

**SIWU LITERARY TRADITIONS
AN ETHNOGRAPHIC BIOGRAPHICAL STUDY OF
PERFORMANCE GENRES**

BY

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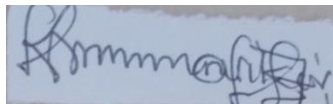
(10329688)

**THIS DISSERTATION IS SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF
GRADUATE STUDIES-UNIVERSITY OF GHANA IN PARTIAL
FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD
OF A DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY DEGREE IN AFRICAN
STUDIES**



DECLARATION

I hereby declare that, except for references to works, which I have duly cited and acknowledged, this thesis is the result of my independent research and no part of it has been presented in part for another degree at the University of Ghana or elsewhere.



Date: October 14, 2025

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DEDICATION

To my 84-year-old mother, Otilia Akua Ayiko Arikor for her unflinching support from my childhood till date, and also to the memory of my late father, Gideon Kwame Senyo Arikor aka Gyamu. You passed on twenty-five years ago, but your legacy of hard work and honesty live on.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I feel a compelling urge to acknowledge the major players who contributed in diverse ways to the realization of this dream. Foremost thanks to Bose Yaa I kato (our father in heaven) for the providence and strength that made a cherished dream a reality. I am grateful to the chiefs and people of Akpafu who welcomed me so warmly during the period of data collection and granted me unlimited access to their oral heritage. The contributions and dedication of all the interviewees and focus group members are highly appreciated.

I owe a debt of gratitude to my supervisors Prof. Esi Sutherland-Addy and Dr. David Ako Odoi. Your academic criticisms, useful contributions, patience, and tolerance are very much appreciated. Your encouragement during moments of disillusionment is worth acknowledging.

My gratitude also goes to my sponsors Andrew W. Mellon Foundation for two years of generous financial support that made the completion possible. Prof. Kwame Offei, Prof. Samuel Agyei-Mensah, Mr. Benedict Fosu, and Ms. Barbara Acquah, I am so grateful to you all. To Prof. Akosua Darkwa of the Sociology Department and Prof. Ansah of the English Department, I am very grateful for introducing me to eco-linguistics, which made a difference in the thesis.

I owe gratitude to my research assistants and Siwu translators, Mr. Seth Agbeme-Amankwah, Grace Esenam Ogbeteh, Timothy Akuamoah, my cameramen Godwin Attu Iprœ and Joseph Akortia, video editor Gabriel Adams, and graphic designer Malik Jamil. To my Librarian, Kwabena Ampadu, I am very grateful. Mr. Nicholas Kwame Ayiti Atiso provided insight into Siwu language usage and its relationship with other Ghana languages. I am very grateful for his support.

Last but not the least, my sincere gratitude goes to my wife, Jennifer Ama Akpene Arikor, and the children; Nhyira, Kwame, Korkor and Kofi. You silently endured my absence, my frustrations and endless preoccupation with research. Your sacrifices are woven into every page of this thesis. I appreciate your prayers, love and support that brought the work into fruition.



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Contents	Pages
DECLARATION.....	i
DEDICATION.....	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT.....	iii
TABLE OF CONTENTS	v
LIST OF FIGURES	xi
LIST OF TABLES	xii
LIST OF MAPS.....	xiii
LIST OF IMAGES.....	xiv
ABBREVIATIONS	xvii
ABSTRACT.....	xviii
CHAPTER ONE	1
1.0 Introduction	1
1.1 Background to the study.....	2
1.3 Statement of the Problem.	6
1.4 The objectives of the study.....	10
1.5 Research Questions	10
1.6 The Scope of the Research.....	11
1.7 Theoretical Framework.	12
1.8.0 Research Methodology	18
1.8.1 Research Type	19
1.8.2 Fieldwork: Data Collection and Transcription.	19
1.8.3 Texts Translation and Focus Group Discussions	22
1.8.4 Data Presentation and Analysis	23
1.8.5 General Analytical Frame.....	26

1.9 The Significance of the Study	28
1.10 The Organization of the Dissertation	30
1.11 Conclusion.....	30
CHAPTER TWO	32
LITERATURE REVIEW	32
2.0 Introduction	32
2.1 Literature on the Study Area	32
2.2 Siwu Socio-Linguistics	39
2.2.1 Selected Siwu and Akan nouns with the same or nearly the same articulation and meaning (in alphabetical order)	41
2.2.2 Selected Siwu and Akan verbs with the same or nearly the same articulation and meaning (in alphabetical order)	42
2.4 Eco-linguistics	43
2.3 African Oral Literature and Performance.....	48
2.4 Performance and Verbal Art	52
2.5 Oral Literature, Written Literary Text and Technology-Technauriture	55
2.6 Conclusion.....	58
CHAPTER THREE	59
THE STUDY AREA	59
3.0 Introduction	59
3.1 Geo-Political Location of Akpafu in the 21st Century.	59
3.2 The History and Migration Experience of Mawu (The People of Akpafu)	61
3.3 From Anum-Boso to Awubeame (Akwapim-Togo Mountains)	66
3.4 Etymology of the name Akpafu	68
3.5. Akpafu Cultural Heritage of the Distant Past.....	74

3.6 Akpafu/Siwu Names	77
3.7 Siwu First Names	78
3.8 Political Institutions and Organizations	79
3.9 Clans/ Kulé (plural) and Kalé (singular) and other Social Organizations.....	81
3.10 Worldview, Kinship and Inheritance in Akpafu	83
3.11 Days and Calendar Months in Siwu.....	86
3.12 Months of the Year.....	87
3.13 Occupation	88
3.14 Land Tenure System.....	90
3.15 Kawu Architecture Across Time and Space	91
3.16 Christianity and Formal Educational in Akpafu	94
3.17 The Population of Siwu Speakers.	96
3.18 Siwu Performing Arts	97
3.19 Conclusion.....	98
CHAPTER FOUR.....	99
SIWU DIRGES.....	99
4.0 Introduction	99
4.1 The Place of Dirges in Akpafu Burial Rites.....	100
4.2 The Structure and Performance of Siwu Dirges.....	104
4.3 Continuity and Change in the Performance of Siwu Dirges	107
4.4 Analytical Frame for Siwu dirges in the Study	108
4.5 Commencement of the Performance of Dirges in Akpafu.....	109
4.6 Curtain Raiser Dirges	111
4.7 Midnight Dirges	115

4.8 Dawn and Early Morning Solemn Dirges	119
4.9 Disclaimer Dirges.....	127
4.10 Accidental Death Solemn Dirges	129
4.11.0 Dirges That Women Dance To In Public.	130
4.11.1 Thematic Classification of Siwu Dirges	132
4.11.2 Dirges That Convey Greetings and Messages to the Dead and Seek the Assistance of the Departed in Overcoming the Daily Challenges of the Living (10A-10E).....	133
4.11.3 Dirges that mourn the irreplaceable loss of human beings (11A-11E)	134
4.11.4 Dirges that remind the living of death as the ultimate plight of the human race.....	136
4.11.5 Dirges that pay tribute to the deceased (13A-13D)	140
4.11.6 Dirges that advise the living especially orphans (14A).....	141
4.11.7 Dirges That Express the Dilemma of the Living over Death. (15A-15D)	141
4.11.8 Dirges That Express The Negative Effect of Death on the Living. (16A-16C)	142
4.11.9 Dirges that insult or cast insinuations (at the people perceived to have a hand in the death). (17A-17D)	143
4.11.10 Dirges that convey communal sympathy to the bereaved family on behalf of those absent at the funeral. (18A and 18B).....	146
4.11.11 Dirges that express communal appreciation to mourners.....	146
4.13 Sociocultural Significance and Functions of Siwu Dirges and how they resonate with the Siwu Language Ecology.....	149
4.14 Women, Funeral Space and the Politics of Orature	151
4.16 Conclusion on Siwu Dirges Performance.	154
CHAPTER FIVE SIWU CEREMONIAL RECITATIONS.....	156
5.0 Introduction.....	156
5.1 The Form, Structure, and State of Siwu Ceremonial Poetry.....	157
5.2.0 Accidental death recitation.....	160
5.2.1 (a) Recitation One (Accidental Death Recitation).....	161
5.2.1(b) Textual and Performance Analysis of Recitation One.....	161
5.3.0 Recitation Two (Crowning natural death ceremony)	162

5.3.1 Textual Analysis	163
5.4.0 Recitation Three (For a joyous occasion other than marriage)	167
5.4.1(a) Prelude to the Recitation	168
5.4.1(b) Recitation For A Joyous Gathering.....	168
5.4.2 Textual Analysis	169
5.5 Recitation Four (For Crowning Marriage Ceremony in Traditional Setting)	174
5.5.1(a) Prelude to the Actual Performance of Crowning Marriage Ceremony	176
5.5.1(b) Marriage Recitations	177
5.5.2 Textual Analysis	178
5.6 Siba Siare – Supreme Appreciation Recitation	182
5.6.1. Textual Analysis of (Siba Siare) Supreme Appreciation.....	184
5.6.2. Conclusion on Supreme Appreciation Recitation	189
5.6.3. Conclusion on Siwu Ethnopoetics	189
CHAPTER SIX	191
SIWU RITUAL DRAMATIC PERFORMANCES	191
6.0 Introduction	191
6.1 African Ritual Performances with Dramatic Content.	191
6.2. The Day After Burial (Ikisira Iyi) Dramatic Rituals.	194
6.3 Dramatic Exhibition of Ritual Cloths.....	197
6.3 The Room of the Deceased Inspection Rituals (Female).....	200
6.3.1 The Significance of the Female Room Inspection Drama.....	207
6.4 Room Inspection Dramatic Rites For Males	208
6.4.1. The Significance of the Male Room Inspection Properties	211
6.5. Conclusion.....	211
CHAPTER SEVEN.....	213
Conclusion	213
7.0. Introduction	213

7.1. The Scholarly Study of Siwu Literary Culture.....	213
7.2 The content of the Siwu Literary Genre Examined.....	215
7.3 The Performers, Performances, and the Performance Space	216
7.4 Siwu Literary Traditions Model (Propounded By Godswill Tetteh Arikor).....	219
7.5 Siwu Literary Genres and their Ecolinguistics Orientation	220
7.6 Conclusion.....	221
7.7 Areas for further Research.	222
REFERENCES.....	224
APPENDIX.....	234
Appendix A.	234
Appendix B	265



LIST OF FIGURES

Figures	Pages
Figure 1. Credit: Joseph Muleka (2014) <i>Theory in the Study of African Oral Literature: The Oral Artist's Agenda</i> . Journal of Arts and Humanities (JAH), Volume -3, No.-7,(85-91)	17
Figure 2. Credit: Joseph Muleka (2014) <i>Theory in the Study of African Oral Literature: The Oral Artist's Agenda</i> . Journal of Arts and Humanities (JAH), Volume -3, No.-7,(85-91)	18
Figure 3.	80
Figure 4. diagrammatical illustration of outdoor performance of dirges. Credit: The researcher.	148
Figure 5: Graphical representation of the study and a model for Siwu oral literature....	219



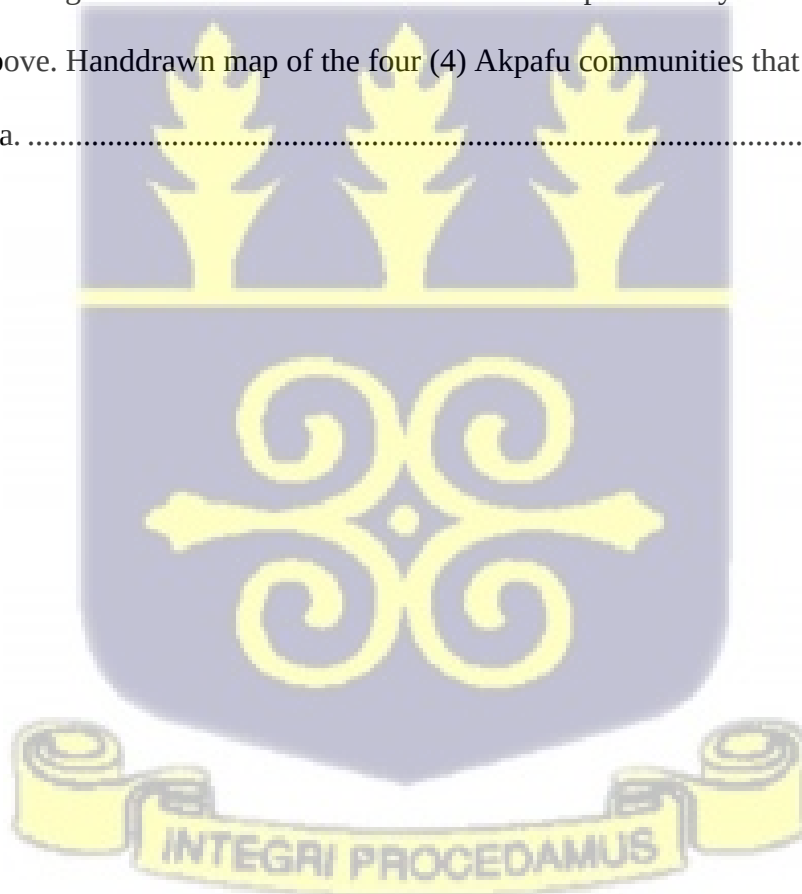
LIST OF TABLES

Tables	Pages
Table 1. Selected Siwu and Akan nouns articulated almost the same.	41
Table 2. Selected Siwu and Akan verbs articulated almost the same.	42
Table 3. Siwu first names for both males and females.	78
Table 4: Siwu names for days of the week.	86
Table 5: Siwu Calendar Months with the English Equivalence	87



LIST OF MAPS

Maps	Pages
Map 1. The language map of Ghana shows sixty- five (65) indigenous languages numbered alphabetically. Siwu is numbered 57 and the researcher graphically points at it with a red pointer.	36
Map 2. The Oti regional map, with the newly created Guan district where the study area is located. Source: Office of the District Chief Executive for the Guan district. Likpe Mate.	60
Map 3.The migration root of the Mawu from Nubia to present-day Ghana.....	62
Map 4 above. Handdrawn map of the four (4) Akpafu communities that constitute the study area.	73



LIST OF IMAGES

Images	Pages
Image 1 The archeological remains above (at Akpafu Todzi).....	71
Image 2 The archeological remains above (at Akpafu Todzi).....	71
Image 3 above: The researcher in an interview with Mankrado Kataninsorojya I (71), Mankrado of Akpafu Todzi (2003-till date) and the seniormost of all Mankrados in Akpafu.....	72
Image 4: Varieties of milled (brown and white) rice, one of the major staples in the study area. Field data February 2023.....	89
Image 5: The carcass of a boar killed with a gun in the study area about to be dressed. .	90
Image 6. A picture of Akpafu Todzi with flat mud roof buildings, taken by early missionaries (probably between 1898 and 1920).....	92
Image 7: The last and the only surviving all-mud flat roof building in the entire Akpafu communities (still at Akpafu Todzi) which was the unique traditional architecture with which Mawu's were identified, until the late 1970s. Source: Field data, April 2023. ...	93
Image 8: A pictorial view of buildings made up of concrete blocks and roofed with corrugated iron sheets in Akpafu Todzi in the 21 st Century. Field data -November 2022.	94
Image 9: Women in early morning dirges performance at the funeral of Mageline Ferdinand Yaw Adjisam. and Bertina Adjaglo respectively at Akpafu Odomi	121
Image 10: Women in early morning dirges performance at the funeral of Mageline Ferdinand Yaw Adjisam. and Bertina Adjaglo respectively at Akpafu Odomi	113
Image 11: Processional outdoor performance of dirges in Akpafu. Women in Akpafu Todzi dancing in a procession to the dirge <i>Mi la mi la so kaboba- Take the lead, we are coming</i> at Albert Asempi aka Apuse's funeral (02/03/23). Source: Field data	136
Image 12: Women in Akpafu Todzi trotting to the dirge <i>Mma lei wo ba, so di si bo ma- Those who could not come did so due to poor health</i> at Albert Apuse Asempi's funeral (04/07/22) Source: Field data.....	137
Image 13: Processional outdoor performance of dirges in Akpafu Odomi and a section of the audience watching the performance. Field data Nov. 2022.	138

Image 14: Processional outdoor performance of dirges in Akpafu Odomi. Field Data November 2022.....	138
Image 15: Women in Akpafu Adokor trotting to the rhythm in communal processional performance of dirges at the funeral of Celestine Agboada-Akpabi. Field data Feb. 2023.	139
Image 16: A section of the women in performance at Akpafu Adorkor at the funeral of Emmanuel Ogbetey. Field data Feb. 2023.....	139
Image 17: The researcher in a focus group discussion with <i>sino idi</i> (dirges) performers with two active performers and two elderly women who were once performers, but are now just audience due mainly to their age and health. The venue is Akpafu Odomi.....	149
Image 18: Above. Kallai Prosper aka Okain- Asafo kyeame of Akpafu Odomi pours a drink outward during the performance of the fifth day rites to signify a rejection of death at the funeral of A.S P. Rtd Aduo-Ofosu at Akpafu Odomi (06/03/23).....	165
Image 19: Kallai Prosper aka Okain positions the calabash to his left to signify that the occasion is for a bad omen at the funeral of A.S P. Adu Ofosu (06/03/23) This is done prior to the recitation. Source: Field data. 2023.....	166
Image 20: Lord Benjamin Boni (the performer) pours the palm wine in a calabash towards his open legs to signify an acceptance of the marriage, with a section of the audience keenly observing the preliminary protocols, before the commencement of the recitations.	175
Image 21; The performer (Lord Benjamin Boni) positions the calabash to his right to signify a good omen, while a section of the audience keenly looks on. The occasion is the marriage of Ms Joycelyn Atukumah in Dec. 2022 at Akpafu Odomi. Field Data 2022.	176
Image 22 Gladys Adade on stage in A solo melodramatic performance at Akpafu Odomi	196
Image 23: Gladys Adade on stage in A solo melodramatic performance at Akpafu Odomi	196
Image 24: From left to right (standing) in a dance performance:	197
Image 25: <i>Orogokpakpa</i> (Elderly woman) Okra Kpei dramatically displays <i>Mabi akati</i> at Akpafu Mempeasem. Field data Jan 2023.....	199

Image 26: Crops culturally reserved for females: <i>kawumɔ</i> -unmilled local rice (<i>Oryza sativa</i>) (left),(akɔtɔabi) groundnuts-(<i>Arachis hypogaea</i>) - in the shell (middle) and (<i>kakpei</i>) lima beans-(<i>Phaseolus lunatus</i> -(right), all in gourds assembled for female dramatic rituals.....	201
Image 27: Props for the indigenous drama for a deceased female.	202
Image 28: Elderly women perform dirge 11G to commence room inspection dramatic rituals while the props are brought out. Field data Oct. 2022	203
Image 29: A section of an all-female audience watching the drama unfold at Akpafu Odomi. Field data Oct. 2022.....	203
Image 30: Women receive the crops.....	204
Image 31: <i>The traditional clay stove breaking process.</i>	206
Image 32: The traditional clay stove or hearth-breaking process.	207
Image 33: <i>The props for the indigenous funeral drama in Kawu for deceased males ...</i>	209



ABBREVIATIONS

GILLBT	Ghana Institute of Linguistics, Literacy and Bible Translation
UNESCO	United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organization
BGL	Bureau of Ghana Languages
SALL	Santrokofi, Akpafu, Lolobi, and Likpe
AD	Anno Domini
E P C	Evangelical Presbyterian Church
ASSETS	Akpafu Senior Secondary Technical School



ABSTRACT

The values of African indigenous literary traditions, rooted in the many African languages and arts of African societies constitute the soul of these societies in terms of culture, religion, and indigenous knowledge. Literary traditions that are expressed in language(s) have functioned socio-culturally, to keep the African societies together. With the growing social change, and the dwindling fortunes of indigenous African languages, most especially the minority languages, there is an urgent need to scientifically study the cultural significance of the literature in these languages and document it or forever lose the literary and artistic legacy inherent in them. Siwu is one of the Ghana Togo Remnant Languages in the Oti region in Ghana, and it is some its literary traditions that were identified and studied in this project. Siwu language has different literary genres (dirges, ceremonial poetic recitations, and ritual public performances) intricately woven into all ritual gatherings, most especially during funerals, celebrations, and the enstoolment of traditional political officeholders among others. Verbal artists, creatively use the Siwu language to engage their audience in songs and recitations, often in the form of call and response. Some of these verbal arts, in which words are in performance, in the voice of an artist, for different functions are on the verge of extinction as a result of non-practice and social change. The Eve and English languages pose a threat because their usage at public functions take precedence over Siwu. The study examines the performance of Siwu verbal arts, especially during funerals, their functions, their paralinguistics, aesthetics, the performer, performance space and how the creative language draws from the ecology of the study area (eco linguistics).

CHAPTER ONE

1.0 Introduction

The values of African indigenous literary traditions, rooted in the many African languages and art forms, constitute the soul of these societies in terms of culture, religion, and indigenous knowledge. Literary traditions expressed in local language(s) have functioned socio-culturally to keep the African societies together. Despite efforts by organizations such as the Ghana Institute of Linguistics, Literacy and Bible Translation (GILLBT) to document all Ghanaian languages for Christian religious purposes, many Ghanaian languages, and the aesthetics of their verbal arts, including *Siwu*, (the subject of this thesis) a Guan language spoken in the southern part of the Oti region of Ghana, have not been documented. Again, the linguistic features in these oral literary compositions in many Ghanaian languages, especially minority languages, have not been critically examined with literary and linguistic lenses, nor have they been deciphered to reveal their literary functions in an ethnocultural context (Kropp-Dakubu 2008).

Compared to Nigeria, Ghana's sister country in the subregion, which has a wide range of publications in Nigerian indigenous languages, there is no denying that Ghana cannot claim the same for its indigenous languages. The Yoruba language has literary classics such as D.O. Fugunwa's *Ninu Igbo Irunmale*, *Ireke* and *Adiitu Olodumare*. The Igbo language also has classics such as Ogbonnaya Mark Okoro's *Uwa na-eme Ntughari* and Pita Nwana Omenuko.

There is an urgent need to study these languages, document their linguistics and literary heritage, and explore other aspects, or risk losing the rich literary and artistic legacy inherent in them forever. In this regard, pioneering works on *Siwu* and the culture of the

people of Akpafu, notably Rattray (1916), Iddah (1975), Kropp-Dakubu (1988), Ogbetey (1998), Agawu (1998), and Dingemanse (2008), deserve special mention and praise for establishing a scholarly foundation for further exploration of different aspects of the Siwu language.

Other scholarly works that address the African languages and their literary heritage include Kunene (2007), Schenb (2007), Horn (2002) Davies (1981), and Gunner (2007). Nwagbara (2015) and Showalter (1989) among others. These scholars have set the pace for further advancement of research in African languages and literature and the gendered space within which they are performed. Essien (1989) and Yankah (1989) advocate for the consciousness of national pride in the many genres and sub-genres of oral performance in different African societies.

1.1 Background to the study

In the mountainous southern part of the Oti region, in the Republic of Ghana-West Africa, are communities speaking Kwa branch of Niger–Congo language(s); Africa’s largest language family according to Kropp Dakubu (1998). In the local Ghanaian parlance, these languages are collectively referred to as Guan languages because according to oral tradition, validated by Westermann (1932), these languages have one parent stock language known as the *Guan*. Some of these language communities include Lɛlɛmi (Buem), Tuwuli (Bowri) Sɛlɛ (Santrokofi), Sɛkpɛlɛ (Likpe) Nkonya and Siwu (Akpafu-Lolobi) all in the Oti region. In the Volta region, the Guan languages are Sideme (Avatime), Tutrugbu (Nyagbo), Tegbor (Tafi), and Ikpana (Logba). These languages are technically classified in Ghana as “Central-Togo Languages” (Kropp-Dakubu and Ford 1998). These languages are also known as “Ghana Togo Remnant Languages”.

It is Siwu's literary traditions and linguistic features that are to be identified and studied in this dissertation. The Siwu language is spoken by the people traditionally known as Mawu. Their land is called Kawu by the indigenes, which is also more popular as Akpafu. The people and the area were christened Akpafu in the mid 19th century when the Ewes discovered the iron smelting industry of Mawu. This subject is given prominence in chapter three, page 67. In effect, the language is Siwu, the people are Mawu, and their land is Kawu. Siwu has different literary genres intricately woven into all ritual gatherings (meetings of kin, clan, and the entire community). These literary genres are performed during funerals and marriage celebrations, inauguration ceremonies of traditional political office holders, and other joyous celebrations. Specialized verbal artists, creatively use language, to engage their audience in elaborate recitations/songs, often in the form of call and response. Some of these verbal arts dramatically performed by different artists, are on the verge of extinction as a result of non-practice by the younger generation, social change, and the threat posed by the Ewe and English languages to Siwu. These endangered verbal arts, their para-linguistics, and aesthetics constitute a unique literary performance genre that Agawu (2001) and Agudze (2000) mention but have not been explored and given academic legitimacy, hence this study.

The choice of the Siwu language stems from Okpewho's (1992) caution to students who desire to research African oral literature "...to go to their hometown or at least a community where they feel at home, a community whose language they understand and can speak..."¹ The researcher is a native speaker of Siwu and has appreciable knowledge of the customs

¹ Okpewho, I(1992:329) **African Oral Literature**, Background, Character and Continuity, Indiana University Press, Bloomington and Indianapolis.

and institutions of the people of Akpafu who speak Siwu. This position also dovetails into Okpewho's (1992) proposition that, oral literary researchers must ultimately equip themselves "...with a dependable understanding of the society or culture from which that literature comes to properly appreciate the images and messages contained in the text and its performance."² Again, the choice of Siwu as a minority language is inspired by Kiguli's (2012) postulations that, with the diversity of languages and literary arts in Africa, "... it is when these genres that are usually labeled informal are taken up and studied with an awareness of the environment within which they operate that they can begin to acquire prominence."³

In terms of language vitality, the Siwu language is the predominant language in the study area. It is the language for communication at home and in all other social settings, and it is passed on to children. It is the most common medium for social interactions in the study area. The Christian religious and formal education activities are, however, conducted in the Ewe language with minimal translation into the Siwu language in all the communities in the study area. Schools in the study area do not allow their pupils to speak the Siwu language during school hours because children write their ultimate examinations in English and Ewe languages. Ewe and Akan are the languages for trading with external traders in the study area. It may thus be surmised that the Siwu language has vitality, in terms of the standard models for assessing language vitality. The Siwu language, therefore conforms to the model put forward by Rustamovna, S.L et al (2018). It is convenient to state that the

² Okpewho, I(1992:333) **African Oral Literature**, Background, Character and Continuity, Indiana University Press, Bloomington and Indianapolis

³ Kiguli, S.N. (2012) **Performer-critics in oral performance in African societies** in *Kunapipi* 34/1. Page 176.

Siwu language is *vulnerable* because all that can be said in terms of positive indicators for language vitality is that “ the language is used orally by all generations and is learnt by children as their first language.”⁴ However, with more than fifteen thousand Siwu speakers in Akpafu and Lolobi combined, endangered status, and the extinction of the Siwu language in the 21st century is unlikely.

1.2 Ethnographic Biographical Study.

Life stories of people written by the people themselves or by other people sit within the (Auto) biographical writing space as a sub-genre of written literature. There are different sub-genres of (auto) biographical writing, including biographies, autobiographies, mediated autobiographies, memoirs, and autoethnography. According to (Arikor 2011), an ethnographic biography centres on the factual enumeration of the indigenous cultural practices of a specific ethnic group by an individual who professes knowledge of the group. In ethnographic biography, the collective consciousness of the values, history, and the different integrated cultural components holding an ethnic group together are exposed to readers. This study comes close to autoethnography, but it is not exactly that in the sense that the researcher is not self-reflective in the study. The researcher does not express any sentimental attachment to the literary forms other than their linguistic features, literariness, and functions. The researcher’s life experiences are not in any way integrated into the

⁴ Rustamovna, S.L et al. (2018), Assessing Language Vitality: Overview of Existing Models Opción, Año 34, Especial No.17 (2018): 1144-1163, page. 1150.

performance and examination of the literary genres under study. The researcher's status does not go beyond participant observer.

Fully developed ethnographic biographies are relatively rare in Africa because most often, their subject fields are subsumed in (auto) biographies that people write. It is a common phenomenon for autobiographical subjects to comprehensively devote substantial space in their autobiographies to the history and different aspects of the culture of their ethnic groups, into which their life stories emerge. Classical autoethnographies in Africa include Kenyatta's (1938) *Facing Mount Kenya* and Vambe's (1972) *Ill-Fated People*. This study was conceptualized within the autoethnography space, but it is not exactly that in the sense that, the researcher is neither at the centre of the performances studied nor are the findings presented in any personalized style. The focus is on Siwu literary forms, their functions, stylistics, and eco-linguistics orientation, which any other person with an interest in such performance arts, other than a native speaker, can examine.

1.3 Statement of the Problem.

The wind of social change sweeping across many cultures, from the beginning of the 20th century, has resulted in the predatory languages affecting the linguistic features of other languages. In some cases, there is total annihilation of some languages as there are fewer speakers, and their cultural heritage for that matter becomes greatly affected. In Africa, the agents of cultural changes include; Colonialism, Christianity, Islam, and Western education. Nukunya (2016) emphasizes that

“Wars of aggression, trade, and population movements necessitated by many different factors have also introduced alterations and modifications in indigenous social systems. As

a result of these, some political entities lost their independence and even identity, while others have strengthened their positions at the expense of their weaker neighbours.”⁵

Siwu language and art forms are directly affected by this assertion because it is a minority language surrounded by other ‘giant’ languages like Eve and English.

Turin (2012) presents disturbing figures on the global language picture. He draws from the *World's Languages in Danger Atlas*, released in 2009 by the United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). It states that up to half of the world's 6,500 languages spoken in 2012 may be extinct by the end of 2099 and that 50% percent of the world's languages are drastically losing speakers. Equally frightening, from a linguistic perspective, is his assertion that close to 90% of the world's speech forms may be replaced by dominant regional, national, or internal languages by 2100.”⁶ It may be convincing for pundits to describe the above illustration as a crisis narrative and dismiss it. However, the stark reality of the threat posed by international and national languages to minority languages stares at linguists.

In Ghana, Akpaglo Nartey & Akpaglo Nartey (2012) examined the future of Awutu and Efutu (Guan) languages, surrounded by Fante. Their findings reveal that grandparents are monoglots and speak either Awutu or Efutu. Parents are polyglots and speak either Awutu or Efutu and Fante. Children are polyglots and speak Fante and English. In effect, when grand-parents and parents die, Awutu and Efutu could die off. It is this phenomenon that has given prominence to the term *linguicide* (major language(s) taking over a minority

⁵ Nukunya G.K. (2016) Tradition and Change In Ghana: An Introduction To Sociology. (pp 139)

⁶ Turin, M. (2012) *Voices of vanishing worlds: Endangered Languages, Orality, and Cognition* in **Análise Social Journal**, Vol. 47, No. 205 (pp. 848)

language) and the associated term, *glottophagy* (major language(s) eating up speech forms or vocabulary of minor languages).

In Ghana, Turin's (2012) fear has long been established by Kropp-Dakubu (1988), who states that in Ghana, "other Guang languages have long died out within the past century."⁷ Dimmendaal (2008) states that Kwadi and Meroitic languages around Sudan have become extinct. When a language dies, a lot more than just the language dies: art forms, medicine, socio-cultural and economic values, heritage products, arts, and general indigenous knowledge among others, useful to humanity also die. A definite statement cannot be made yet on the extinction status of the Siwu language because of the relatively large number of speakers (about 15,000 people) according to 2020 population and housing census estimates. However, there is no argument that various art forms performed in Siwu are seriously under threat as a result of social change and the effects of Christian religious activities. These art forms have remained in their oral form, and when people with in-depth knowledge of them, as well as their performers, die, portions of these arts naturally die with them. The linguistic features of Siwu literature, Siwu literature orientation, and its aesthetics stand the risk of extinction. There is an urgent need therefore to methodically study and unearth authentic ethnographically Siwu literary forms and document not only the forms of language but also, linguistic features, their performativity, functions, and performance space and audience. This is because urbanization is growing by the day, and the youth in particular are migrating to the urban areas, culminating in migrant communities engaging in their indigenous cultures in urban areas for ethnic identity

⁷ Kropp Dakubu M.E ed (1988) **The Languages of Ghana**. Routledge & Kegan Paul International Ltd New York (pp78)

creation (Nukunya 2016). The number of younger people to learn the art forms in the source region decreases each passing day and there is the need to study and document these art forms for posterity and to also bring them into the academia.

Another angle to the problem, borders on the national policy in Ghana on indigenous Ghanaian languages. Out of about sixty-five languages in Ghana, only eleven (Twi, Fanti, Ewe, Ga, Dagbani, Gonja, Kasem, Dagare, Gurune, Hausa, and Nzema) are accorded written attention at the Bureau of Ghana Languages (BGL). Until 1998 when Nzema was added to the BGL list, “Gonja is...the only Guang language recognized by the Ministry of Education for use in primary schools”⁸, and a lingual franca for that matter, and was taught at the University of Education campus at Ajumako, where major Ghanaian languages are studied and developed academically.

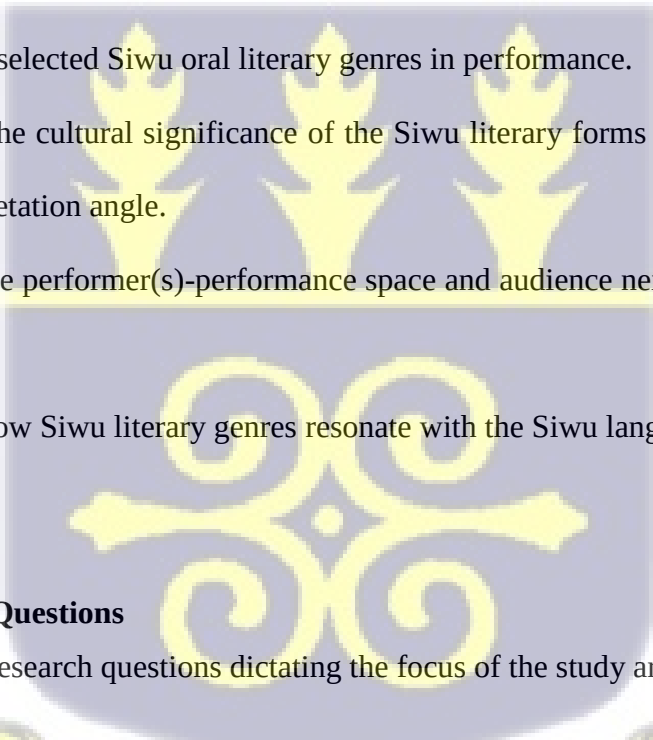
Language is one of the most prominent components of any culture, and yet the cultural policy in Ghana is not forthright on the policy on Ghanaian languages. Section 8.2 on *Literary Arts* is clear on the need to document and preserve oral and written literature in Ghana and encourages “Ghanaian Literary Artistes to compose and write in Ghanaian Languages”⁹. Unfortunately, BGL technically writes ten (10) Ghanaian languages if Asante Twi, Akwapim Twi, and Fante are classified as Akan because they are mutually intelligible. About fifty (50) minority languages in Ghana and their literary arts are overtly left out of scholarship. This is because not even the basic writing tools are provided at the national level to aid in the writing of all Ghanaian languages at the local level.

⁸ Kropp Dakubu M.E ed (1988) **The Languages of Ghana**. London, Kegan Paul (pp79)

⁹ Ghana’s Cultural Policy, Section 8.2.3 Page 30.

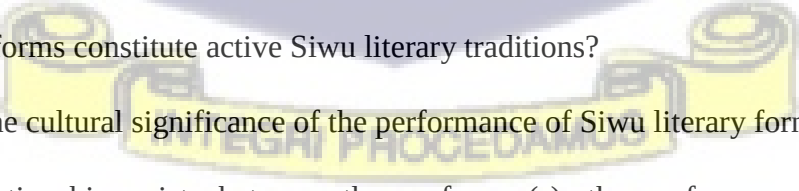
1.4 The objectives of the study

The literary genres of prose, poetry, and drama, rooted in all languages, do not elude Siwu. Like many African languages, Siwu prose is expressed in storytelling performance, mythology, and oral history. The researcher is, however, yet to see any written work of prose in the Siwu language. Though GILLBT has developed characters that constitute the Siwu alphabet and has translated the New Testament Bible into the Siwu language, Siwu, like many other minority languages in the Oti region, has not been written. The study attempts a comprehensive examination of the cultural underpinnings of the performance of Siwu literary traditions, contextually from the language ecology in which the art forms emerged and are performed. The study's specific objectives are to

- 
- (i) Document selected Siwu oral literary genres in performance.
 - (ii) Examine the cultural significance of the Siwu literary forms from a literary analysis and interpretation angle.
 - (iii) Evaluate the performer(s)-performance space and audience nexus in Siwu literary arts and
 - (iv) Examine how Siwu literary genres resonate with the Siwu language ecology.

1.5 Research Questions

The principal research questions dictating the focus of the study are as follows:

- 
- What art forms constitute active Siwu literary traditions?
 - What is the cultural significance of the performance of Siwu literary forms?
 - What relationship exists between the performer(s), the performance space, and the audience in the execution of Siwu literary forms?
 - How does ecological linguistics apply to Siwu literary forms?

1.6 The Scope of the Research

The Siwu language is spoken in seven communities and several hamlets in the Oti region in the Republic of Ghana. These communities are Akpafu Todzi, Akpafu Odomi, Akpafu Mempeasem and Akpafu Adorkor. The meaning of Akpafu and how and why it has overshadowed Kawu the indigenous name (the land of Siwu-speaking people) is discussed in chapter three. The rest of the Siwu-speaking communities are Lolobi Kumasi, Lolobi Ashambi and Lolobi Hunyasem. The Lolobi communities separated from the rest of the Mawu, long before the two groups (Akpafu and Lolobi) finally immigrated from Awubeame (presently in Nkonya territory) to their present settlements. Nonetheless, both groups speak the same Siwu language that is mutually intelligible to both Akpafu and Lolobi, but with a little variation in accent.

The geographical scope of the research covers Akpafu Todzi, Akpafu Odomi, Akpafu Mempeasem and Akpafu Adorkor. The research does not extend to Lolobi communities because of the relatively short time frame for data collection, analysis, and submission of the thesis, since Lolobi is geographically distant from the four Akpafu communities. Again, Lolobi's proximity to the people of Hohoe and their trading together, intermarriages, and other social interactions have adulterated a lot of Siwu spoken at Lolobi, which has subsequently affected the Siwu art forms performed by the people of Lolobi. The phenomena of code-switching Siwu with Eve, as well as performing Eve arts due to Lolobi's proximity to Hohoe (Eve speaking community), coupled with over one hundred and fifty years of separation from the people of Akpafu, call for independent research into Lolobi arts. These are the criteria for the exclusion of Lolobi in the current study. In a nutshell, the identification of common literary genres in the study area is at the core of the

study. Additionally, a detailed examination of literary genres and related performance arts that are prevalent and culturally significant in the study area constitutes the study. In effect, the study documents the Siwu literary performance traditions, examines their cultural significance, and their linguistic orientation.

1.7 Theoretical Framework.

Scholars like Okpewho (1992), Osofisan (2012), with an interest in African literature, are increasingly beginning to question the appropriateness of the application of “text-focused theories” in the study of African literature, and in particular, the African oral literature genre. Some aspects of African oral literature are associated with non-verbalised and non-writeable dimensions of performance that may easily elude a casual observer and yet are integral parts of a performance. The non-textual aspect of oral performance could be ephemeral, even to a literary scholar, and for that may not be captured into theoretical concepts, and yet these non-verbalised components are so integral to the performance of the literary event. Osofisan (1992) argues in favour of not seeking performances that echo Western modes but rather assessing African performance arts space in a manner that brings understanding to the context in which African oral performance works. The emphasis is on connecting African oral literary genres with the socio-cultural context of the production of African arts, and by extension, artists’ perception of their trade.

Okpewho (1992), Haring (1994), and Finnegan (2005) make a strong case for the existence of literature in performance and the need to expand the intellectual boundaries of theory into the scope of performance. Bame (1991), Senanu (1981), Olaniyan (2007) and Dareng (2019) identify African popular cultural environment, notably birth and puberty rites, marriage and age group ceremonies, and enstoolment/enskinment ceremonies and

funeral ceremonies as fertile grounds for the identification of different African literary genres in performance.

Finnegan (2005) states that

“...it has become increasingly clear that an oral performance can be analyzed not just as the contingent setting for some enduring- writeable- text but as itself the central reality.”¹⁰

Finnegan (ibid) is concerned with the intellectual study of the oral literary components of literature in performance that engages the multi-dimensions of oral performance on their merit as part of the complete whole. Her argument advocates the integration of the performance qualities associated with oral literary expressions into the holistic analysis of oral performance. It is in the enlargement of the theoretical horizon beyond the gaze of written text that oral-related performances, for which Africa is noted, is African oral literary theory accorded its rightful place in the global literary theory canon.

It can be deduced from Finnegan's (ibid) arguments that scholarly conceptualization of oral literature in performance provides the realization of literary diversity that stretches beyond written text for an enhanced comparative literary study. The conceptualization of oral performance also has the potential of making blur the binary opposition of oral literature in performance as traditional, communal, non-scientific, undeveloped, and primitive against the other; civilized, literate, rationally scientific, and modern. Appropriate

¹⁰ Finnegan, R (2005) **The How of Literature** In *Oral Traditions* 20/2. Pages 166.

theoretical conceptualization of oral performance also makes a case for how writing can interact with oral performance, based on the qualities and strengths of both.

Haring (2005) postulates the contributions that the study of African oral traditions has made to literary theory and states that “... the study of oral traditions with its local knowledge (Geertz 1983) and its passion for the politically disenfranchised, occupies an oppressed position lower even than feminism.”¹¹ This calls for a comprehensive assessment of all resources available in oral literature under study in advancing theoretical arguments. Kiguli (2012) posits that an appropriate angle for assessing oral performance in different parts of Africa “is by examining its practice within its environment, realizing that it demands its own intellectual space.”¹² She calls for constant engagement of performers on issues of their trade for insight into African oral performance. There is a conscious attempt by the researcher to situate the performance of the literary genres under study within the analytical frame of Bauman's (1977) and (1986) examination of performance, with a focus on the performer, the text, competence, the occasion, and the audience factors.

Theoretically, (Turner 1984) postulations that situate human rites of passage (birth, puberty, marriage, and death) and the liminality that accompanies the various stages, feature in this study, with particular reference to performance space. The ritual performances that communicate communal rites of passage involve liminality of public space from their normal everyday uses to a transformed stage for public ritual performance, especially during funerals.

¹¹ Haring, L (1994) **The Search For Grounds in African Oral Tradition** In *Oral Traditions* 9/1. Pages 16.

¹² Kiguli, S.N. (2012) **Performer-critics in oral performance in African societies** In *Kunapipi* 34/1. Page 172.

Bauman (1986) identified the role of the performer(s) and the social conditions as key elements of a performance. This is because though an oral literary genre may exist, it is only in its performance in a specific context, that it comes alive through a performer or performers. In other words, the performance environment and the skills of the performer(s) in a rendition of an oral genre bring out the aesthetics, meaning, and totality of a performance. Sekoni (1990) and Kruger (2002) argue for text, context, and performer for the realization of a performance.

This study attempts to engage in a continuous search for a more appropriate theory relevant to the performance of African oral art under study. In that regard, the performer(s), the text that is performed, the prevailing socio-cultural environment of the study area, and the audience are at the center of the study from a theoretical angle. The researcher adopts a *performer-centric approach* model, developed by Joseph Muleka.

Muleka (2014) argues for the choice of appropriate theory in the study of African oral literature making a strong case for the centrality of the performer in the performance of all genres of African oral literature. His argument is convincing, that, the uniqueness of the performance of any genre of African oral literature rests on *the performer, the text, and the audience*. The performer renders the text on an occasion and the audience appreciates and appraises the performance. He propounds the performer-centric theory where the “performer interprets the context or actual occasion through three arms: composition which is the content; transmission reflects the method of explaining the occasion and the audience completes the occasion through appreciation, appraisal, evaluation and feedback. Through

the audience, the meaning of the occasion is made relevant.”¹³ The pivot of the performance is thus on the performer who actualizes the performance. The theory and argument are relevant to this study that attempts documentation of Siwu literary traditions that rest on group or individual performance of different literary genres in the full glare and evaluation of an audience.

In this model, the composition of the oral genre, the occasion/context that calls for the performance, the process of transmission, and the audience are intrinsically interwoven and the four components pivot on the performer for a performance. “By trying to see an oral performance through the eyes of the artist, one can answer questions on why this particular occasion; who is targeted; what social and cultural conceptions shape the performance; what artistic considerations are to be given prominence; what societal values are emphasized and so on.”¹⁴

The justification for the performer-centric theory stems from its ability to equip the researcher with the source of the literary genre in performance, the content of the text that the performer decides to put into the public domain, the stylistic choice the performer(s) exhibit in the text, the emotions of the performer and the inspiration the performer(s) takes from the audience. This approach also makes room for comparison of the same performance event by different performers or performances of the same genre in different contexts. This ensures a holistic understanding of the literary genre and its performance.

¹³ Muleka, J. (2014: 89) Theory in the Study of African Oral Literature: The Oral Artist's Agenda in Journal of Arts and Humanities (JAH), Volume -3, No.-7, July, 2014

¹⁴ Mukela, J.(2014) Theory in the Study of African Oral Literature: The Oral Artist's Agenda In Journal of Arts and Humanities (JAH), Volume -3, No.-7, pp 84-91.

The textual composition of this theory, *performer*, *literary text*, *the occasion*, and *audience* has similar features to those of Bauman(1986); however, Muleka's (2014) graphical presentation and addition of “ the occasion” marks it as unique and a departure from other theories. Formal and informal performance spaces (s), typical of African societies and their different performing arts, are provided for in the theory. The theory provides the space to look at performance beyond just the text.

The Performer Centric Model (Theory), propounded by Joseph Muleka.

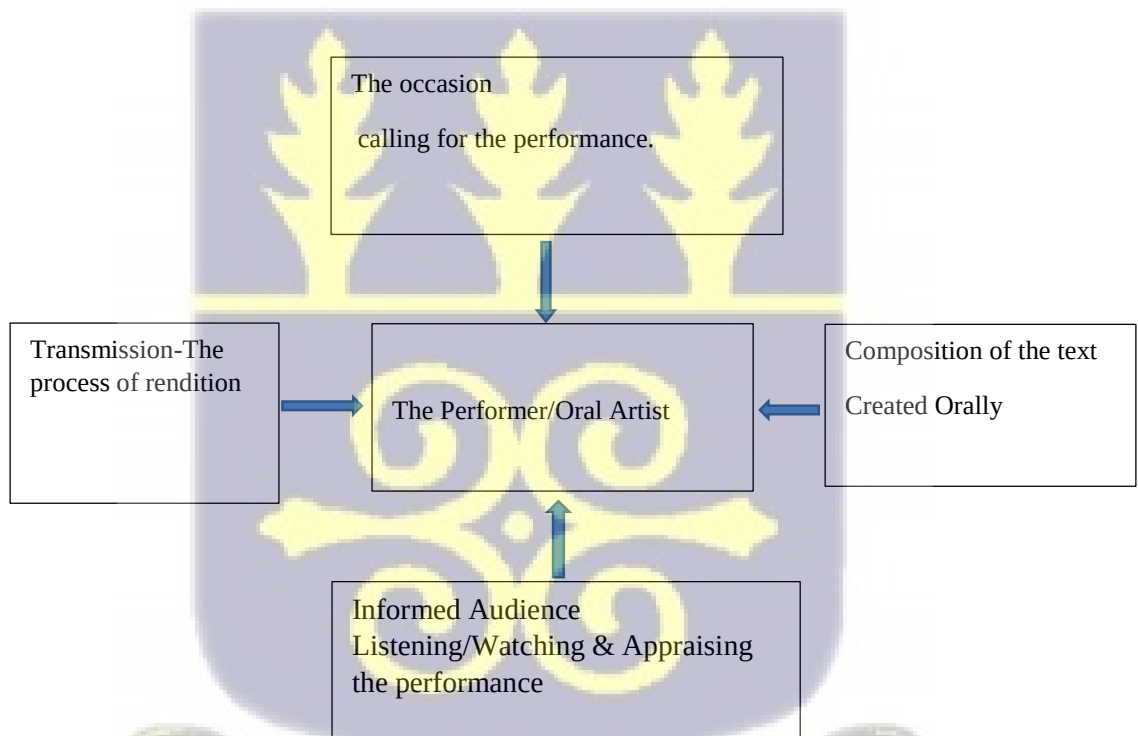


Figure 1. Credit: Joseph Muleka (2014) *Theory in the Study of African Oral Literature: The Oral Artist's Agenda*. Journal of Arts and Humanities (JAH), Volume -3, No.-7,(85-91)

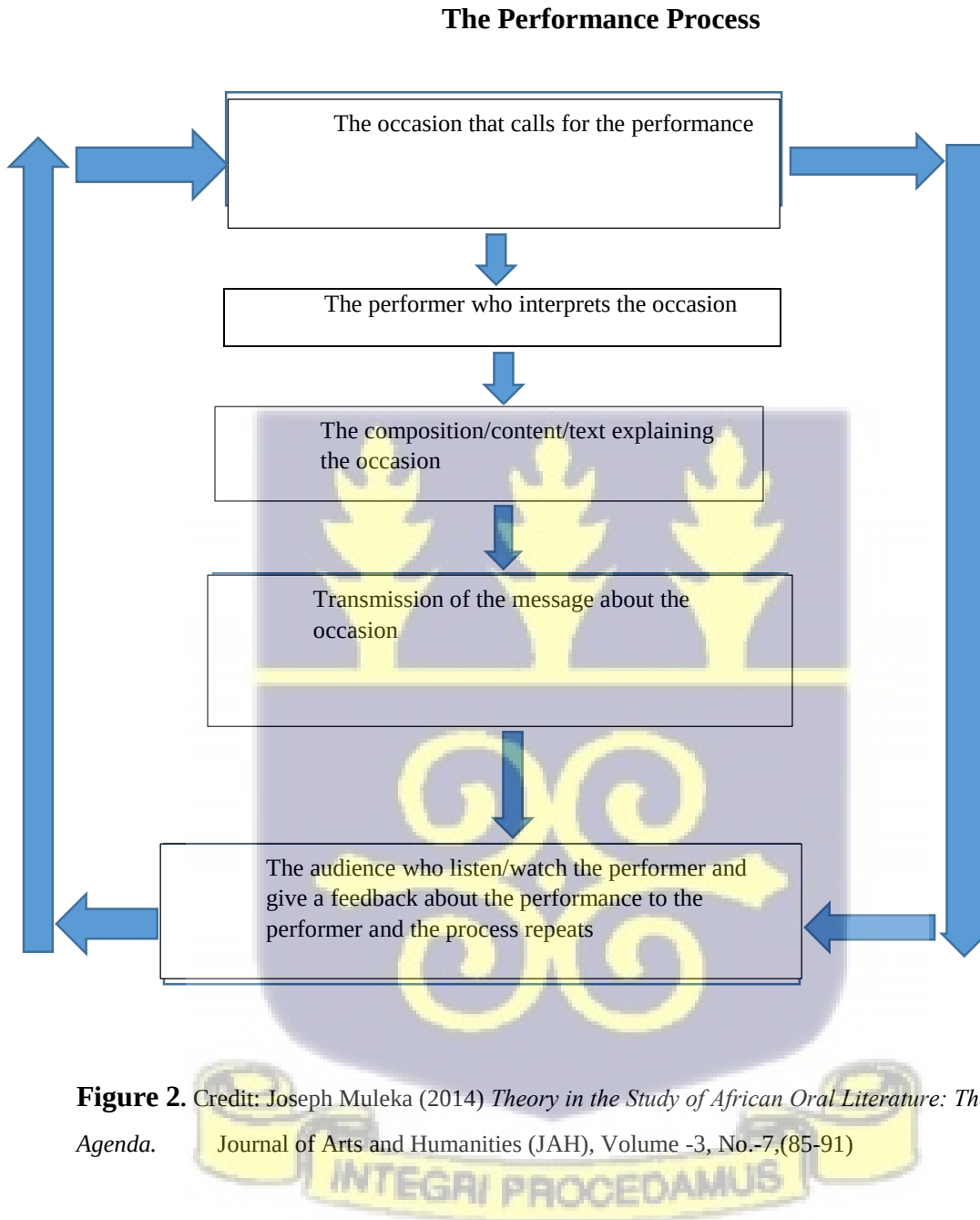


Figure 2. Credit: Joseph Muleka (2014) *Theory in the Study of African Oral Literature: The Oral Artist's Agenda*. Journal of Arts and Humanities (JAH), Volume -3, No.-7,(85-91)

1.8.0 Research Methodology

The qualitative approach to data collection (from performers and other resource persons with in-depth knowledge of Kawu verbal arts performance frames the study. A team of

knowledgeable natives in Siwu verbal arts was engaged in in-depth interviews and focus group discussions to unpack the meaning and functions of the verbal arts under study to obtain qualitative data for the study. The use of the qualitative approach is informed by what the researcher sets out to investigate in this study: the identification of Siwu literary traditions, which can only be performed or spoken about by specific people, the processing and analysis of the findings, interviews, and focus group discussions, which are all qualitative tools and can be used only in qualitative research.

1.8.1 Research Type

The research falls within the African oral literature academic space where indigenous African language is artistically used for the expression of specific verbal arts in context. Specifically, the researcher, who is a native speaker of Siwu is interested in the literary ethnography of the Siwu language. That the researcher is a native speaker does not confer on the researcher any expert knowledge of the Siwu language and its arts. Intensive learning of Siwu (language) and Mawu (indigenes) linguistic culture in context is at the core of the study.

1.8.2 Fieldwork: Data Collection and Transcription.

The research started with formal permission and prayers from the chiefs, elders, and women's leadership in all Akpafu communities by way of community entry. The researcher put up a five-member research team, including a professional video camera person and one GILLBT-trained Siwu writer and translator. Participant-observation method, as and when a literary performance event avails itself with the deployment of appropriate tools for data collection, was adopted. The major occasions for data collection were funeral and marriage ceremonies. Other joyous occasions also provided some data.

In one instance where a performance of any kind was not possible, text was collected from potential performers and analysed on its merit. The researcher collected data from performers and other resource persons within the Akpafu communities with the aid of traditional writing tools, a digitized Sony audio recorder, a Canon EOS 600D digital video camera, and, finally, with the aid of a Samsung A03 Android smartphone. A large volume of data was collected from which specific and relevant performance-centered literary forms were selected for documentation and analysis. The major challenge to the collection of data with electronic equipment was rainfall, which occasionally hindered some performances.

The researcher was not at the centre of handling the recording equipment. Professionals and semi-professionals were contracted and coached on how to capture performance events, performance space, and audience responses, among others, in order not to miss the nuances of any Siwu performance event under study. The reason was to allow the principal researcher to position himself, often among the audience, where he could get a bird's-eye view of the best of the performer(s) and also obtain metadata from the audience, in line with the principles of participant observation. Performers or the leaders of large groups were visited in their homes, and exploratory conversations were held before the events. These interviews border on the performer's acquisition of the verbal art, years of practice, source of inspiration, constraints of the art, continuity, and change, among others, and the interview is recorded on the audio recording device.

The study engaged performer(s) in their real-life environment through the use of participant observation, face-to-face interviews, and documentation. Apart from attempts to capture the performance on recorded devices, the researcher takes written notes on the performance

event concerning the date, community, literary event, name of the performer, and number of performers where a large group of performers were involved. The performance space and audience were also closely observed. Methodologically, the researcher also consciously sought metadata from the audience members and ordinary people who comment or engage with a performance genre and are of any significance with any verbal art event.

The cultural importance, prevalence, the literary weight of the text, and aesthetics associated with the literary genres that were eventually collected and analyzed informed the decision to settle on them. The researcher maintained neutrality in terms of research approach and selection of participants, ensuring that only communally endorsed resource persons and active performers, visible during a performance, took part in interviews and focus group discussions. The researcher's insider position was, however, advantageous because participants were at home to perform and to speak on their art.

Once the data or the event is captured, appreciation is extended to the performer(s) and audience, and data representation and processing start immediately. The performance events are transferred from the recorded devices to a computer's external hard disk and other storage devices for external storage and data security. The researcher begins to watch the performance on a computer, noting further areas to be questioned and in readiness for transcription. Textualization of the data of the performance begins with transcription. The researcher, the GILLBT volunteer(s) with appreciable knowledge of Siwu writing, engaged with the transcription. Siwu dirges and indigenous poetry collected are transcribed, sometimes verbatim or with the application of the principles of pragmatism, for the text to

make sense. The transcripts and translations are written in poetic lines for poetry-related performances/texts.

The data for this study was collected between September 2022 and April 2023. Naturally occurring data was collected from twenty-two (22) funerals and two (2) traditional marriages. The repertoire of dirges collected (60 in all) is thematically grouped by the researcher in Appendix A

1.8.3 Texts Translation and Focus Group Discussions

Translating oral literary text, not originally meant to be written, into writing does not come with ease. Originality and verbal artistry easily gets lost. The researcher and a team of GILLBT staff that speak, write, and translate Siwu took pains to intellectually reconcile the oral text with the written, using the central idea of the text, Siwu linguistics and cultural nuances and the nearest most appropriate in English principles advocated by Okpewho (1990) and Sidikou (2001).

The recorded data is listened to carefully and repeatedly to generate the most appropriate dialectical Siwu transcripts. The transcripts give the oral texts a familiar context of their expression. The transcripts were then collectively translated by combining semantic and literal translation principles within the broader literary translation space without any tonal or histrionic markings. The adoption of this method is informed by the need to convey the literary meaning of the text for ease of comprehension by readers in the English language. Again, extreme care is deployed in the translation so that it is not empty of the literary merit of the text and the intellectual expectations of both the internal and external readers. The translations sometimes were carefully modified by the researcher, albeit

concerns to retain their force and power, thought and meaning, and spirit and feeling (s) in the original Siwu composition.

After obtaining text in Siwu and English on paper, the researcher asked relevant questions by way of interviews and focus group discussions to deconstruct specific literary forms identified for examination. Appointments were booked with the performer(s) and select members of the community, purposively selected because they are deemed knowledgeable in particular literary genres. The criterion for selection is that the participant has practiced the art for at least ten (10) years. The participants watched the video performance to be analysed. The discussion then follows with thought-provoking questions on specific texts. The objective was to get explanations to the text, (now in print before the discussants) in terms of the ethno-cultural and social meaning and significance of the entire performance. How the text resonates with the eco-linguistics of Siwu was also part of the focus group discussion. Textual and performance analysis of the literary sub-genres also focused on the method of acquisition of a particular art. These discussions were recorded and transcribed and translated, and notes were taken. It is the substance of these interviews and discussions that important and salient issues were drawn for the final presentation.

1.8.4 Data Presentation and Analysis

Montenyohl (1993) argues that human interaction, directly or indirectly, is very prominent in the performance and study of oral traditions. Data analysis and presentation of oral literary genres over the years were bisected with challenges associated with the apt representations of these human interactions in oral form into print. Data collected from the field and textualized in print as a scholarly effort is often inimical to its natural occurrence in real-life performance. Any attempts to analyze it accurately call for accurate

contextualization of the text and performance event in the complex socio-cultural variables of the ethnic group that hosts the performance event. This makes it possible for the audience readers to vividly visualize the performance and comprehend its meaning in a cultural context. The original context, inherent in the language ecology and worldview of the ethnic group that owes the performance, as well as the socio-linguistic orientation of the performer(s) and their audience, is critical in the analysis that attempts to lay bare the actual performance event. Tedlock (1971) and (1977) critique the textual representation of performance in traditional print mode. He makes a strong case for the inclusion of para-linguistics, kinetic and semiotic peculiarities in the course of the performance as well as the textual characteristics of the tradition from which the performance event derives strength. The task of representing verbal art from a subculture into the print mode for a wider readership and appreciation does not come with ease.

Montenyohl (ibid) proposed a format for the representation of verbal art in print and though his postulation slightly deviates from different scholarly formats traditionally known, it adds new concepts to the print mode representation and thus its adoption in this thesis. His approach “involves contextualization via a personal narrative on the part of the scholar/collector.”¹⁵ In this approach, the researcher must be very knowledgeable in the socio-cultural environment from which the performance event is derived to become an intermediary between the performance event and the larger readership. The intermediary's (the researcher's), personal experience narrative brings the performance event to his or her readership. The model argues that the researcher is immersed in the performance event to

¹⁵ Montenyohl L. E. (1993) **Strategies for the Presentation of Oral Tradition in Print** In *Oral Tradition* 8/1. Page 176

produce personal narratives, albeit with subjectivity concerns. Nonetheless, the approach eliminates the issue of the researcher's distance from the performance event. Again, the personal narrative approach dovetails with Achebe's (1975) call for the African writer to fashion out the universal English, and carry out his or her peculiar experience in writing African literature in English.

The assumption is that the wider audience readership is familiar with *personal narratives* and can therefore easily associate with the performance event in traditional print format when presented in a personal narrative. Montenyohl (ibid) calls for the presentation of text and performance as part and parcel of the experience of the researcher who presents the analysis in a manner he/she deems expedient and framed in the social, cultural, and linguistic domain of the performer.

A major disadvantages of this approach has to do with a long period of association with the study area by the researcher and especially utmost familiarity with the language of the performance event(s). These disadvantages do not pose any challenge to the researcher in this study because the researcher grew up in the study area and has remained attached to it over the years. This personal narrative approach is reflected in data presentation and analysis in this research as experienced during fieldwork interaction with resourceful informants, performers, audience, focus group members, Siwu writers, and above all the researcher's many years of association with the Siwu language.

. The deeper philosophical, cultural, and literary meaning of Siwu literary performance events that feature constantly in funerals and constitute popular culture and worldview in the study area are unpacked by way of data analysis framed within the scope of eco-

linguistics. The traditional representation of the text in lines is adopted mainly in chapters four and five because the performance events are poetic in structure. English translations are juxtaposed with Siwu transcripts in poetry format, followed by the outcome of its analysis. Personal narrative and description dictate the representation of the performance arts. The relatively high number of dirges collected does not encourage each dirge analysis. Consequently, their thematic classifications were mainly discussed in addition to the purposive sampling of some dirges for analysis. All the dirges collected during the field work were recorded; however, it is the dirges with coded phrases that needed decoding for easy comprehension after transcription and translation that were purposely selected for analysis on the broad theme under which they fall.

1.8.5 General Analytical Frame

The meaning, function, and socio-cultural significance of each performance event is contextualized, not as the researcher's reflections, but as byproducts of the collective indigenous knowledge within the eco-linguistic philosophy of the Siwu language ecology. The context of all performances was not as narrowly framed, by the text but "... as socially constructed and culturally determined construct."¹⁶ The performance structure and accompanied para-linguistics, histrionics, and kinetic features are contextualized within the socio-cultural values of the study area and presented in terms of their functions and significance as reflected in the performance frame that Goffman (1974) puts forward. Functional analysis within the Siwu language ecology frames the analytical approach for data analysis.

¹⁶. Kiguli, S.N. (2012) **Performer-critics in oral performance in African societies** in *Kunapipi* 34/1. Page 176

A manual analysis of the performance event and the texts was done with a team of like-minded people with deep knowledge of the Siwu language, history, and arts, as well, as performers in the form of focus group discussion. This is because the explanation of literary texts requires an exploration of history, socio-linguistics, and eco-linguistics inclinations, as well as artistic knowledge as stated by Kropp-Dakubu (1981). The inclusion of performers, in particular, in the analysis and interpretation of their performance arts stems from the performer-centric theory approach adopted in this study. Performers' active involvement is also supported by Kiguli (2012) who argues that "... it is necessary to allow the poets and performers to participate in the interpretation of their work and context alongside the researcher."¹⁷ She argues that oral performance arts can be fairly assessed when performers on the field and oral-literary scholars engage in meaningful dialogue on the developments of the oral arts in the various African communities.

The final segment of the analysis is the researcher's sole effort to search and identify the nuances of poetic diction for poetry-related genres in the form of prosodic features in the dirges and ethnopoeitics. Stylistics qualities and literary devices in the text such as proverbial language, piling and association, idiophones, parallelism, metaphor, and imagery among others inherent in the text are brought to the fore. Literary scholars such as Okpewho (1992), Agyekum (2007), and Frog and Tarkka (2017) have advanced arguments for scholars to look for these devices in ethnopoeitics. Dramatic features, as well as the socio-cultural significance of the Siwu funeral ritual drama sub-genre, are also discussed in chapter six. It should be pointed out, however, that, textual analysis from which

¹⁷ . Kiguli, S.N. (2012) **Performer-critics in oral performance in African societies** in *Kunapipi* 34/1. Page 173.

literariness is deduced dominates the analysis and presentation space in this study because as argued by Briggs and Bauman (1990), analysis of text is central to the study of performance.

1.9 The Significance of the Study

The study is significant because it attempts to cross-pollinate disciplines such as African oral literature, ethnography, and linguistics, and introduces eco-linguistics studies into *African Literature* using the Siwu language as the medium. The study is also significant in that the literary arts, history, customs, and institutions of a minority ethnic group in Ghana have been documented and given scholarly attention, adding to the Ghanaian language literature. Significantly for the people of Akpafu, the study fills a gap in a manner that the documentation would serve as a blueprint for Siwu performance arts under study, deepening an understanding of why, how, and when specific literary genres are performed by specific performers. The forces of social change, and their effects on minority languages like Siwu, with the potential to annihilate their literary heritage products, must not be underrated. Significantly, this study contributes to rekindling the interest of scholars with interest in indigenous African language literature.

The study also examines from a multidisciplinary perspective, the ethnocultural functions and aesthetic interrelationship in Siwu indigenous poetry and dramatic traditions. The rural-urban nexus in the 21st century and its ramifications for ethnic identity in urban centres has given rise to ethnic cultural performances in urban centres. Many citizens of Akpafu today (from rural Akpafu), own property in urban areas, especially in Accra, and live there permanently, resulting in the growth of a migrant community's culture in urban centres. With the emergence of cultural identity during marriage, funerals, and other ethnic

ceremonies, this study fills a gap in the provision of literature in Siwu literary heritage. The study therefore sets the pace for similar scientific, scholarly empirical study of the numerous languages in Ghana especially minority languages and their several art forms.

Writing a *foreword* to Nketia (2016) Kwesi Yankah acknowledges colonialism and globalisation as looming threats to indigenous African cultures, languages, and performing arts. He is however quick to inspire hope that “...resilient cultures do not buckle or recoil under such pressures. Instead, they adjust, adapt, and reposition to revitalize creative energies.... accommodate, reinvent, and blossom with a new lease of life. That is creativity beyond survival”.¹⁸ Siwu speakers self-motivate themselves and re-enact their art forms whenever the occasion presents itself, however, the researcher is optimistic that continuous scholarly engagement with these indigenous art forms has the potential to inject a new lease of life into them in two ways. At one level, scholarly engagement re-energize their performance because the arts, as well as their performance and performers, are archived for posterity.

At another level, the study expands the scope of language and literary studies beyond analysis of the text and performance and relates them to their language ecology. This carries African oral literature studies into the eco-linguistics space. In conclusion, a minority language’s performing arts take a step into academic debates for knowledge production, cultural diversity discussion, and inter-cultural dialogue. Without doing any advocacy for minority languages in Ghana, the study opens debate on cultural policy in Ghana, and in particular the present state and future of minority languages and the Bureau

¹⁸ Nketia, J.H.K.(2016) Reinstating Traditional Music In Contemporary Context. Regnum Africa. (page xv)

of Ghana Languages mandate to write Ghanaian languages. The documentation of an aspect of a minority language in Ghana, though a major objective of this study, is in itself significant.

1.10 The Organization of the Dissertation

The study is structured into seven chapters. Chapter one outlines the background of the study, the statement of the problem, the objectives of the study, the concept of performance studies, the theoretical framework, methodology, analytical frame the significance of the study, and the organization of the dissertation. Chapter two reviews literature in four major segments; literature of the study area, eco-linguistics of literature, African oral/aural literature and technology, and literature on performance. These first two chapters set up the study. The remaining five chapters contribute knowledge to the academic community. Chapter three provides comprehensive information on the history, customs and institution, worldview, naming frames, traditional calendar, and occupation among others that pertains specifically to the study area. Chapter four attempts a literary analysis and interpretation of Siwu dirges in performance. Chapter five analyses the performance of Siwu ceremonial poetic traditions (other than dirges) and their cultural significance. Chapter six attempts an analysis of some special ritual performances in the form of indigenous drama that takes place during the period of mourning. Chapter seven concludes the study with a discussion of the entire work together and ends with the propounding of an oral literary model by the research for the identification and study of literature in the indigenous African languages.

1.11 Conclusion

Chapter one primarily aims at setting up the study. It gives background information on the study stating the problem and the objectives set to be achieved at the end of the study. The

chapter clearly outlines the methodology employed in collecting and analyzing data and why. The significance of the study is brought to the fore and the chapter is concluded with the organizational structure of the entire dissertation.



CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter reviews literature that pertains to the study and it is structured into four segments. The first segment reviews the literature on the study area in general as well as the Siwu socio-linguistic relationship with the Akan and Ewe languages. The second segment deals with eco-linguistics and how it resonates with Siwu literature. The literature that pertains to the discipline of African oral literature and the involvement of technology in oral performance is dealt with in the third segment. The final segment reviews the literature on the performance of verbal arts.

2.1 Literature on the Study Area

According to Dingemanse (2008), the first Siwu written document to appear in print is that of *Plehn (1898)*, when Rudolf Plehn-a Basel Missionary from Switzerland in Akpafu translated two dirges into German. This pioneering work is abroad and all attempts by the researcher to peruse their contents failed. Rattray (1916) and Westermann (1932) briefly touch on the ethnography of Mawu (the people of Akpafu), their kinship, political settings, and cultural practices. Westermann (ibid) wrote on Kawu mud flat roof *atakpame* buildings during their exploration of the then Trans Volta Togoland, that is, present-day Volta and Oti regions of the Republic of Ghana. Dietrich Westermann's chapter in Rattray (1932), identifies the Central Togo group of Gur (Guan) languages and among others, included Avatime (Sideme), Akpafu (Siwu), and Santrokofi (Silé) Likpe (Sékpélé), Nkonya and Buem as some of the Guan communities in this group. Commenting on the relationship between Guan and Akan languages, Dietrich Westermann is on record as saying that

“Guang and Akan are closely related; in a number of cases, however, Guang has older word forms than Akan... so that one might be justified in saying that Akan is the side branch of the original Guang, altered by a foreign element.”¹⁹

This assertion is so revealing in Siwu language usage, except for the rather generally accepted notion that Akan loaned vocabulary to Siwu contrary to Westermann’s claim.

The Guan-speaking people, obviously due to their fragmented numbers have for

“most part been conquered by the Twi-Fante-or Ewe speaking tribes and use these languages for intercourse with the outside world, keeping their ancient mother tongue for private use.”²⁰

Ward’s (1948) remarks above are apt, since for years, many Guan languages have remained languages for informal usage due to the relatively smaller number of their speakers and also as a result of the language policy in Ghana as implemented by the Bureau of Ghana Languages (BGL). Gonja, a Guan language is however an exception because it is a language of formal education in its geographical space. Akan, Ewe, Dagbani, Ga, and Hausa are more popular Ghanaian languages that are given national prominence (teaching and learning in schools and access to national media platforms). This is mainly due to their relatively higher number of speakers. The minority languages are generally not provided for concerning access to national media and documentation in Ghana.

¹⁹ Westermann D. (1932 :193) In Rattray R.S.(1932) Tribes of the Ashanti Hinterland Vol. 1 Oxford, Clarendon Press.

²⁰ Ward, W.E.F. (1948:39) A History of Ghana, George Allen and Unwin limited, London.

Kropp-Dakubu and Ford (1988) identify Siwu as among the fourteen *Central-Togo Languages*, earlier referred to by Westermann (1932) as the *Togo Remnant Group of languages*. Kropp-Dakubu and Ford(1988) are on record that not even one of the

“Central Togo languages are recognized by the Ministry of Education for classroom use or publication, and none are to be heard on radio or television.”²¹

Their contribution to Siwu touches on the status of Siwu as a domestic language and its sociolinguistics and structural features. Kropp-Dakubu and Ford (1988) deserve credit as a pioneering publication in the development of Siwu phonetics and phonology. The authors state that “Siwu is spoken by perhaps 9,000 people”²² in 1988.

In 2002, GILLBT, in collaboration with the Siwu language writing committee published, *Teach Yourself to Read and Write Siwu*. This is a Siwu language writing manual. This document, though primary in content, provides Siwu language characters, phonemes, fundamental grammatical elements, and phraseology for any composition in Siwu. Additionally, the publication has an introduction to two Siwu oral literary genres (tales *anatika*-plural and *intaka*-singular and proverbs-*agbã*-plural and *igbã*-singular). The document provides basic tools for the writing of Siwu and was helpful with the transcription in the current research.

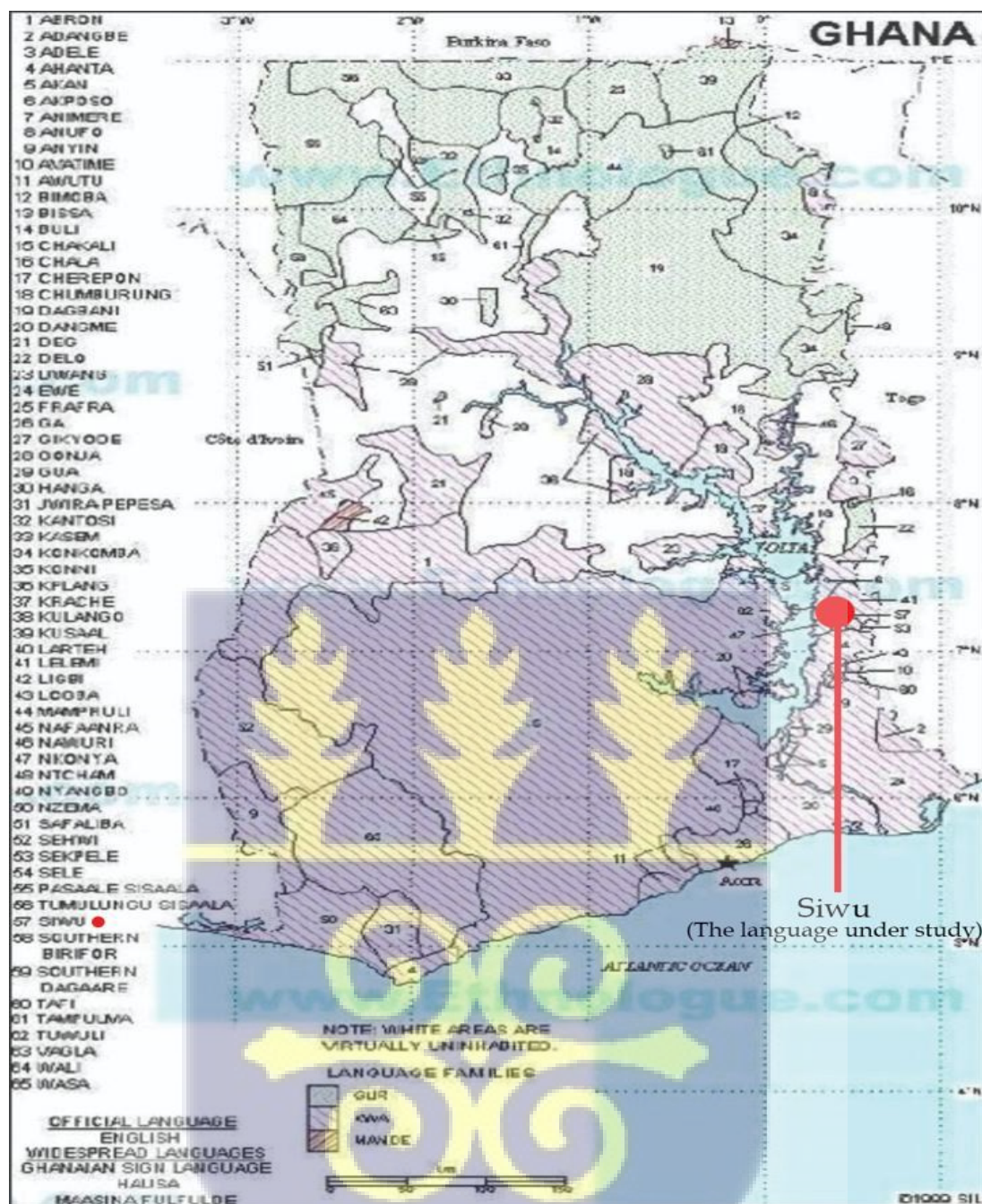
In 2005, a further more advanced Siwu learning material; *A sketch of Phonology and Morphosyntax of Siwu* (GILLBT 2005) was compiled. This work focuses mainly on

²¹ Kropp Dakubu M.E. and Ford, K. (1988) Central Togo Languages in Kropp-Dakubu M.E. ed **The Languages of Ghana** pp 122-123.

²² Kropp Dakubu M.E. and Kelvin Ford(1988) Central Togo Languages in Kropp Dakubu M.E. ed **The Languages of Ghana** pp 121.

alphabets and phonemes, and to some extent, the linguistic features of the Siwu language. Its compilation paved the way for the translation of the *New Testament Bible (Ndamu Yete)* into Siwu in 2008. Arguably, *Ndamu Yete* is the first authentic and complete Siwu language publication of considerable intellectual weight.





Map 1. The language map of Ghana shows sixty- five (65) indigenous languages numbered alphabetically. Siwu is numbered 57 and the researcher graphically points at it with a red pointer.

Credit: www.ethnologue.com Retrieved in June 2023.

Before the 21st century, two credible works were published in the study area which are Agawu (1988) and Ogbetey (1998). Using the Ewe and English letters, Agawu (1988) examines selected Siwu dirges on a musical staff notation, paying close attention to pitch structure, rhythm, music pattern, and melodic structures among other musical technicalities, discernable mainly to musical scholars. Preceding the examination of the musical structures in the Siwu dirges, Agawu (ibid) provides information on the migration saga of the people of Akpafu. Ogbetey (1998) provides information on the general ethnography of the study area, recounting Akpafu history from an oral angle that written accounts fail to validate, thus creating a gap that the current study fills. Again, Siwu literary genres identified in Ogbetey (ibid) were not analyzed with literary and performance lenses but described, thus creating a gap for literary analysis that the current study again fills. Agudze's (1991) unpublished diploma project work submitted to the Department of Music at the University of Ghana was exclusively on music and dance performed at the shrine of the Tokpaikɔr deity at Akpafu. Tokpaikɔ is the most powerful deity at Akpafu and performance rituals with particular reference to music and dance associated with its worship is what Agudze (ibid) studied. The work primarily aimed at Tokpaikɔ devotee's renewal of commitment to the service of the supreme God through the Tokpaikɔ deity. Tokpaikɔr music repertoire exposes the history and worldview of the people of Akpafu, as well, as their cultural affiliation to the neighbouring Guan communities. Performance of dirges and other poetic recitations and associated literary performances akin to Mawu were not part of his study creating gaps that necessitate the current study. Sadly, Tokpaikɔr worship and its associated songs and dance performance activities have become extinct at Akpafu within thirty-one years after it was studied in live performance. This is a result

of the growth of Christianity in the study area. The rate at which indigenous Siwu performance arts lose value and become extinct is worrisome and has partly necessitated the current study.

Another credible work relating to Siwu is that of Dingemanse (2011). It is a doctorate dissertation submitted to the Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistic-Holland. Dingemanse (ibid) intellectually studied Siwu idiophones and their functions in terms of descriptive and mental images that idiophones create in the Siwu language. His search for idiophones in the Siwu language introduced him to Siwu dirges where idiophones are bound. He recorded forty Siwu dirges (not in performance) to fish out the idiophones in them. Engaging in literary analysis of the dirges and their performativity as well as other forms of poetry in Siwu was not part of his study, consequently creating gaps for the current study. Methodologically, Mark Dingemanse, assembled a few singers at their convenience, to sing for recording purposes and not during the actual time of death and mourning. Consequently, he left out important Kawu socio-cultural elements in performance in the course of the actual period of mourning or celebration. But for one literary genre, this study collects data from live performances to enable the researcher to capture all the aesthetics and cultural nuances of the performance as expounded by Goffman (1974). Interestingly, the dirges Mark Dingemanse recorded are played on public address systems during funerals at Akpafu, and because the recordings were done in a serene environment, uninterrupted by any human noise or activities the lyrics are so audible and clear. The people of Akpafu encountered the Europeans from about 1898 according to Ogbetey (1998). The Basel Missionaries from Switzerland were the first Europeans to settle at Akpafu Todzi in the year 1898 according to the E.P Church archival materials and were followed by the Bremen

Missionaries from Germany. Most of all the ethnographic and linguistic related subjects that the Basel missionaries and the Germans wrote about the people of Akpafu is in in Europe remains inaccessible in English. Dingemanse (ibid) identified some of these works which include but are not limited to,) *Phehn (1898), Seidel (1899), and Schosser (1907)* in the course of his research.

Kpodo (2013) attempts an acoustic analysis of Siwu vowels from Siwu linguistics and grammar perspectives and his use of a spectrographic analysis model, diagrammatically makes the study of Siwu vowel visual other than the traditional articulatory model of analysis. This publication is a credible reference material for the study of Siwu linguistics and in particular, the vowels.

2.2 Siwu Socio-Linguistics

Like any other spoken human language, Siwu is made up of vocal codes through which the Mawu ethnic group interacts. Attempts by the researcher to carefully listen and examine Siwu language items usage, plunged the research into linguistics, with particular reference to Siwu's relationship with other Ghanaian languages. The scientific study of the rules and components of human language is technically referred to as linguistics. There are different fields of linguistics which include sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, anthropological linguistics, ethno-linguistics, philology, and eco-linguistics among other sub-disciplines in linguistics studies.

Sociolinguistics, a sub-discipline in linguistics, establishes the relationship between a language and society, Lillis (2013). One hundred and thirty years or more of the Akan-Mawu relationship culminated in linguistic intercourse that has resulted in common Akan

language items in Siwu, a clear case of acculturation. The study has identified over one hundred and fifty (150) language items that are articulated the same in both Siwu and Akan, while a few others numbering over fifty (50) language items have either been corrupted in Siwu-Guan or Akan.

Siwu linguistic culture is predominantly dominated by everyday conversation from a general socio-cultural perspective. The term “*bo side*” *our language* or “*boaɖe side*” *our hometown language* is used mainly for ethnic identity and group membership. The normative is that all people born and raised in Kawu can speak and sustain conversation in Siwu. Siwu functions mainly in traditional settings; everyday conversation, farming, traditional funerals, and other social gatherings. Oral culture is the norm in the study area and Siwu is the medium of the oral preservation of all forms of indigenous knowledge in history, medicine, arts, traditional religion, worldview, occupation, birth and death rites, traditional religious rituals, Siwu lore and other creative art forms among others.

All Siwu speakers interacted with during the fieldwork are polyglots, and speak in addition to Siwu, at least average Ewe or Akan or English in order of popularity. One’s polyglot status is mainly determined by the level of formal education and exposure to the world of work outside the study area. Occasionally, Akpafu indigenes who have lived in Ewe communities for relatively longer periods co-switch Siwu with Ewe, however, it is not the case to hear either Akan or Ewe or English as the prevailing language in Siwu homes in the study area. Of the two Ghanaian languages; Akan and Ewe that Siwu associates with most, it is the Akan that looms large on Siwu. Below is a glance at the Siwu-Akan relationship from a socio-linguistic perspective.

2.2.1 Selected Siwu and Akan nouns with the same or nearly the same articulation and meaning (in alphabetical order)

No:	English	Akan	Siwu
1	abomination	musuo	mmusuo
2	African	obibini	ɔbibini
3	Answer	Mmuaeé	mmuaeé
4	bed	mpa	mpa
5	brain	adwene	adwuni
6	character	suban	ɔsoban
7	cemetery	asieeé/amusieeé	Asie
8	executioner	brafoɔ	ɔbrafoɔ
9.	glory	animuonyam	animuonyam
10.	gun	tuo	ɔtu
11.	iron pot	dadesén	dadesén
12	knife	sikammoa	sikan or ɔsikan
13.	military canon	Premo	iprimu
14.	mission	amaneé	amaneé
15.	poverty	Ohia	ɔhia
16.	prayer	Mpae	mpae
17.	sadness	aweréhoɔ	ayrɔhoɔ
18	talking drum	atumpan	atumpa
19.	victim of accidental death	tɔfo	ɔtɔfo
20.	white person	obroni	ɔbroni

Table 1. Selected Siwu and Akan nouns articulated almost the same.

2.2.2 Selected Siwu and Akan verbs with the same or nearly the same articulation and meaning (in alphabetical order)

No:	English	Akan	Siwu
1	Bless	hyira	hyira
2.	break	pae	pae
3.	chew	we	wae
4.	close (eg a programme)	pɔn	pɔn
5.	drive	kan	kan
6.	fold	Buka	buka
7.	force	hye	hiɛ
8.	Hate	Kyiri	tsiri
9.	Imagine	Susu	susu
10.	insert into anus (especially medicine)	Tua	tuan
11.	inform	Kra	kla
12.	Learn	Suan	suan
13.	offend	Fom	fumu
14.	place an order	Kra	kla
15.	pick-up	Pegya	pagya
16.	plead or beg	srɛ	srɛ
17.	remember	Kae	kae
18.	Shuffle	Futu	futu
19.	visit(casually)	Sra	Sra
20.	Write	twɛɔ	twɛɛ

Table 2. Selected Siwu and Akan verbs articulated almost the same.

The lack of written literature on Siwu prompted the exploration of the Siwu that is spoken in everyday terms. These selected language items that Siwu and Akan languages share in socio-linguistic terms demonstrate the historical relationship that exists between the two languages. This confirms Dietrich Westerman's assertion in Rattray (1932) that, Guan and Akan languages have a linguistic relationship. The essence of the above tables (language items) is to foreshadow the language that constitutes the raw materials for the production of Siwu literature. Despite the Akan-Siwu relationship, the literary genres collected and analyzed in this study are all in Siwu and claim Siwu language authenticity.

2.4 Eco-linguistics

Eco-linguistics, a sub-discipline of linguistics, explores language patterns that influence the worldview of the speakers of a particular language. Human thoughts, concepts, economic practices, socio-cultural values, and social relations among others are shaped by the language and the collective lore (stories, songs, proverbs, poetry, artifacts, symbols, etc.) of an ethnic group. They are expressed mainly in the language an ethnic group speaks. This establishes a link between a language and its ideological and natural ecology, giving rise to the term ecological philosophy (ecosophy) which is the philosophy of a language, drawn from its ecology.

Derni (2008) defines eco-linguistics as “the study of a language according to the environment it is used in.”²³ Chen (2016), like many authorities who have written on eco-linguistics, citing Stibbe (2015), defines eco-linguistics as an attempt to analyze a language to reveal the stories an ethnic group lives by and to judge those stories according to the

²³ Derni, A. (2008) International Journal of Language, Society and Culture. Issue 24 page 22.

ecological philosophy of the ethnic group to resist the stories which oppose its ecosophy and to contribute to the search for new stories to live by. Vaishali and Rukmini (2021) state that the *International Eco-linguistics Association* defines eco-linguistics as “the role of a language in life-sustaining interactions of humans, and other species and the physical environment.”²⁴ Yuniawan et al (2017), citing Crystal (2008:161-162) define eco-linguistics as “a study that reflects the nature of ecology on biological studies, in which the interaction between language and cultural environment is seen as the core”.²⁵

A critical look at the above definitions shows that eco-linguistics points to how a human language builds bridges between humans and their environment and worldviews, as well as other organisms that live in that language ecology. Stibbe (2015) explains that eco-linguistics aims at a normative ethno-cultural orientation towards environmental preservation and sustainable human relationships across time and space, using the language of that ecology as the medium.

How a language is affiliated to the identity of the speaker, contextually in the ecological environment he or she belongs to, with recognized social and cultural values, controlled by an ecological setting is at the heart of eco-linguistics studies. As an academic discipline, eco-linguistics is traced to Einar Haugen’s publication of *The Ecology of Language* in 1972. The argument with eco-linguistics is that, instead of linguists concentrating all their attention on the study of language science of grammar, phonology, semantics, syntax, phonetics, and lexicon among others, Garner (2005) citing Haugen (1972), calls for the

²⁴ Vaishali, V.S and Rukimini (2021) Language, Ecology and the Stories We Live By: The Ecolinguistics of Tholkappiyam In Rupkatha on Interdisciplinary Studies in Humanities. Volume 13 Number 4. Pages 1-16.

²⁵ Yuniawan et al (2017) *Humaniora*, Volume 29, Number 3. Pages 291-300.

inclusion of symbols and metaphors of any given language in its study. The justification is that real people use language metaphors and codes of their environment to sustain themselves and their environment from an eco-linguistic perspective. As a discipline, eco-linguistics, though relatively recent, has evolved and found roots in many other disciplines such as sociology, biology, geography, and anthropology among others.

Theoretically, Garner (ibid) looks at language ecology at two levels. The first level examines uncertainties on eco-linguistics as a discipline and its implications for *linguistics* in general. The second demonstrates how ecology can be properly positioned in the study of a language by understanding the worldview of the people who speak a language to understand its language, its literary forms, and its functions. Garner (ibid), illustrating Einar Haugen's *Ecology of Language*, advanced arguments in favour of the value of community and language interaction that infuses historical, cultural, social, and physical features of a community into its linguistics orientation. To some extent, this is what Siwu's literary forms do.

The existence of a language is hinged on the assumption that people communicate with it in complex and diverse real-life situations. The eco-linguistic approach is premised on the orientation that, it is by understanding the complexities and diversities associated with a language, from the ethno-cultural angle that a language's philosophy can be understood. In other words, by adopting of ecosophy approach, there is a high tendency to advance the study of a language and demonstrate why particular peculiarities exist in a language.

Derni (2008) argues that language study can be made a *life science* by connecting language with ecology, sociology, geography, and biology among others in a seamless integration within the micro and macro levels of linguistic studies. The micro level involves the rules

of grammar; phonology, syntax, semantics, and morphology to establish the features of the linguistics of a language to build it. At the macro level, there is an attempt to figure out the relationship between a particular human language and the life of humans that speak that language, that is, any physical object that is aligned with a language.

The environmental ecology of a language sits within the physical environment and the man-made environment margins. The physical environment consists of the natural geographic features in a language ecology, such as topology, vegetation, climatic conditions, flora and fauna, and water bodies among others. The man-made environment consists of ethno-cultural forces of different kinds; occupation, laws, values, gender roles, and worldviews among others in a language ecology that shapes the minds of the speakers. An understanding of both is necessary for the understanding of the literary forms of a language.

Literary artists generally look around their environment for a representation of their thoughts and concepts that are difficult to express in words. This manifests in classical hymns the magnificence of the environment strikes them and becomes a tool for the creation of literary works. In the study area, the researcher observed the deliberate representation of symbols, colours and metaphors of the environment in the verbal arts of the ethnic group to achieve social order and environmental equilibrium. In Siwu literary compositions, the flora and fauna of the study area, the streams, topology, and Kawu worldview and migration experience constitute literary tools and reflect significantly in Siwu dirges, ceremonial recitations, and dramatic traditions. This is how eco-linguistics manifest in Siwu literary forms. Similarly, different aspects of ecology assume equal significance in the verbal arts and creative forms of different cultures.

With the increasing physical environmental challenges (environmental degradation, pollution of, the environment, water bodies, and general climate change narratives), the search for solutions goes beyond environmental politics at national and international conferences. A collective response at all levels is required. Eco-linguistics provides a new paradigm for possible environmental solutions at the language ecological level where there should be a re-conceptualization of the relationship between human beings and their natural environment as revealed in their arts and languages. This is because there is a strong relationship between language and natural ecology as argued by Derni (ibid) and Vaishali and Rukmini (2021). To conclude, eco-linguistics is an interdisciplinary field where ecological environment, culture, and linguistics intersect with sociology, psychology, and anthropology. Eco-linguistics in effect is framed within the ecological space of a language, with the central objective to achieve a socio-cultural symmetry in any language ecology.

Siwu language's interaction with its ecology across time is at the core of the study of Siwu literary forms, and that is eco-linguistics as put forward by Chen (2016) and buttressed by Ahmed and Nawaz (2021). How the Siwu language draws from its physical environment, worldview, and social relations is central to the study. The study is in tandem with Amonoo's (1989) call on Ghanaians to reconsider the importance of language, especially mother tongue and culture in nation-building. He calls for popularity in the application of the many Ghanaian languages and their literature, as well as other means of communication like symbols in different sectors of Ghana for cultural diversity and this call dovetails into this study.

Veit-Wild & Vierke (2017) argue that despite similarities in languages, each language has its worldview and for that matter its own experience, its way of speaking, and the specific

aesthetics that it evokes. They call on writers writing in African languages to explore the linguistic peculiarities of the language they write. They critique a post-colonial approach that has generally silenced African literary writing in African languages (with a few exceptions though eg Ngugi wa Thion'go). Another limitation to literature in African languages is the seeming neglect of minority languages and their literature, with their potential for extinction if not documented. This research aims to fill that gap in response to the call by Barber and Furniss (2006) to define *African language writing* as a field of study.

2.3 African Oral Literature and Performance.

One of the pioneering works in African oral arts and indigenous works of literature related to this study is Nketia (1955). The work is a comprehensive study of the Akan dirges as a literary sub-genre within the broader oral culture in Africa. Typologically, the author situates the dirge within a tradition of songs and poems referred to as elegiac poetry in which there is an expression of sorrow, melancholy, pain, and praise for the dead. There is also an expression of praise in panegyric terms for the dead. Some of the dirges in Nketia (ibid) are not only biographical but also a reflection of the Akan cosmology of the universe and their belief in the eternal bond between the world of the living and the world of the departed. It is this belief in the existence of a world of the living and the world of the dead that permeates the composition of dirges in terms of content, style, imagery, and mood of the performance of Akan dirges.

Finnegan (1970) puts the many genres and sub-genres of African oral literature into the academic limelight. But for North African societies and the Sahel, the content and form of many oral literary genres in sub-Saharan African languages are brought to the fore. She

makes a case for African oral art; namely poetry of different genres and sub-genres in different African societies. Prose narratives, drum language, and indigenous drama as different forms of African oral literary genres feature prominently in her landmark publication. Just when the work was to pass with distinction, she put into the public domain a statement that evoked sentiments from African scholars.

Concerning drama, she draws some parallels between Western drama and African indigenous drama and identifies common elements of drama as place, content, plot, music, and performances that involve body movement in a space with an audience, as elements that sit with drama. She concludes that “...it is very seldom in Africa that all these elements of drama come together in a single performance.”²⁶ Unjustifiably so, her final remark is that “ it would perhaps be truer to say that in Africa, in contrast to Western Europe and Asia, drama is typically not a wide-spread or developed form.”²⁷ While all or some of these dramatic elements are ever present in indigenous African drama, their absence or otherwise is no basis to draw parallels and rule out drama in African societies since the identity, content, and form of African drama are unique just as Western and oriental region drama is also unique with their literary orientation. Finnegan's (ibid) attempt to look for elements of Western drama in African traditional festivals, funerals, and any popular cultural event in Africa has received backlash from many African literary scholars who have encouraged diversity in ritual drama. Ruth Finnegan's remarks provide the basis for Okpewho (1992) to outline a comprehensive background of African oral literary forms as well as literary

²⁶ Finnegan, R. (1970) *Oral Literature in Africa* (501)

²⁷ Finnegan, R. (1970) *Oral Literature in Africa* (500)

devices associated with them and the tools with which African oral literature should be studied and analysed. Okpewho (ibid) again equips researchers and practitioners of the oral arts with tools for continuous engagement with oral literature, with emphasis on the need to delve into the ethnography of the society that performs this literature to comprehend and appreciate its artistic and literary merit. He writes “...we ultimately have to equip ourselves with a dependable understanding of the society or culture from which that literature comes to properly appreciate the images and messages contained in the text and its performance.”²⁸ Ruth Finnegan’s seemingly shallow understanding of the societies and cultures she wrote about obviously informs her position.

Okpewho (1990) ed, is another classic publication worth mentioning. The many scholars that contribute to Okpewho(ibid), drum home the need to look at works of art beyond their socio-cultural functions to the whole nature of performance; voice, gestures, body language, mimicry, the audience response, the performance space and frame and as well the text where applicable. Isidore Okpewho’s introduction, *The Study of Performance* explores the cardinal angles from which African oral genres can be studied and understood in terms of relevance, context, and culture. The performer(s) and their trade, the context in which the art derives strength, how scholars can present oral genres in print without dimming their shine for an enhanced understanding, and how the many oral genres of art and their historical antecedents guide us into the future is discussed in-depth.

Bame (1991) is also in the literary canon for its attempt to analyze a broad array of literary genres and educate researchers and practitioners on the social functions of different African

²⁸ Okpewho, I (1992) *African Oral Literature* (333)

literary forms. It is in this *popular culture* that literary performance genres can be identified and interrogated (Bame 1985). He is emphatic that all popular culture “involves a relatively large number of people from all sections of the African community...”²⁹ This large *number of people*-the audience, have been identified as central to all literary performances and do not only appreciate and inspire performance but also evaluate it. Dorsey (2012) terms them as the *informed audience* because they are familiar with the content and spirit of the performance and often provide the meta-data that completes the performance. While Bame (ibid) should be credited for analyzing a broad array of genres, the demerit of the work lies in seemingly shallow analysis.

The twenty-four articles in the edited work of Harding (2002) ed by seasoned African literary scholars touch on speechcraft genres, festival theatre, and ritual drama and the different roles of the audience to complete performance. Herbert M. Cole’s article *The Art of Festival in Ghana* encapsulates most aspects that engage African oral performance and Siwu oral literary traditions for that matter. The Odwira festival which is the subject of his article has many elements the the ritual drama of many African societies. These include a period to clean the community, mourn the dead, commune with the ancestors, celebrate the harvest of new yam, and renew the communal spirit with music, dance performance, prayers, and display of artistic sculpture, feasting, and ceremonial dress and colours that completely elevates ordinary space beyond its daily utility. It is on these occasions that African oral literature comes alive. Similarly, Siwu funeral drama and ceremonial poetry performance do not only use symbolic colours to mourn and praise the dead and rekindle

²⁹ Bame K.N (1991:1) Profiles In African traditional Popular Culture: Consensus and Conflict.

communal spirit but also commune with the ancestors and biographically re-enact Siwu communal values and gender roles by way of performance, on a space, before an audience.

2.4 Performance and Verbal Art

The performance landscape in the arts is saturated by contributions from different scholars notably anthropology, linguistics, music, literature, and sociology among others. Drewal (1991) and Schechner (2007) are among other performance theorists who have acknowledged the multiple layers and interfaces of performance as a concept that compounds its complexity. A panacea for the comprehension of the complexity of performance is to isolate the variables on which a performance event and performativity hinge. Despite the difficulties, researchers from different fields; sociology, ethnomusicology, theatre arts, and linguistics among others have come out with working definitions of performance that are skewed in the direction of their chosen fields.

Goffman (1974) defines performance as an intentional arrangement (s) that transforms an individual on stage to exhibit a behaviour other than his/her usual self before an audience and in the process ensure interaction between the performer(s) and an audience. He identifies two sites of human interaction or activity from which he situates theatrical frame and performance. The first is the informal interaction of two or more individuals which he terms as *ad hoc performance*. A parent sharing a tale with a child, a child reciting a poem in class or in the house or even two people engaging in a game reveals some level of *ad hoc performance*. What is unique about this performance is that “the performer typically

supplies his scenery and props, and no prior agenda need be present to obligate the individual to perform.”³⁰

The second is the formal staging of different genres as scripted or unscripted drama, enactment of a historical event during a festival, funeral, or religious occasion. These include verbal performances of all sorts in which the audience factor is critical for the performance to take place. It is in this regard that communal gatherings during rites of passage, parties, and weddings among others constitute socio-cultural events that warrant performance. With the second site of performance, Goffman (ibid) explains that the performer does not only act on stage with his/her body, often accompanied by verbal expression(s) but also seeks cooperation from other members of the cast, and as well, induce audience sympathy or anger among others because he/she has assumed some responsibility to them.

Goffman (ibid) identifies some pointers to performance and terms them as *frame* and *key*. The frame includes the principal structure and elements of the performance, as well as the distinctive communicative and visual aids that foreground a performance. These elements bring out the meaning inherent in it. The keys of a performance according to Goffman (ibid) constitute cues that either decode or add meaning to the performance frame. The frame and key that may be employed to bring out the meaning of the performance are never the same. Frames and keys provide insight into what a performance is all about, that is, *what is going on at a particular time*. Consequently, there are complexities in different

³⁰ Goffman, E. (1974 125) *Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience*. Northeastern University Press, Boston.

performance events that collectively come together to bring out the meaning of performance.

Austin (1965) illustrates how utterances in social interactions become, performative and crystalize the audience's imagination for meaning. He illustrates how a performative utterance can similarly be hollow and not meaningful. Hymes (1973) on the other hand, provides a different definition for performance. To him, performance is an impute of any behaviour, when a character accepts responsibility to deliver (utterances or body movement) before an audience. Dell Hymes is an authority in the ethnography of speaking and communication as performance and his works, Hymes (1972) and (1975) all drum home a conscious attempt to always investigate a language in context. The three authors above have in common utterances that have inherent meaning, and in a sense, performing before an audience.

The concern of Vansina (1985) with performance revolves around performers whose interest is the interest of the communities of which they are members. Consequently, what these performers perform is validated or refuted by their audience. Bauman (1986) is generally concerned with the integrative nature of sociolinguistics that contributes theoretically and methodologically to the ethnographic study of language and performance. He termed the artistic use of language in diverse areas of anthropology, notably storytelling and other expressions that have to do with linguistics *as verbal art*. To Bauman (1977), “performance as a mode of spoken verbal communication consists in the assumption of responsibility to an audience for a display of communicative competence.”³¹ As a linguist, the verbal text, and its delivery, before an audience, are at the core of performance

³¹ Bauman, R. (1977) *Verbal Art As Performance*, Waveland Press. Illinois. Page 10.

conceptualization to Richard Bauman. It should be added that body movement and gestures, costume, and meta-communication elements in specific context and performance space is intrinsically linked with most performance arts.

Richard Bauman synthesized from different fields in the arts, and from human interactions of everyday occurrences to frame performance. One cannot miss the same methodology employed earlier by sociologist Erving Goffman, as it manifests in Goffman (1974). As a sociologist, Erving Goffman was noted for his studies of face-to-face communication and related rituals of social interaction. Goffman (ibid) draws from sports; indoor and outdoor games, animal behaviour, and above all human experience and interactions to impose meaning on all kinds of representations, from the perspective of language usage, to frame and analyse performance.

2.5 Oral Literature, Written Literary Text and Technology-Technauriture

The inception of the oral literary products into academic cycles, and representing them in print, in an attempt to actualize the oral rendition in visible written text is associated with numerous challenges. This is because a proportion of what is performed; extra and para linguistics features of a performance is lost in print, no matter the precision of the representation. For example, representing the effects and tempo of the rhythm of a performance and a particular histrionic posture and or gesture can be lost when orality is transcribed and translated into a written version. Undoubtedly, the advent of emphasis on written text has to some extent altered the fortunes of verbal arts, given the challenges associated with the production and documentation of African oral literary products.

Ong (1982) is one of the first scholars to raise concerns about the integration of new technologies into oral documentation. Ong (ibid) adumbrates the need to transform verbal

communication and oral literature representation by employing the electronic technological changes emerging at the time. He argues in favour of the opportunities offered to humanity by radio, television, and other communication media in sharing different genres of oral literature. Ong (ibid) stresses the relevance of literate culture concerning the preservation of oral resources. Dara (2014), expanding on Ong's (1982) arguments makes a case for breaking down barriers in the sharing of oral literary products by taking advantage of how technology facilitates easy access by a larger audience, as well as the tantalizing effect of technology on both the older and the younger generation.

Merolla (2011) explicitly discusses the need to infuse different technological approaches in the research, documentation, and teaching of different African oral genres. The need to document with audio-visual equipment, generate transcripts, and translate them before analysis is stressed, bringing to the fore the limitations of documenting oral literature without audio-visual aids. Merolla (ibid) states that “new forms of video documentation and research are thus needed to give greater space to the intonation, the gestures, and the eventual musical accompaniment, the interaction between the performer and the public, and to all those elements that usually get lost in written forms of documentation...”³² In effect, the deployment of technological tools in the study of African oral literary performances has become central to the study of African oral literature. The deployment of technology into the study of African oral literature, equally calls for theoretical shift along the line of digital recording.

³² Merolla, D.(2011:55) Reflections on the Project African Oral Literature in the Global South Vol. 5 No. 2.

It is in the wake of the integration of new technologies into the orature interface, contemporary African oral scholars notably (Kaschula & Mostert 2011), in their attempt to negotiate the contours of verbal arts, written text, and technology, and to integrate them have coined the term *technauriture*, credited to Russel Kaschula. ‘Tech’ from technology, ‘auri’ stems from the word *auriture* (involving the oral and the aural hearing and understanding of sound), and *ture* from literature.

Technauriture in effect aims at ensuring that the ever-evolving post-modern audio-visual technology carries oral literature along and makes it available anywhere, especially to people who for various reasons may never be at the sites of the live performance of African oral literature as proposed by Kaschula & Mostert (2011). Technauriture is an attempt to seamlessly link oral literature and its equivalent written form and technology, ensuring an all-encompassing archetype. This study ultimately aims at revitalizing the verbal arts in the study area and is built on technauriture architecture. In an attempt to document Siwu oral traditions, text, still images, and video clips are in intercourse. This puts orality, literacy, and technology in unhindered interaction amid social change in rural and urban communities and their assimilation into the global village. Technauriture aims at the transformation of computers from machines to companions “facilitating the ability to speak, interact and even translate from one language to another, thereby enabling communication to take place, and, in many cases, community development.”³³

³³ Kaschula, H.R., Mostert. A.,(2009; 171) Analyzing, digitizing and tecnologizing the oral word: The Case of Bongani Sitole, *Journal of African Cultural Studies* 21:2 pages 159-175 .

2.6 Conclusion

The chapter attempted to review literature that pertains to the study area as well as Siwu socio-linguistics and its relation with Siwu language ecology to help frame the study within the African oral literature space. Literature that pertains to African oral literature and performance and the nuances of performance as a concept are examined in the review. The review identified scholarly contributions and trends in African oral literature and the verbal arts to identify gaps in knowledge creation. The review has brought to light emerging trend in oral tradition, written text, and technology that has resulted in the term technauriture, and the study is built on technauriture architecture.



CHAPTER THREE

THE STUDY AREA

3.0 Introduction

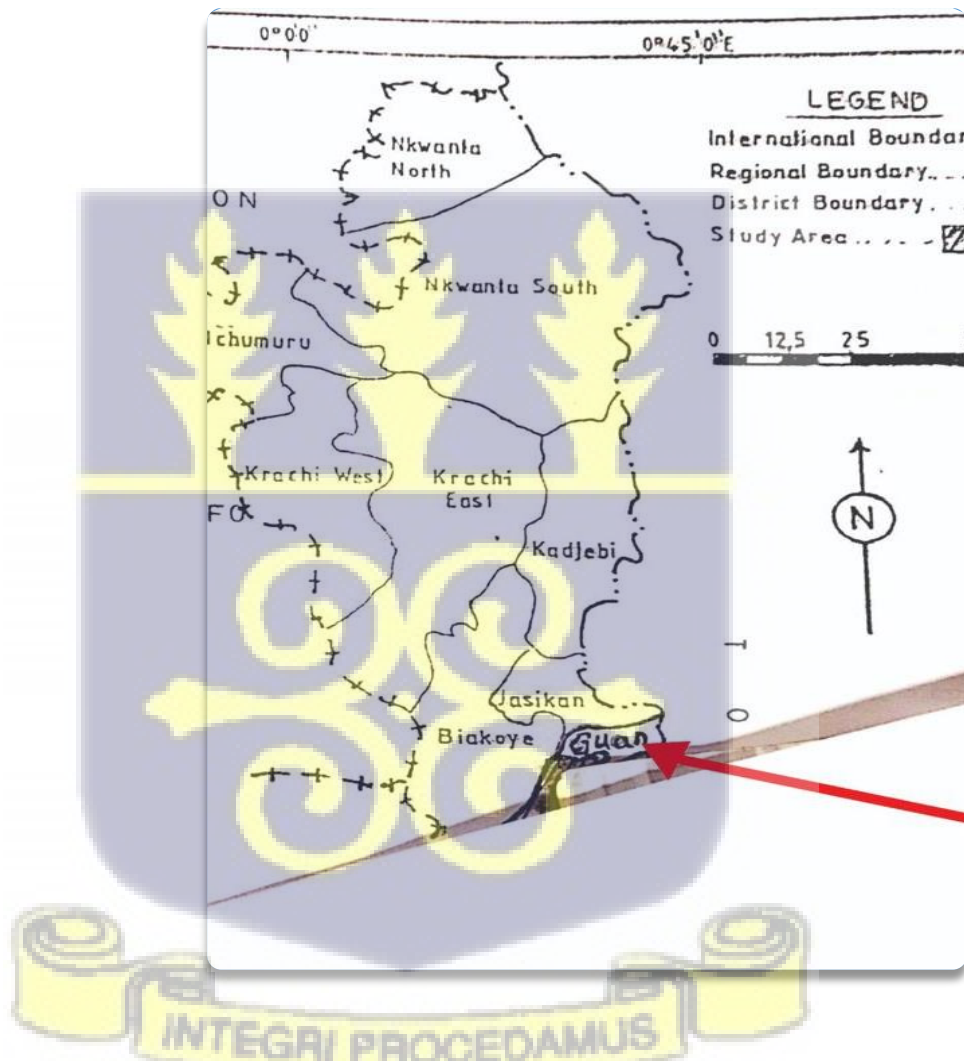
This chapter looks at the geo-political location, migration history, and general ethnography of Mawu or the people of Akpafu. The name Akpafu is what is known in Ghana and therefore accepted in academia and would be used in this thesis. However, the people of Akpafu's original name is Mawu and it is also used in the thesis where its application is more apt. Specific reference is to the four major Akpafu communities that constitute the study area namely, Akpafu Todzi, Akpafu Odomi, Akpafu Mempeasem, and Akpafu Adorkor. Additionally, the chapter attempts to outline the Akpafu's worldview, socio-economic activities, and functional socio-cultural structures as well as its socio-political organization.

3.1 Geo-Political Location of Akpafu in the 21st Century.

Until the creation of the Oti region by Nana Addo Danquah Akufo-Addo led New Patriotic Party (NPP) government in December 2018, Akpafu was in the central part of the Volta region. It was specifically in the Hohoe Municipality in the Hohoe North constituency of the Republic of Ghana along the middle belt. Geographically, Akpafu is located between Hohoe and Jasikan along the eastern corridor of Ghana. The study area is geographically located on latitude 7.2745°North of the equator and longitude 0.4750°East of the Greenwich Meridian.

Akpafu went into the Oti region following the creation of that region in December 2018 and was not under any municipal or district assembly from January 2019 until October 2021 when the people of Santrokofi, Akpafu, Lolobi, and Likpe (SALL) were put together

under the local government and was named the Guan District with the district capital at Likpe Mate. Sadly, the four communities listed above have no representation in the eighth parliament of the Fourth Republic of Ghana for constitutional reasons that stem from the creation of the Oti region. At the time of conducting the study, the area was not under any parliamentary constituency and had no representation in the eighth parliament (2020-2024) of the fourth republic.



Map 2. The Oti regional map, with the newly created Guan district where the study area is located. Source: Office of the District Chief Executive for the Guan district. Likpe Mate.

3.2 The History and Migration Experience of Mawu (The People of Akpafu)

The people of Akpafu and Lolobi are traditionally known as Mawu- (the natives of Akpafu) and Owu (a native of Akpafu). Their land and traditional abode is Kawu, and their language is Siwu. The name Akpafu, which has become more popular was given to them somewhere in the 19th century by the Ēwes and other neighbouring Guan communities when they migrated to their present abode. More light is thrown on this later in this chapter. Oral narratives trace their migration saga from Nubia (between Sudan and Ethiopia) and this is validated by (Ogbetey 1998). The oral history of Mawu reveals their association with the great Egyptian civilization thousands of years before the Christian era. This is where their iron smithing technology, which the Christian missionaries demonized and collapsed at their present abode, between 1900- 1920 can be traced to.





Key	The migration root of the Mawu from Nubia to present-day Ghana.
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Map 3. The migration root of the Mawu from Nubia to present-day Ghana

Credit: Ogbetey (1998) History of the Akpafus.

The reason and period for migrating from Nubia can hardly be ascertained, however, the era was either before or during the existence of the old Ghana empire 1000 to 1200 AD according to Boahen (1966) which is corroborated by Siwu oral traditions. One oral account says they left Nubia because of the exhaustion of the iron ore and stayed in the old Ghana empire. Another says it was due to conflicts with the neighboring communities that they migrated from Nubia. From Nubia, Mawu journeyed westward and wandered through present-day Chad and Niger and joined the mighty Ghana empire was its peak 1000AD-1200AD according to Boahen (ibid). Masonen, (2005) is on record that “Ghana was also endowed with plentiful mineral deposits, especially iron ore and gold ”³⁴ and some of its inhabitants practiced iron smithing and traded in iron products. Mawu certainly advanced their iron industry during their stay in the Ghana empire. When the Ghana empire collapsed, Mawu became part of the Mali empire that emerged from about 1234 AD and declined by 1400 (Boahen ibid). There is no documentary or oral evidence that Mawus were part of the Songhai empire that emerged in that region after the collapse of the Mali Empire. Perhaps, they were among many of the provinces that broke away according to Boahen (ibid). Mawu moved eastwards after they left the Mali empire and settled in the Volta Basin of present-day Ghana, among the larger Guan group.

Mawu are undeniably Guans and their history is intrinsically linked with the Guans; the undisputed first ethnic group to have settled in the present-day Republic of Ghana according to (Ampene 2003). It was once a single ethnic group, speaking the same language and the group traces its migration saga to the empires mentioned earlier. In the

³⁴ Masonen, P (2005:563) Ghana Empire: Historiography Of Origins In Shillington (ed) Encyclopedia of African History Volume 1, Fitzroy Dearborn – New York . ,

21st century, the bigger Guan ethnic group is fragmented and scattered into all the regions of Ghana, the Ashanti region (Ampene 2003). All the sub-groups speak different dialects of the same Guan language, with some common and familiar language items among the speakers. Some of the earliest scholarly works on Guans can be traced to Westermann's chapter in Rattary (1932) titled *Tribes of the Ashanti Hinterland*. Dietrich Westermann locates the Guans between the old Asante Empire and the Moshi-Dagomba territory. Westermann (1932) states that the language is spoken in the area "spread over a considerable part of the Gold Coast and Togoland, and known by the name Guang"³⁵

Another early written record of the Guans is the account of Ward (1948) which acknowledges the occupation of the Guans on the plains of the left bank of the Black Volta and in the Afram Plains area before its occupation by the Asantes, specifically, the people of Agogo. Ward (ibid) also acknowledges the Guans' occupation of the Akwapim hills, as well, as the hills in Trans-Volta Togoland and as far as Winneba and its environs.

Oral history shows that the Mawu is very likely to be part of the Gonja Guans under the leadership of Sumaila Ndewura Jakpa, believed to be a Mandingo according to Ward (1948). This is because the Guan language spoken by the Gonjas, and the one spoken at Akpafu have a common cognate vocabulary that is mutually discernable. Sumaila Ndewura Jakpa and his numerous Guan groups invaded the present-day Gonjaland (Savana Region in the Republic of Ghana) at about 1591 AD or very soon afterward (Ward ibid). From the Volta Basin, the Mawu descended southwards and settled among the people of Bono. "For many years, the tribe (Mawu ethnic group) sojourned in and around Gyaman, Nweneme,

³⁵ Westermann's Chapter iv in Rattary(1932:106) *Tribes of the Ashanti Hinterland*

and Duadaso in the Drobo Traditional Area searching for ore-bearing stones, digging and smelting into hoes, mattocks, and farming implements”³⁶ according to Ogbetey(ibid).

From the Bono region, Mawu and their sister Guans, Balé (Santrokofi) and Bakpele (Likpe) settled among the Asantes and Akyems practicing their iron smithing trade among the Asantes and Akyems, with attendant skirmishes due mainly to cultural differences. They migrated further eastwards to settle among the Akwamu Akans which troubled them the most during the trans-Atlantic slave trade lasted from about 1400 to 1880s according to Boahen (1966). Oral history, validated by Ampene (2003) and Ogbetey (1998) has it that for years, the Akwamus captured the Mawu young men and women and sold them into slavery and also for sacrifices to Akwamu deities. It was while with the Akwamus at the western bank of the river Volta that the Mawu crossed the river Volta from about 1720 or earlier to the eastern bank. Oral history in Siwu has it that the Mawu were the first Guan group to cross the river Volta which they called Frao and still call Frao from the west to the east. This Siwu oral history is given documentary validation by Ampene (ibid) who states that the pioneer Anum Guans who emigrated from the Akwamus and founded Anum state in 1724 found Mawu there upon their (Anum’s) arrival. He writes “On arrival, they (the people of Anum) met some strange people living in the foothills who were identified as Akpafu, Lolobi, Avatime, and Nyagbo..... The Akpafus were blacksmiths whose stones and iron pits can still be seen on the Okrako Hill at Annum today.”³⁷

It is historically difficult to figure out the duration that Mawu settled among the Akans but Ward’s (1948) account of the dispersal of the Guan groups in the Volta basin was around

³⁶ Ogbetey, H.B.K.(1998:5) A History of the Akpafus, Onyase Press, Accra.

³⁷ Ampene, K. (2003:80) A History of the Guan Speaking People of Ghana

1600 or earlier after which they settled among the Akans. Ampene (ibid) writing on the era that Mawu exited Akwamu (Akans) area states that the people of Anum “drove Akpafus north-eastwards in about 1729...”³⁸ . It can therefore be concluded that the period of the Mawu living among the Akans is from about 1600 or earlier to about 1729 or earlier spanning about 129 years or more. This relatively long period of Mawu’s stay with the Akans left a language and arts heritage on the Siwu language. The Akan language’s reflections on the Siwu language is most evident in the Siwu drum language which is mainly in Akan.

3.3 From Anum-Boso to Awubeame (Akwapim-Togo Mountains)

From the present-day Anum-Boso area, Mawu settled on a hill between Peki and Tsito at the time the Ewes had not yet migrated into present-day Ghana. Ampene (ibid), citing Robert Conervin (1967), states that the Ewes migrated from Notsie in Togo at the beginning of 1720. The people of Tsito Awudome (an Ewe sub-group) met Mawu at present-day Tsito between 1720 and 1740 but skirmishes that stemmed from the Ewe cutting Mawu rice on the field ignorantly, to be used as thatch for roofing their (Ewe) buildings prompted the Mawu to migrate further northwards and settle at present-day Vakpo lands. Ampene (ibid), citing Okai (1989), a Vakpo historian, is on record that “The people of Vakpo in the Volta region met people of Guan extraction at their present site who received them well. But differences in custom, language, and attitudes soon engendered troubles, and most of the Guans left without notice to settle in the present-day Akpafu and Bowri.”³⁹

³⁸Ampene, K. (2003:109) A History of the Guan Speaking People of Ghana Anum Boso, Laterian House.

³⁹ Ampene, K. (2003:8) A History of the Guan Speaking People of Ghana

From the Vakpo and Kpando areas, the Mawu migrated further north and settled on one of the ranges of the Akwapim-Togo Mountains, in an area presently occupied by the people of Nkonya, another Guan group. Siwu's oral history has it that Mawu migrated from the Akwapim-Togo mountains (where they have co-existed peacefully with their Nkonya Guan sisters who came and met Mawu there. The people of Alavanyo (an Eve sub-group) later migrated there and were given the vacant Mawu land, annexed by the people of Nkonya. Alavanyo people later overstepped the boundary between them and the people of Nkonya, resulting in a conflict between the people of Nkonya and Alavanyo in 1923 according to the seniormost mankrado in Akpafu-Mr. Benjamin Christopher Kwame Akraasi. The remote cause of the Nkonya-Alavanyo land conflict has to do with Mawu who migrated and left a vast land. In effect, the land the people of Nkonya and Alavanyo have been fighting over since 1923, originally belonged to the Mawu (the people of Akpafu). This claim is attested to by some Nkonya elders. Mawu called the place “Awubeame”(Mawu mountains) and it is about twenty-five kilometers west of the present location of Akpafu, where the people of Akpafu share a common boundary with the people of Nkonya till date. In 2021, Siwu's oral history, myths, songs, and legends are bound with Akwapim Togo mountains (Awubeame) stories. It is at Awubeame that true archeological evidence relating to the meeting arena for elders and the larger community, as well as graves or burial sites for Mawu ancestors, dating back to the 18th century, can be seen to date.

The presence of iron-ore at Awubeame kept the Mawu there from about 1780 to 1830 when they finally migrated in badges, occasioned mainly by the discovery of iron-ore in large quantities at present-day Akpafu. It should be put on record, that until about 1850, Mawu

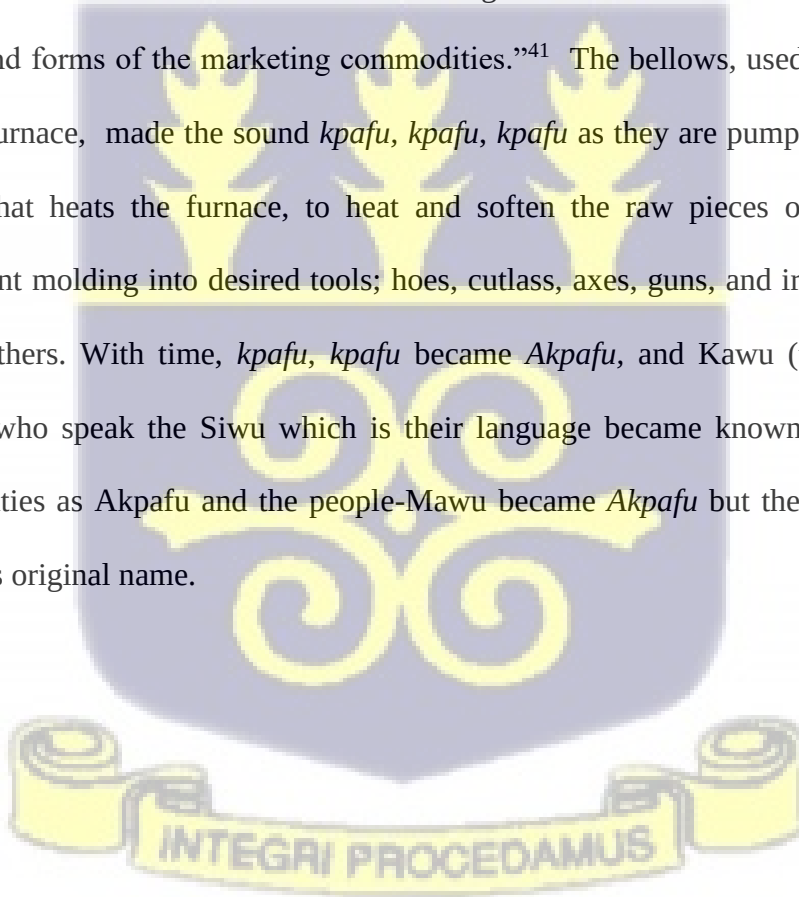
was the only name by which the people of Akpafu knew themselves, the name Akpafu emerged after this period. After the settlement at present-day Kawu land, two cultural elements; tools and weapons made of iron, manufactured by men, and Kawumɔ (Kawu brown rice) grown by women attracted the neighbouring Eve and Guan communities to Kawu. A heritage product that accompanied Mawu on the entire migration journey and is still present and relevant in Kawu today is brown rice and its variety of meals made from its flour. It was the tradition for women to keep the flour in handy for any humanitarian emergency. Apart from its many meals, the flour was mixed with water and drank to keep people going in times of crises, especially when enemies were in pursuit during the migration saga. Siwu history gives credit to Kawu women, who always keep the flour handy to date and use it to nurture humanity, just as their ancestress did several centuries ago.

3.4 Etymology of the name Akpafu

Oral history believes that Kawuikato ie Akpafu Todzi- meaning Akpafu on the hill/mountain (the traditional capital of Akpafu), and Akpafu Odomi were simultaneously established between 1830 and 1840 according to Mr. Isaac Kwodwo Krabor a retired educationist and one of my informants. This account was corroborated by Mr. Trigotte Boateng, the head of Kpadzia clan at Akpafu Todzi. From about 1850, Akpafu Todzi, Akpafu Odomi and much later Akpafu Mempeasem became market centres for iron tools. Ẽes, (notably Gbi ie Hohoe, Ve, Fodome, Alavanyo, Liatɔ, Leklebi, Kpando and the neighbouring Guan communities of Buem, Bowiri, Likpe (Bakpele) Santrokofi (Balɛ) and Nkonya came to acquire farming tools and arms, made of iron, for farming, hunting, and defense during war. Another highly priced commodity mentioned earlier was Akpafu rice

(Kawumɔ). “Kawumɔ became popular with all who interacted with the people of Akpafu. The neighbouring Ewe communities, in performing many of their customs like puberty rites (Gbortowɔwɔ), and marriage ceremonies, would insist on Kawumɔ (Akpafu rice) because of its nutritional values, its traditional origin, and its religiously treasured value.”⁴⁰

The name Akpafu was a nickname by the traders who thronged to Kawu from about 1850-1900 which was the peak of the iron smelting industry according to Mr. I.K. Krabor (82), a retired educationist, very conversant with Kawu history, customs and institutions, and one of my many informants. The name Akpafu originated “from the onomatopoeic sounds made by the native bellows with which the ingots were blown red hot to be beaten into shapes and forms of the marketing commodities.”⁴¹ The bellows, used in blowing air to fire the furnace, made the sound *kpafu, kpafu, kpafu* as they are pumped or blown to let out air that heats the furnace, to heat and soften the raw pieces of iron(ingots) for subsequent molding into desired tools; hoes, cutlass, axes, guns, and iron-headed arrows among others. With time, *kpafu, kpafu* became *Akpafu*, and Kawu (the land/abode of Mawu), who speak the Siwu which is their language became known by neighbouring communities as Akpafu and the people-Mawu became *Akpafu* but their language, Siwu retains its original name.



⁴⁰ Pewudie, M. (2008) *A Brief History of Akpafus and Their Rice Festival*. Unpublished article.

⁴¹ Ogbetey H.B.K. (1998: 15) *A History of the Akpafus*.



A colonial picture of a young man behind the indigenous Kawu bellows that fired the furnace to smelt iron. The technology was developed by Mawu long before getting into contact with the Europeans. The picture might have been taken before 1920.

Credit: Credit: Mark Dingemanse collections from Bremen-Germany, kept by Mr. Tragotte Boateng (80) Kpadzia clan head at Akpafu Todzi.



Image 1 The archeological remains above (at Akpafu Todzi)



Image 2 The archeological remains above (at Akpafu Todzi)

Image 1 & 2 above: The archeological remains above (at Akpafu Todzi). These are sites where iron tools were made in the 19th and 20th centuries. The ash-polished stones served as anvils for the traditional iron smelting industry in Akpafu.

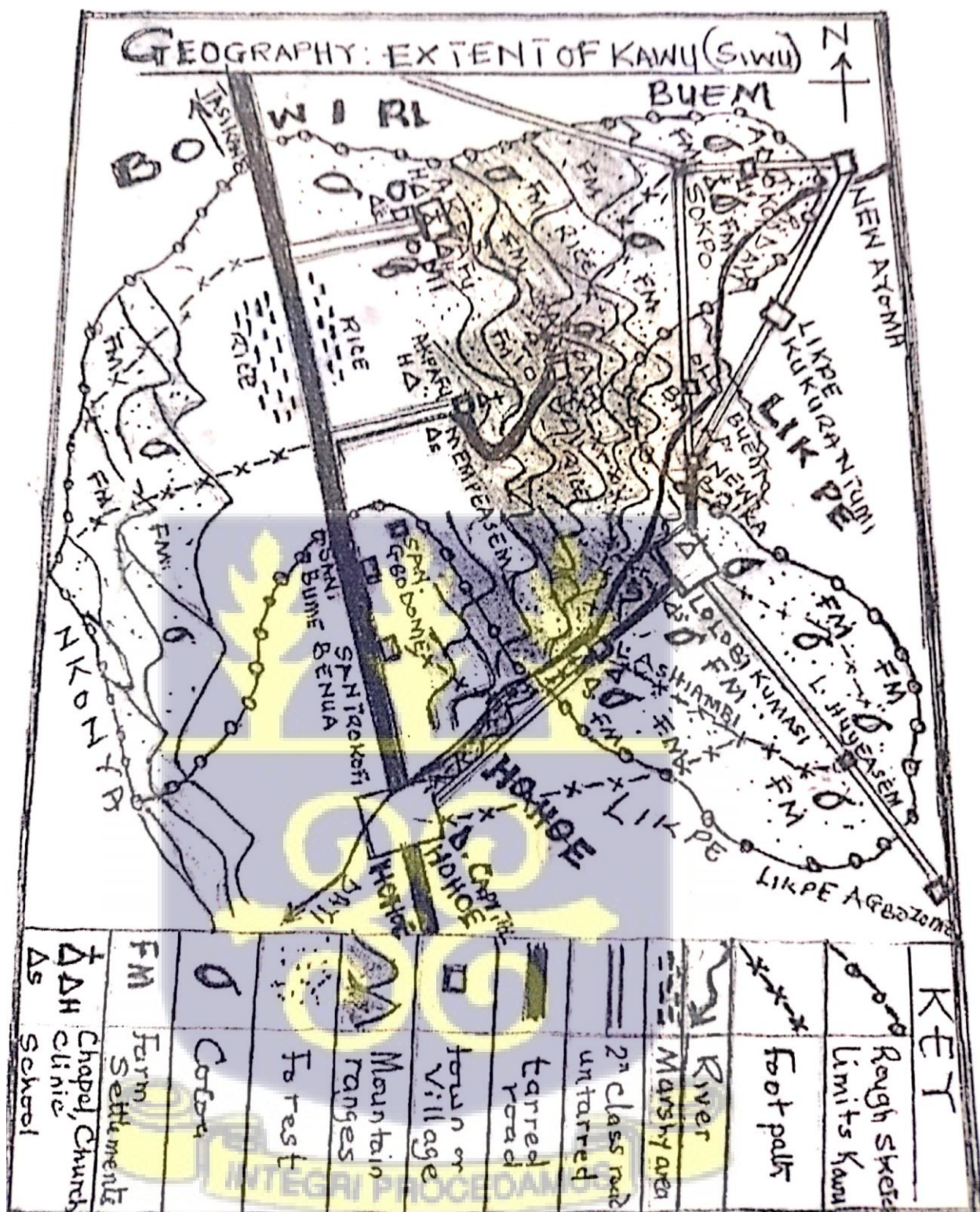
Field data: November 2022.

When the Basel missionaries visited the land in about 1898, according to Ogbetey (ibid), they recorded the nickname, Akpafu and popularized it, instead of Mawu. To date, but for the indigenes who still refer to themselves as Mawu in informal conversations, Mawu and Kawu are simply referred to as Akpafu but their language is acknowledged in different academic publications that deal with Ghanaian languages.



Image 3 above: The researcher in an interview with Mankrado Kataninsorojya I (71), Mankrado of Akpafu Todzi (2003-till date) and the seniormost of all Mankrados in Akpafu. The topic is on Kawu history and Siwu ceremonial recitations. He is known in private life as Christopher Benjamin Kwame Akrasi, a retired Deputy Director of Ghana Education Service and a traditional leader. The venue is the compound of his residence at Akpafu Mempeasem.

Field Data: November 2022.



Map 4 above. Handdrawn map of the four (4) Akpafu communities that constitute the study area.

Credit: Kpazia Kaléokpakpa (Kpadzia Clan head) Tragotte Boateng's archives. Akpafu Todzi.

3.5. Akpafu Cultural Heritage of the Distant Past

Personal observation of many Akpafu cultural rites, and especially, the chieftaincy institution and the rice industry in the study area has revealed some unique characteristics. The Akpafu chieftaincy system, though without any debate, is modeled along the Akan system, there are revealing elements that point to the acquisition of the culture of chieftaincy elsewhere other than from the Akans. In Siwu, a chief is called *igara*. According to Senkomago's's (2005), accounts in the *Encyclopedia of African History*, the Soninke of the old Ghana empire called their king or chief *gana*. There is a reason to establish a historical link between the two names: *gana* and *igara*, because of their sound, and meaning. The differences in spelling might have been occasioned by many years of separation. The point is to make a case that the people of Akpafu learnt the art of chieftaincy in the old Ghana empire and only perfected it during the period of their stay with the Akans. Indeed, there is a cycle of rites that are peculiar to the Akpafu chieftaincy institution, obviously different from the traditional rites of Akan chiefs.

Enstoolment rituals begin with divination to identify the candidate the deities and ancestors have approved from the royal family along the patriarchal line, unlike Akans which is the maternal line. The candidate is then captured and confined for seven days, followed by outdoor rituals, including taking an oath and slaughtering a ram on the feet of the new chief. This symbolizes cleansing the new chief for his new position. After enstoolment, there are the chieftaincy acceptance rituals, which involve the preparation of *ɔpusu* (a meal made of rice and special beans known in Siwu as *oketeku*) for all the elders of clans in the entire community. In the last ritual as an Akpafuhene or adontenhene etc. of Akpafu, the chief visits the streamside where he takes a symbolic bath in a stream to climax the

completion of chieftaincy rites. These chieftaincy rituals are so unique and certainly not Akan practices but learnt or acquired elsewhere- perhaps during their stay in the old Ghana Empire among the Soninke or Malinke.

It should be noted that the Soninkes and the Malinkes of the old Ghana empire practiced African traditional religion and chieftaincy before the Islamic invasion of the North Western part of West Africa according to Boahen (ibid) corroborated by Ajayi and Crowder (1976). Again, the Mawu ethnic group might have acquired the culture of chieftaincy from either the Ghana or the Mali empires because oral accounts have it that the Mawu were culturally acephalous societies that historically, did not enstool chiefs. The traditional priest of the *tokpaikor* deity was their spiritual leader and the administration of the community before joining the Akans, was administered by a council of clan elders. This implies that when the Mawu migrated from Nubia, chieftaincy was alien to them. If many of their chieftaincy practices are not Akan, and certainly not an Ewe practice, then it can only be associated with the period before their association with the Akans.

Another cultural practice of ancient days across time till date in the study area is their heritage local rice industry and associated meals. Oral accounts have it that the Mawu ethnic group was associated for a long time with the Mandingos and the subgroup Malinkes in the old Ghana and Mali empires. The people of Akpafu celebrate the rice festival, and brown rice, which they have grown from antiquity till date, with its varied heritage meals, is one of their cherished traditions. The researcher holds the view strongly that Mawu either perfected or learnt the culture of rice production (which for generations, has remained the main occupation of the people of Akpafu, especially women) during their stay in the old Ghana and Mali empires for the following reason. The traditional method of growing this

rice and harvesting it is just like how the Malinke; a subgroup of the Mandigo, who were very influential in the Mali empire did it, as described by Laye (1954) in his landmark autobiography; *African Child*. Pages 49-51 describe a group rice harvesting incident in Tindican, a Malinke community in Guinea. Camara Laye paints a mental picture of a group of men and women lining up from a starting point, and using sickles to harvest matured rice and tying the swathes behind them. Very skillful and smart people (like Laye's uncle) with the art of harvesting rice can be seen ahead of their comparatively slower kin co-workers. The entire family or clan communally visits one's farm to harvest the rice, shred it, and carry it home and the entire occasion, with the food and conviviality, is a festival according to Laye (ibid). Every year at Akpafu from the middle of November through to December, the peak of rice harvesting season, this group's rice harvesting 'festivals', are common occasions, just as Camara Laye described. Coincidentally, the Malinke also harvests rice in November and December. It is a reason to establish a link, more so when they have once lived together.

Again, Laye (ibid) and Niane (1967) establish that people who bear the name 'Camara' among the Malinkes are traditionally iron smiths who make many tools from iron. As pointed out earlier in this chapter, the men of Akpafu historically were iron smiths and their migration route is littered with iron waste to date. The name they are known today, Akpafu, was derived from the iron smithing industry. If the rice and the iron smelting industry in Akpafu is similar to what the Malinke do, and both were part of the old Ghana and Mali empires, then cultural diffusion through migration is the justification to establish a historical relationship between the two ethnic groups. It should be stated however that further research is needed to establish the variety of rice grown over the years in both

African societies, as well as the methods adopted in growing the rice and the meals made from rice to validate the above claim.

3.6 Akpafu/Siwu Names

Without any argument, it should be stated, that, the people of Akpafu culturally borrowed so much from the Akans and this demonstrates the extent to which the two African societies lived together and Siwu assimilated Akan language items. Most surnames in Akpafu are undeniably Akan in origin, while others are also Ewe. The Akan names stemmed from over a hundred years of Mawu's relationship with the Akans. Some common surnames in Akpafu with Akan origin are Nyame, Akuamoah, Ntiamaoh, Amoah, Asamoah, Asase, Asare, Wurapa, Kakraba, Boateng, Bediako, Anipa, Agyeman, Nyarko, Boni Adom, Amankwa, Obaku, Akrasi, Abasa-Addo, Buami and Asempa, Abusuasem, Abuampe among several others. Some common Ewe surnames in Akpafu are Agbenyo, Agbenyegah, Agbo, Amegbe, and Tevor among others. There are however some surnames that require further research to validate their Siwu authenticity and origin. Some of these surnames are Okiti, Arikor, Kubiti, Lortsyor, Dabri, and Krabor among others. There are also some Siwu surnames like Adibo, Iprœ, and Atiso among others which are Siwu words/names. Other surnames in Akpafu appear to have originated from the Ga-Adangbe or Krobo tradition. Names like Ayitey/Ayiti, Adade, Odamtey, Akpetey, Klobodu, and Akwei among others fall in this category.

Traditionally, males and females in Kawu have unique first names that follow the order of birth of a male or female child. Further exposure has revealed that a few of these names are also common with the Ga-Dangbe and Krobo and further research is required to

establish the link between these Siwu and Ga-Adangbe and Krobo names. The nomenclature is as follows

3.7 Siwu First Names

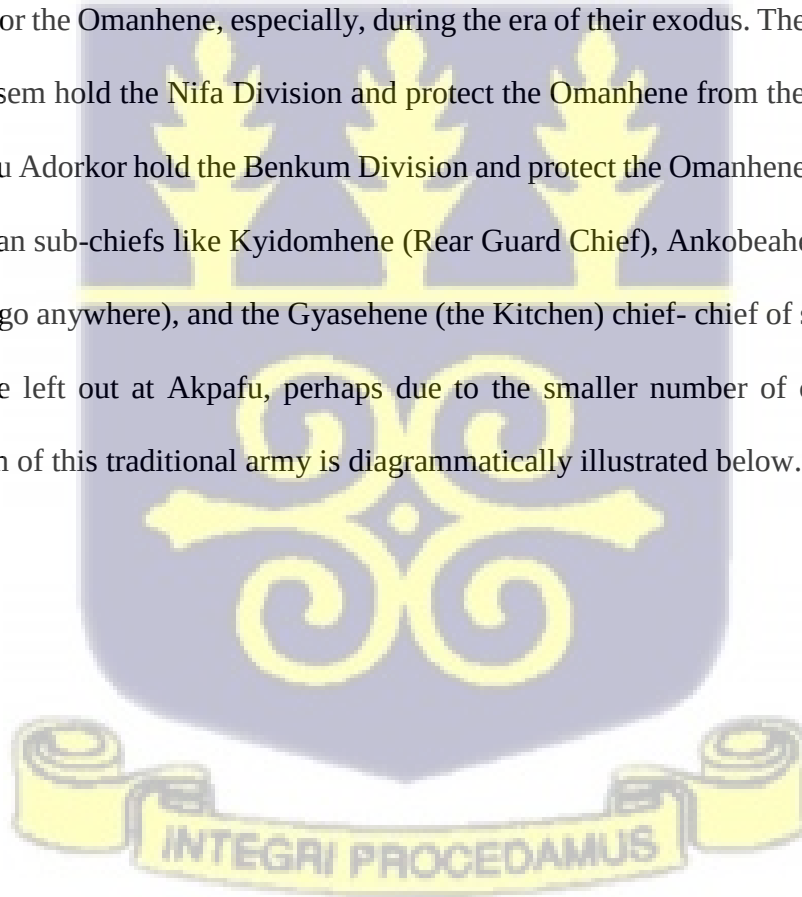
Order of Birth	Male	Female
1 st	Oyé	Aiko/Mago/Dzedze(Ɔdze)
2 nd	Téttéh/ Oyété	Korkor/Magodé/Dzedzeté(Ɔdzeté)
3 rd	Kallai	Kpéi
4 th	Ɔgbé/Kallaité	Kafei
5 th	Ɔgbété	Kafeité
6 th	Ɔbro	Ikoende
7 th	Ɔbroté	Kakorã

Table 3. Siwu first names for both males and females.

There are instances where an affix “si” is added to some male names and given to females that are born directly after these males. There are Oyési and Ɔgbési which are names for females that are born directly after Oyé and Ɔgbé respectively. When you give birth to the eighth male or female child, the cycle is started all over. With the advent of formal education, it has become common practice in Akpafu to use the male first names above as surnames, mainly because people either want to preserve their names or create their own family identity. Subsequently, names like Oyé, Téttéh, Kallai, Ɔgbété, etc have become surnames in Akpafu.

3.8 Political Institutions and Organizations

Obeng (2008) states that in most Akan communities, anytime the Omanhene (Paramount Chief); that is the commander-in-chief of the local army moves, the Adonten division (front guard) stays in front to pave the way for his movement. The Nifa (right guard) division protects the commander-in-chief from the right and the Benkum (left guard) protects him from the left. The people of Akpafu borrowed this concept from the Akans and the chieftaincy institution in Akpafu is modelled along this line. The paramount chief (Akpafuhene) is at Akpafu Todzi- the traditional capital. The militarily offensive Adonten Division is at Akpafu Odomi and they attack in defense, at the least provocation, to pave the way for the Omanhene, especially, during the era of their exodus. The people of Akpafu Mempeasem hold the Nifa Division and protect the Omanhene from the right. The people of Akpafu Adorkor hold the Benkum Division and protect the Omanhene from the left. The other Akan sub-chiefs like Kyidomhene (Rear Guard Chief), Ankobeahene (the chief who does not go anywhere), and the Gyasehene (the Kitchen) chief- chief of staff) among other chiefs are left out at Akpafu, perhaps due to the smaller number of communities. The formation of this traditional army is diagrammatically illustrated below.



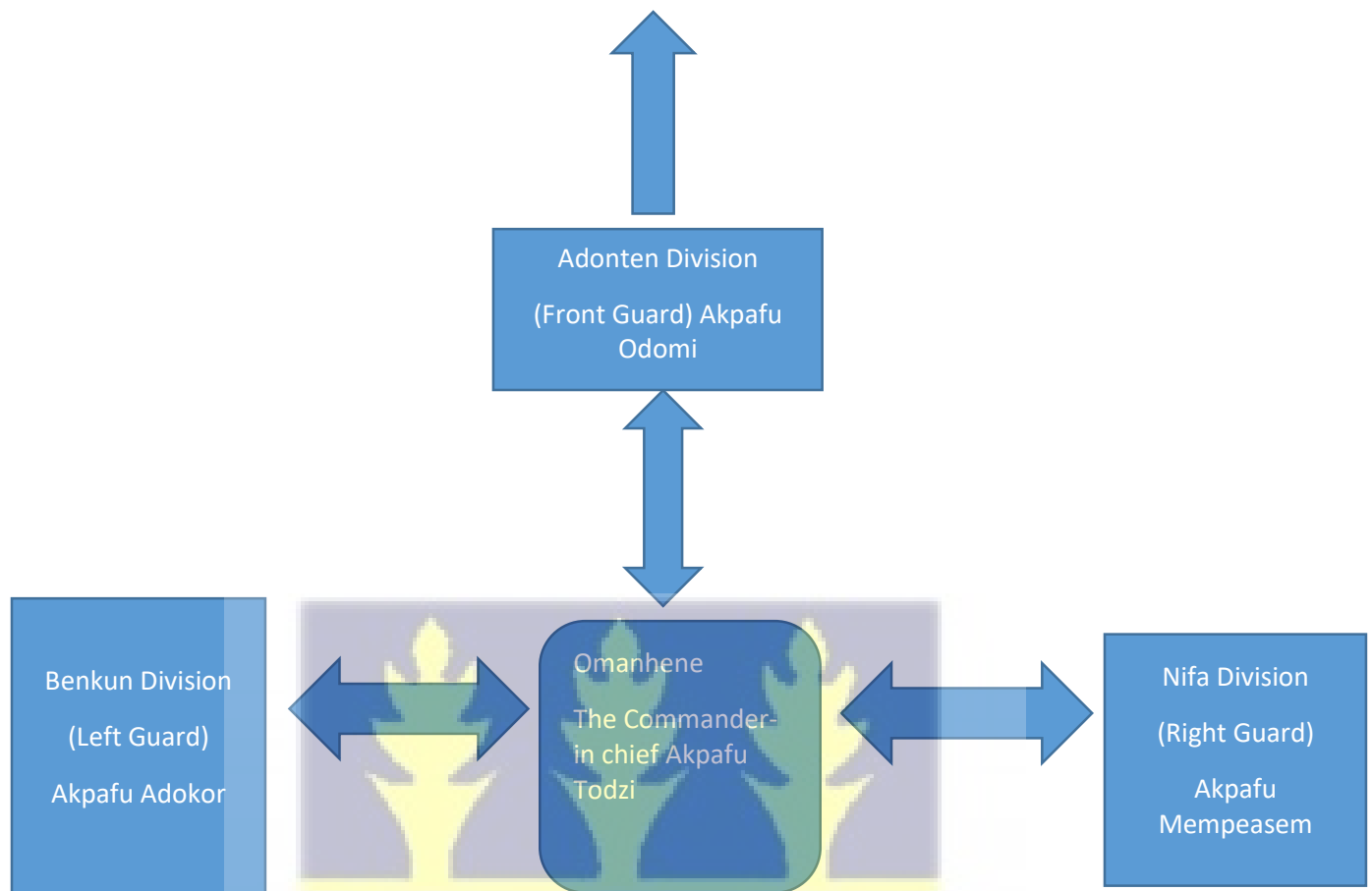


Figure 3.

Diagrammatical illustration of the formation and movement of the Akan army along which the Akpafu chieftaincy institution is modeled today. The rear guard and chief of staff among others are conspicuously missing due to the smaller number of communities in Akpafu.

Credit: The researcher.

In Akpafu, there is also the traditional political position of *ɔmankrado* (custodians of the state) from the Akan word *ɔman* (state) and *krado* (padlock). Traditionally, these are the founders of communities and for that matter kingmakers. The office of the queen mother is relatively recent in Akpafu and only selected clans enstool them. In addition to the above political structure, there are the Asafo groups (local contingents) that are headed by the

Asafoatsɛ selected from specific families. There are age group sects (Isɛgrui) made up of men and women born within about ten years period. Age group sects are named after the oldest male of the sect and administered by the sect executives (Isɛgrui makpakpa). All age group sects select a patron (ɔsaa); a male, older than members of the age group.

3.9 Clans/ Kulɛ (plural) and Kalɛ (singular) and other Social Organizations.

There are six clans in Akpafu but not all of them are present in all four communities. All six are in the traditional capital Todzi. In no particular order, these clans are:

- (i) Atedua
- (ii) Kpadzia
- (iii) Maritei (known as Gabi at Akpafu Odomi)
- (iv) Jakwua also known as Aborade
- (v) Kalɛ Sɛa and
- (vi) Asakyiri

But for the Atedua clan that permanently retains the position of the mankrado at Todzi, and for that matter does not enstool chiefs because they are kingmakers, all the other clans have their chiefs, regents, or representatives of chiefs where the stool is vacant. There is a traditional order of how the paramount chief (ɔmanhene) of the Akpafu traditional area rotates among the rest five clans at Akpafu Todzi and so are the adontenhene, the nifahene, and the benkumhene respectively.

The clans present at Akpafu Odomi are:

- (i) Kpadzia,
- (ii) Maritei also known as Gabi at Akpafu Odomi

- (iii) Atedua and
- (iv) Asakyiri

The position of the Adontenhene rotates among all these four clans at Akpafu Odomi. Kpadzia clan, in addition, retains the position of the mankrado (custodians) at Akpafu Odomi.

There are generally four clans at Akpafu Mempeasem. These are

- (i) Maritei
- (ii) Kalé sêa
- (iii) Jakwua and
- (iv) Matukuse.(made up of Kpadzia, Atedua and Asakyri,)

There are three clans at Akpafu Adorkor. These are

- (i) Jakwua
- (ii) Maritei and
- (iii) Kalé sêa

Next to the entire community, the clan is the strongest social unit in any Akpafu community. Within these clans are larger families (*atin*) (plural) and (*itin*) (singular). Larger families (*atin*) and clans (*kulé*) constitute the major social units that collectively function in Akpafu communities. All clans and their property; land, economic trees, and streams among others are administered by select clan elders (*kalé makpakpa*) headed by the most elderly male of the clan or his representative. The other members are appointed by their age, good conduct, or specialised knowledge of issues that pertain to the clan. These clan chiefs in collaboration with the mankrados and queen mothers were present, rally elders to

lead their various clans and the community at large. Indeed, gerontocracy is the norm in the selection of clan administrators, however, respectful and responsible relatively younger people are occasionally appointed to play specific roles among the clan elders. In all Akpafu communities, very functional traditional leaders such as chiefs, *omakrados*, community elders, queen mothers, and different age group sects that consist of both men and women and formidable women groups keep the spirit and soul of all communities alive.

3.10 Worldview, Kinship and Inheritance in Akpafu

The people of Akpafu traditionally believe in the Supreme God- known differently as *Yhaa/Ahyaa/ Lama* and worship him through other deities and ancestors(Ogbetey ibid). Traditionally, the people of Akpafu, like many African societies, believe in the presence of the ancestors (*ɔwamre*) among the living which constantly brings the living closer to the spiritual/ancestral world as noted by Opoku (1978). The ancestors are believed to appear in dreams to their relations or devotees of deities to either warn or instruct the living. Notable deities in Akpafu (which no longer have devotees due to Christianity) include *Tokpaikor* (god of peace and protection, he is the greatest of Akpafu deities) *Imu* (god of war who protects against the attack of the enemy) *Orerei Tagbaraa*-Tall Warrior (god of war who does the real fighting of the enemy at war), *Ibukutu* (war god), *Ipoitwara* (a deity that aids individuals in fighting). Why so many war deities? It is due to the nature of their migration, where many foes were confronted. These deities protected and aided their fight during the era of their migration. Other titular deities such as streams, water bodies, and clay images erected at different spots in all Akpafu communities, as well as lesser spirits, are revered because the Supreme God is believed to manifest through a pantheon of these deities.

In Akpafu traditional religion, upon the death of an individual, the dead body or its spirit is consulted (carrying the body on palm-front mat) to know, among other things, whether the deceased was a witch/wizard or otherwise. In Akpafu, it appears witchcraft (*kabuê*) is so abhorred that to have practiced it while alive is synonymous with being declared a grievous sinner. To be declared a witch/wizard is perhaps the most heinous sin in Akpafu and one is buried without honours, bringing shame to the family and friends. A traditionalist who is declared innocent of witchcraft is buried with the celebration and performance of elaborate traditional rites and performances that automatically make him or her ancestor/ancestress. Chiefs and *omankrados* that pass on, whether Christians or not are buried with traditional funeral rites and are automatic ancestors. These burial ceremonies are fertile grounds for indigenous Akpafu rituals, drama, and occasions to showcase Akpafu performance genres to be discussed in later chapters. Divination was a common practice, interestingly, there is no longer any traditional priest or priestess at Akpafu in the 21st century who renders divination services anymore. One may need to travel outside Akpafu communities to engage the services of a traditional priest for divination. Traditional religious rituals are however still performed for some deities by a handful of traditionalists left in the various communities.

Traditional religion was the norm until the Basel Missionaries arrived in 1898. In the 21st century, Christianity is the dominant religion in Akpafu, with Evangelical Presbyterian Church as the oldest and multiplicity of charismatic churches in all the communities. Though there are still traditionalists in Akpafu, traditional religion is now a pale shadow of what it used to be. During the celebration of any traditional rites, the performers that turn out in their numbers are mostly people who profess Christianity or people who do not

profess traditional religion. But for Akpafu Adokor, where there is a mosque and few Muslims that are not indigenous citizens of Akpafu, Islam has yet to make any serious inroads in terms of permanent settlement in other communities, despite several years of trade relations.

One resilient culture that the people of Akpafu's association with the Akans could not alter is their kinship and inheritance rites. Kinship in Akpafu is strictly patrilineal and an individual belongs to his father's lineage and clan. Male sons and their male descendants succeed and inherit their fathers, paternal uncles, and aunts. Females marry and become part of their husbands' family, though retain the membership of their larger families and clans and make contributions to them. In case of divorce, a woman returns to her father's family. If a man dies leaving a widow behind, the widow may re-marry from the deceased husband's family and remain in the late husband's family, or remain in her late husband's house, often with the children, if she chose not to marry or ultimately return to her family house. A woman who acquires property is inherited by her brothers or nephews. Even in cases where her female daughters inherit her in the short term, the property would ultimately be inherited patrilineal in the long term. Any individual's succession to office and inheritance of property is determined by his or her patrilineal affiliation to a clan.

The status quo in the application of kinship and inheritance rights is firmly established in Kawu oral traditions though yet to be documented. However, continuity in the exercise of customary practices in such areas as inheritance, methods of farming, traditional medicine, food, and nutrition, local craft, marriage, birth and death rites, the arts, and the general application of indigenous knowledge in a wide range of socio-cultural and economic sectors are gradually changing.

3.11 Days and Calendar Months in Siwu

The people of Akpafu observe a six-day week and twelve calendar months in a year. The six days are presented in the table below.

Number	Name of the day
1 st day of the week	Iklu
2 nd day of the week	Ikluikpɛnɛɔɛakato
3 rd day of the week	Ikluikpɛnɛtsɔra
4 th day of the week	Ipɔ
5 th day of the week	Ipɔikpɛnɛɔɛakato
6 th day of the week	Ipɔikpɛnɛtsɔra

Table 4: Siwu names for days of the week.

Credit: Interview with Afua Inyama Adiabu (Aug. 1, 2021 at Elmina-Central region)

Iklu and *Ipɔ* are the two most important reference days. The next two days after *Iklu* are its first and last days. The fourth day of the week is *Ipɔ* followed by its first and last day. The Akan and Ewe days of the week; Kwasida(Sunday), Dzoda (Monday), Benada (Tuesday), Kuda(Wednesday), Yaoda(Thursday, Fida(Friday), and Memeneda(Saturday) have however become the most popular days in Akpafu though many elders, mostly women, know each traditional day in Siwu. Some traditional religious rites in the study area are observed on specific Siwu calendar days. Different farmlands in the study area observe their rest day on either *Iklu* or *Ipɔ*.

3.12 Months of the Year

The people of Akpafu observe twelve calendar months in a year. The order of the months and their English equivalent is as follows.

Number	English	Siwu
1 st Month	January	Kukplamowa
2 nd Month	February	Ɔfindo
3 rd Month	March	Kasɔrɔrɔi
4 th Month	April	Makeke
5 th Month	May	Soya
6 th Month	June	Buton
7 th Month	July	Buto
8 th Month	August	Gagɛn
9 th Month	September	Kutekpawa
10 th Month	October	Sala
11 th Month	November	Bobo
12 th Month	December	Imurasá

Table 5: Siwu Calendar Months with the English Equivalence

Credit: GILLBT 2009 Siwu calendar, produced for the New Testament Bible translation into Siwu confirmed by Afua Inyama Adiabu one of my informants.

These months of the year are also losing their relevance because though they exist in Siwu vocabulary, the names of the month in English have become dominant and these Siwu months are used by the very elderly often non-literate class and there is a possibility of their extinction.

3.13 Occupation

The physical ecology of an area; vegetation, topography, climatic conditions, and water bodies in which an ethnic group finds itself, largely dictates the occupation of its indigenes. This is what Freilich (1967) terms environmental determinism. Mawu had acquired the art of smithing iron (by men) and growing rice (by women) when they arrived in present-day Akpafu. Though the iron smithing industry has completely collapsed, it was the presence of iron ore in the study area that largely influenced the settlement of communities at their present locations. In the 21st century, the iron-smithing industry has completely collapsed mainly because of the importation of more refined tools and implements. Only one blacksmith was chanced upon at Akpafu Odomi still practicing the trade alongside farming during the fieldwork.

The study area has dense deciduous forests on hills, valleys, and wetlands, populated by streams, many of which dry up in the dry season. The wetlands support the rice production industry. The indigenous rice, *Kawumɔ*, however, grows on both dry and wetlands. Two rainy seasons (May, June, and July) and (September, October, and November) provide sufficient rainfall that supports the production of staple food crops such as maize, cassava, plantain, yam, cocoyam, groundnuts, varieties of beans and vegetables. Additionally, cocoa and palm fruits are grown as cash crops while some youth have also diversified into ginger production on a commercial basis. In the 1960s and 70s, coffee was grown but coffee

production has completely collapsed due mainly to the intensive labour involved in growing it.

The rice production industry is vibrant and remains the domain occupation mainly for women. It has undergone a major transformation from mechanical and laborious production that relied solely on physical labour and the natural fertility of the soil, to mechanized production, accompanied by the use of agrochemicals and organic and chemical fertilizers, resulting in higher production in contemporary times. The researcher in the 2022 harvesting season counted thirteen (13) varieties of rice that can fall into two major groups; brown/red rice and white rice. The continuity and change of the rice industry as a heritage and commercial venture in the study area is in itself a subject of research.

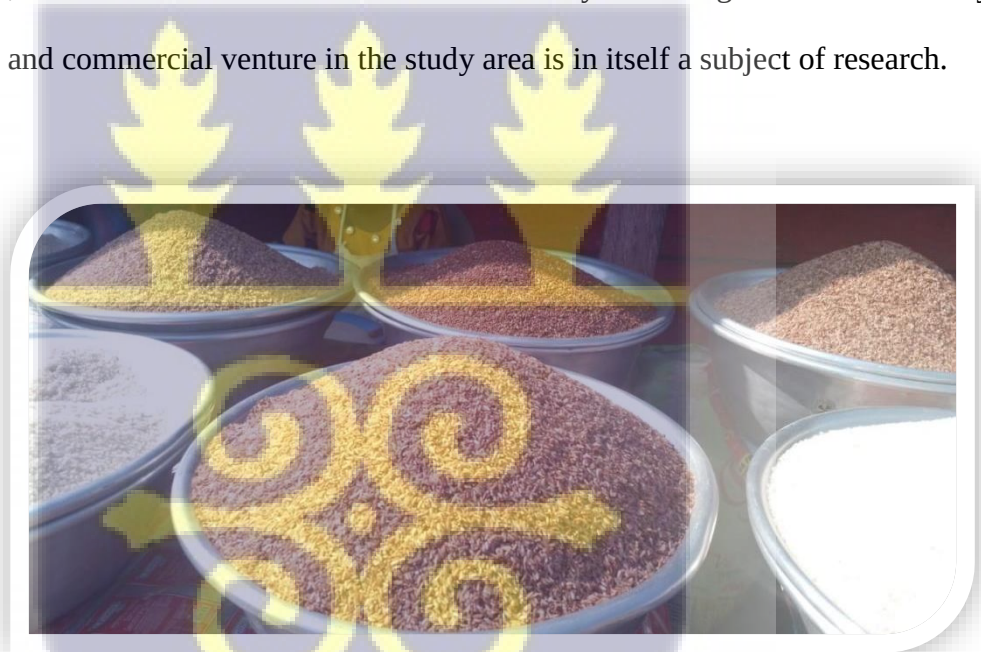


Image 4: Varieties of milled (brown and white) rice, one of the major staples in the study area. Field data February 2023.

Subsistence poultry and livestock keeping is also practiced. The dense forest vegetation of the middle belt in Ghana supports hunting for game. Wild animals such as boars, different species of antelopes, rodents, squirrels, and a variety of birds (habitat and migrating birds)

are hunted for game. Major fish sources are however from neighbouring freshwater fishing communities, including Abotoase and Dambai along the river Volta about, 40 kilometres away from the study area. The forest vegetation is a habitat for different species of snails and a variety of mushrooms as forest products for nutritional purposes. Banana is the most common fruit and it is available all year round, though coconuts and oranges are also common. During their seasons, avocado pear, and mango are in abundance and often go to waste.



Image 5: The carcass of a boar killed with a gun in the study area about to be dressed.

Field Data: Feb. 2023. Credit: The researcher.

3.14 Land Tenure System

In Akpafu, two forms of land tenure system are observed. There are family lands that are for individual family members and are inherited and passed on to succeeding family members. It is on these family and individual lands that commercial crops like cocoa and oil palm are grown. The other form is the clan lands which are the property of the clan and for that matter its members. By one's status as a member of the clan, one is entitled to a

parcel of land, at least to grow food crops. Clan lands are clan members and social capital. One can however not grow commercial crops on clan lands because the land does not belong to individuals. Only perennial food crops are permitted, and once you have harvested your crops, the land returns to the clan, and any other kin of the clan can work on it.

There are also *forest reserves* in the mountainous areas, supposedly government lands. As a result of the population explosion, *forest reserves* are gradually being invaded by the youth, especially for the cocoa industry.

3.15 Kawu Architecture Across Time and Space

One unique feature that was traditionally associated with the people of Akpafu was their flat-roof mud buildings. The brown soil is dug and soaked with water for at least two days. After the foundation of up to one foot is dug, the soaked and sticky soil is then kneaded into a paste and molded into balls and used to lay walls of up to thirty (30) centimetres high with the ideal single room size of about 8x10 feet. The walls of the room are straightened by experts using special straightening tools. The walls are left to dry for at least three days during which fresh soil is dug and soaked for another layer. Kneading, molding, and laying continue until the ideal height of nine to ten feet is reached with one side of the building sloping for easy drain of rainwater when roofed. Beams of fan palms or other hardwoods that grow naturally are then felled and beams made from the logs by men with the skill for that purpose, are used for roofing. The beams are laid on the last layer at about two feet intervals. Very strong stakes of special hard shrubs are cut to a length of about six feet. The stakes are crossed at very close intervals on the beams and the kneaded soil paste is again used to cover the stakes at the exterior and the interior and both sides are made smooth by

hand. After plastering, Swiss bentonite clay is then soaked and used to polish the walls mostly the inside. Palm fronts traditionally were used for the doors, and often, there were no windows for security reasons and also because the rooms were always cool. Wooden doors and windows were later introduced. The buildings were commonly referred to as (*isã yo*) *mud roof buildings* with cool temperatures. These buildings were the architectural signature of the people of Akpafu in the pre-colonial and the colonial era and Akans, Eñes, missionaries, and colonial officials used it as the people of Akpafu identification trademark.



Image 6. A picture of Akpafu Todzi with flat mud roof buildings, taken by early missionaries (probably between 1898 and 1920).

The five conical roofed smaller structures in front at the right end of the photograph are the traditional rice silos (Siwú-plural) and (owú-singular) in which unmilled rice was stored after harvest. Siwú are completely extinct at Akpafu because rice is now stored in bags and kept indoors. The label below the picture “**The City of Akpafu Todzi As it Appeared 200**

Years Ago” is erroneous. This is because the first European (German) missionaries arrived in Akpafu in 1898. 1898-2023 is 125 years. It can therefore not be 200 years ago.

Credit: Mark Dingemanse collections from Bremen-Germany, kept by Mr. Tragotte Boateng (80) Kpadzia clan head at Akpafu Todzi.

The rooms were mostly single though one could make two or more rooms. These buildings have become rare, and the researcher can say on authority that only one such dilapidated structure is left at Akpafu Todzi. It has been left just for heritage and tourist purposes. It should be noted that the construction of these buildings was an entirely communal affair, mostly in kind, and immediate family and clan kin were at the centre of their construction.



Image 7: The last and the only surviving all-mud flat roof building in the entire Akpafu communities (still at Akpafu Todzi) which was the unique traditional architecture with which Mawu's were identified, until the late 1970s. ... Source: Field data, April 2023.

The immediate post-independent era saw the mud roof replaced by thatch on mud walls. Again, no such thatch roof building was still at Akpafu at the time of the fieldwork. In the

21st century, there is neither mud nor thatch roof at Akpafu. Though most walls are still made of red kneaded swiss clay, all the roofings are now made of corrugated iron sheets. Indeed, most buildings constructed in the 21st century are made of cement blocks or bricks, with iron rods and concrete mortar to bond the blocks or bricks, and are plastered and painted with modern paints.

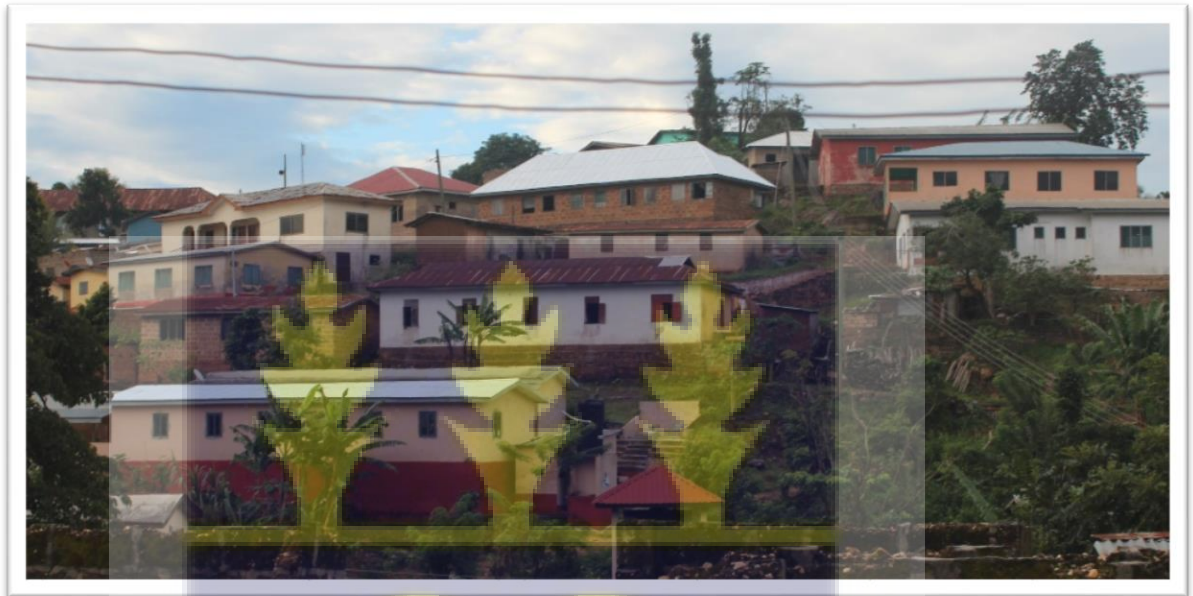


Image 8: A pictorial view of buildings made up of concrete blocks and roofed with corrugated iron sheets in Akpafu Todzi in the 21st Century. Field data -November 2022.

3.16 Christianity and Formal Educational in Akpafu

The first Christian organization to make in-roads at Akpafu were the Basel Missionaries who started the Presbyterian Church and the schools simultaneously after 1898 according to the E.P. centenary celebration in the Akpafu brochure. GILLBT 2009 Siwu calendar, produced for the New Testament Bible translation into Siwu, traces the first school established at Akpafu by these missionaries to 1899. The missionaries remained at Akpafu until the First World War broke out (1914-1919). The missionaries used Akwapim Twi in

their missionary activities. After the war, the Germans took over in Akpafu area with the Ewe church. After 1923 according to the E.P. centenary celebration in Akpafu brochure, the Ewe church became autonomous. Much later, the Scottish Missionaries became the patrons of the Ewe church and christened it the Ewe Presbyterian Church and finally the Evangelical Presbyterian (E.P.) church. It is the most dominant church in the study area. It should be noted that Ewe was the language of the church and Siwu was not part of the Christian religion at the time as compared to the 21st century when there is the New Testament a Bible translation in Siwu. Reading the Bible in Siwu has become very popular in many of the churches in the study area.

Christian evangelization process paved the way for the establishment of basic schools in all Akpafu communities. In 1944, the Kawu Senior School was established at Akpafu Mempeasem according to Ogbetey (1998). This post-primary school prepared students for teacher training colleges as, well as employment in the public and civil service and served all of Akpafu and the neighbouring Lolobi, Likpe, Santrokofi, and Buem communities. The Middle schools replaced the Kawu Senior School in the late 1950s.

In 1978, General Kutu Acheampong's government started the Junior Secondary School concept on an experimental basis at Akpafu Mempeasem alongside the Middle Schools in other Akpafu towns. Akpafu Experimental Junior Secondary School again became the highest institution of learning in Akpafu and attracted students from neighbouring communities until 1990, when the Junior Secondary School concept was rolled out throughout Ghana and the Middle Schools were phased out. In 1991, Akpafu Senior Secondary Technical School (ASSETS) was established again at Akpafu Mempeasem and it has remained the highest institution of learning at Akpafu. Many citizens of all Akpafu

towns have pursued education to its apex and in the 21st century, there are medical doctors, academics, lawyers, engineers, senior public and civil servants as well as security men and women many of whom do not reside at Akpafu but pay visits. There is also a pull of retired public and civil servants at Akpafu and in the urban areas.

From the late 1960s, different charismatic churches emerged at Akpafu and have grown in numbers. The Catholic Church announced its presence in Akpafu in the 1980s at Akpafu Mempeasem and in the late 1990s at Akpafu Odomi.

In 1991, there was a breakaway in the E.P Church resulting in the sister church, the Global Evangelical Church. The Evangelical Presbyterian Church and the Global Evangelical Church are the dominant churches at Akpafu. Other charismatic churches like the Church of Pentecost, the Apostolic Church, and the Assemblies of God Church among others have made inroads in the study area.

3.17 The Population of Siwu Speakers.

The high rate of rural-urban migration in the study area, especially among the youth, does not easily allow for the accurate projection of Siwu speakers. Kropp-Dakubu and Idah (1988) put Siwu speakers at about 9,000. The 2010 population and housing census pegged the figure at about 11,000 people. Unfortunately, the 2021 housing and population census figures failed to capture the projected number of Siwu speakers, and instead, provided the entire population of the newly created Guan district, made up of three (3) Guan languages; Siwu (Akpafu-Lolobi), Sékpélé (Likpe) and Silé (Santrokofi). The population for the entire district is 28,238. If Akpafu-Lolobi, followed by Likpe and Santrokofi is the order of population density in the district, then it is convenient to project Siwu speakers to be between fourteen and fifteen thousand (14,000 or 15,000) people at the time of data

collection. This figure represents speakers resident in the study area and does not include a chunk of non-residents.

3.18 Siwu Performing Arts

Generally, the occasions that bring rich Siwu literary performance genres to the fore are the funeral rites of male traditionalists, chiefs, and custodians of the Kawu state (ɔmankrados). During funerals for Christians and others (people who are neither Christians, traditionalists nor Muslims), the performance of dirges by women accompanies the funeral rites on the day of burial, the day after burial, or, on the fifth day. These five days of mourning are also accompanied by different forms of indigenous drama, rooted in Akpafu customs, staged before a mixed or gendered audience. Again, during the rice festival celebration (kamɔ ideyi), different Kawu literary genres are also showcased.

Other specific ceremonies where Kawu arts are performed are during age group sect formation rites, traditional marriage ceremonies, a celebration of fortune, and a celebration of the survival of misfortune or ill-health. These are occasions where members of the kin, the extended family, and the clan assemble and share a drink. Specific Siwu poetic recitations are performed, before an audience, in a call and response, to crown these gatherings. These ceremonies and their associated artistic performances reflect Kawu's communal values and experiences in a cultural context, and the ceremonies are used to express the communal renewal of cherished Kawu values. The Siwu poetic recitations at many of these events constitute chapter five of this research.

3.19 Conclusion

This chapter attempted to present in brief, the history, worldview, social relations, and diverse ethno-culture of the study area. The physical and social environment, by way of language ecology, has been discussed. The various aspects of Akpafu socio-cultural practices and ethnography explained in this chapter inspire literary performances and are the pivot on which Siwu literary traditions revolve. Different Kawu cultural aspects that reflect on different Siwu performance genres constitute the spirit and soul of the Siwu literary genres which are preserved in oral forms. The literary genres from the Siwu language ecology show how Siwu relates to its physical and social environment which is the spirit and letter of this research.



CHAPTER FOUR

SIWU DIRGES

4.0 Introduction

This chapter on research findings examines Siwu literary forms identified in the study area. The various genres identified in the course of the study are classified as non-active and active. Tales/ stories, riddles, myths, praise poetry (especially in drum language), divination text, and lullabies are categorized as non-active literary forms, because, though they exist in the Siwu language, their performance is rare and on the verge of extinction. Dirges (performed by women), ceremonial recitations (performed by men), ritual drama (staged by men and women), drum/horn language, libation text, and proverbs can be classified as active literary genres in the study area because these forms are in constant performance. Three active literary forms: dirges, ceremonial recitations, and ritual drama are examined in-depth.

The chapter progresses with the place of dirges in Akpafu burial rites and is followed by the structure of Siwu dirges in terms of their lyrics. The chapter further looks at the particular dirges that are performed at a specific period of mourning, from the vigil through to the day of burial, and ends with the dirges performed on the day after burial (*ikisira iyi*). The functions of the Siwu dirges are further examined.

There are two categories of the Siwu dirge repertoire: dirges performed in slow rhythm in sitting or standing position and quick rhythm dirges that are accompanied by communal processional dance. Dirges in the two categories are thematically grouped and functionally analysed, paying close attention to their literary merit and their interaction with their ecology, which sits with eco-linguistics. The contextual meaning of the lyrics of the dirges

and the cultural significance of their performance is key in the analytical process. This chapter is very relevant to the thesis because it attempts to intellectually study one of the authentic and preserved Siwu literary heritage that cuts across time.

4.1 The Place of Dirges in Akpafu Burial Rites

Death and interment rites across different cultures are associated with different rituals, meant to give the deceased eternal rest. These rituals are also meant to satisfy the living that they have executed their responsibilities to the deceased and other kin in the land of the dead. It is this cultural obligation towards deceased kin that gives rise to the performance of dirges at different stages of mourning in Akpafu. The word ‘dirge’, originally Latin, was written as *drige* and was borrowed into the English language to mean “chanting or reading of the office of the dead as part of a funeral or memorial service”⁴² and later as a funeral song or lament as explained by Tobalase (2014). Akporobaro (2001) defines a dirge as “a highly stylistic form of expression that is governed by specific poetic recitative conventions used to express the feelings of the mourners in a determinate form and performance procedure.”⁴³ Nketia (1955) defines a dirge as “a traditional literary expression in a more or less finished state and is capable of being used in different funeral situations”⁴⁴. Adiabu,(2022) the principal informant on Siwu dirges explains that a dirge(*ɔnɔ-singular*) or dirges (*sinɔ-plural*) are “songs or poetic expressions that one sings or expresses during the period of mourning the dead in order to be consoled”⁴⁵. The

⁴² Tobalase, A. (2014) The dirge as a literary and cultural expression: a study of the Awori people of Lagos state, N, Nigeria in Reserachgate publication.net publication 3117661366.

⁴³ Akporobaro F. B. O. (2001) Introduction to African Oral Literature. Lagos: Lighthouse Publishing Company Limited page 66.

⁴⁴ Nketia, J.H.K(1955) Funeral Dirges of the Akan People, Exerter, James Townsend and Co. Ltd. Page 110.

⁴⁵ Interview with Afua Inyama Adiabu on Aug. 3, 2021 at Elmina

sorrowful expression of different songs by individuals and groups (women) in performance, in the course of mourning the dead, sits within Siwu dirges performance space. Different Siwu dirges are used in different funeral situations.

When people pass on in the study area, the mortal remains are either buried within forty-eight hours or preserved at the mortuary for some time before burial. This is based on the financial capabilities of the bereaved family. On the eve of the burial day, a vigil is kept by the family and clan *to keep watch over the body* before the burial. The vigil and the burial ceremonies are superintended by religious bodies, either Christian or traditional. No matter which religious body presides over the ceremony, individual women and groups are provided with the opportunity to perform different dirges as part of the funeral ceremony.

The solemn communal singing of dirges before a body lying in state, and on the second and fifth day of burial, and the more popular communal processional singing and dancing to dirges are intrinsically linked with the funeral rites of adults of both sexes in Akpafu. Both natural and accidental deaths of adults witness the performance of different sub-genres of dirges. Mourning and burial of a child is not accompanied by dirges in the study area because such death is not culturally celebrated and it is a means to register protest at death culturally. In the study area, the communal performance of dirges is strictly restricted to funeral space, and it is culturally a domain for women. However, it is common to see individuals, mostly elderly women, who have either lost so many kith and kin or witnessed different deaths, sing dirges in their daily chores in a solitary mood as they reflect on life and death in old age. Culturally, all Siwu dirges are intangible Siwu literary heritage products, and their authorship is communal, with the setting of their composition unknown. Though the dirges were composed by artists who were once alive, none could be

remembered and credited to have composed any single dirge during the entire fieldwork. However, it is important to state that the message in the dirges, what the dirges draw from the cosmology, social relations and the language ecology of the study area is still relevant even in contemporary times.

The presence or absence of the performance of dirges during the period of mourning is a measure of successful funeral rite or otherwise. Performance of dirges, spice Kawu funerals, and either evoke an atmosphere of mourning or lighten the burden of the weight of mourning weight. In the study area, different stages of mourning; the commencement of the vigil ceremony, the midnight of the vigil night, and the dawn of the day of burial have specific dirges common to these periods, mostly performed in a solemn mood by relatively older women. The day of burial from about 8 am till the burial time, provides the opportunity for professional singing and dancing to dirges communally by as many women as possible in good health to do so at the funeral space. This is because culturally, public performance of Siwu dirges is strictly gendered, and executed mainly by women, often above childbearing age. Though not a taboo, mothers with babies strapped at their backs are also exempted from funerals due to the inconvenience of having to carry a child to perform. It is not a taboo for a man to perform dirges publicly or privately, however, it is a domain for women culturally in the study area. Children below eighteen years are also not part of funerals in the study area because of the belief among the people of Akpafu that some children's spirits may delight in death when they (children) see dead bodies.

The researcher has observed similar public performance of dirges by women in Ewe and Akan communities in Ghana. In sharp contrast, however, the researcher has observed that in Dagomba and Dagao communities in Northern and Upper West regions respectively in

Ghana, it is the men that stage public performances of dirges amidst drumming. The researcher has further observed that among the Birfor and Mabilia of the Upper West region of Ghana, both men and women combine to perform dirges.

In the study area, the day of burial, the day after burial (*ikisira iyi*), and the fifth day of burial (*ayi aru*), counting the day of burial as the first day, the people of Akpafu have cultural and therapeutic rites, accompanied by a specific performance of dirges by women. The researcher's engagement with the performance of dirges reveals two common genres. The first is the solemn dirges performance, executed strictly by voice and gestures, either in standing or sitting position around the dead body when it is lying in state. Between two to five elderly women perform these solemn dirges in a chorus, with the lead singer calling the solo of the dirges before the others respond with the chorus. These dirges are performed around the deceased, as the body is laid. On the day after burial and the fifth day after burial, these solemn dirges are performed communally as signature tunes that usher the second and fifth-day burial rites that assemble women.

The second sub-genre of dirges consists of quick rhythm dirges that are performed sometimes with castanet and rattle(s), with different body movements and gestures by way of dancing before an audience/mourners in a public space. The performance of quick rhythm dirges is a communal affair, and many women who are in physical and psychological health to do so, join the communal processional performance of this category of dirges. About fifty women or more were counted performing these dirges in procession during the fieldwork. The research revealed that the communal performance of dirges is also enhanced by the personality of the deceased, with regards to his or her contributions to building his or her community, as well as, his or her social relations with others. When

good things are said of the deceased, many women join the communal processional performance by way of paying tributes to the deceased. The performance space available at the funeral ground also plays a role in the number of women that may join public performances of dirges. Naturally, spacious funeral grounds appeal more to public performances. Public performance and dancing to dirges in Akpafu is similar to Nketia's (1955) assertion that the performance of dirges shows glaring gaiety and satisfaction of fulfillment of a cultural rite among the women performers during the period of mourning.

4.2 The Structure and Performance of Siwu Dirges

A study of the lyrics and structure of Siwu dirges shows that they are made up of short lines, numbering from two lines to as many as thirty-four lines in a dirge. These lines are variedly repeated over and over again in the course of the performance. In some cases, a dirge is just a short poetically condensed line, repeated with different tones for a performance. The lead singers call out the dirges, while the other performers respond in a chorus. The study of Siwu dirges reveals three elements of their composition and performance. These are music, poetry, and dance (body movement), which collectively convey the meaning, function, and aesthetics of the performance of dirges. Orality and kinetics are the tools with which Siwu dirges performers create the aesthetics of the performance that are visible to the mourners (audience). It is the poetic elements, and to some extent, the dance, that are the focus of the discussion in this chapter. This is because the researcher does not have the skill and knowledge for analysis of musical notation, pitch, and related technicalities associated with the musical components of the performance of dirges. Siwu dirges' performance is interspersed by cries, wails, and sobs which represent

sorrowful expression by the performers and the entire community. According to Agawu (1998), some of these wails and sobs are “sometimes genuine and sometimes feigned.”⁴⁶

One very common feature of ending lines of Siwu dirges is the linguistic prosodies that Nketia (1955) calls “junctural prosodies”. It is common to see two same vowels (ee, aa, oo, ii, ɔɔ, etc.) or two different vowels (ea, ao, oa, etc.) together, ending the solo and chorus of many dirges. These prosodies serve as ending points of a solo of a dirge for the chorus to start or end the dirge. These prosodies also echo the meaning of the dirge. The call and the response feature is, however, the most dominant peculiarity in Siwu dirges repertoire. The call-and-response feature is very effective because it provides an opportunity for communal participation by as many people as possible.

There are also common stock expressions that are recited within the Siwu dirges performance. Very common stock expressions are “*If we had known that there was death, we should not have come*”, “*There is sickness, yet there is no cure*”, and “*There is the path that leads there, and yet there is no path that leads here*”. These stock expressions are interjected into the different genres of Siwu dirges for aesthetic effect. Again, there are different kinds of stylistic qualities associated with literary devices in Siwu dirges. The most common ones identified are repetitions, imagery, metaphor, rhetorical questions, allusions, idiophones, and above all tonality. It is in careful analysis of these literary devices and related texts in different funeral contexts that the cultural and literary meaning of a dirge is revealed. There are common dirges that cut across all funerals, however, specific funeral contexts reveal different genres of Siwu dirges.

⁴⁶ Agawu V. K. (1998) **Music in the Funeral Traditions of the Akpafu** in *Ethnomusicology*, Vol. 32, No. 1 pp 79.

The performance of a dirge involves the call and response of a particular dirge for up to two minutes or more before another is tuned in by the lead singer. This is a prominent feature of the performance. Though the lead singers do not go through a formal apprenticeship, they know their art, because of association with it over time. Acquisition of the art of performing Siwu dirges comes naturally with interest and regular participation in the performances during funerals. Another observation during the fieldwork is that, though dirge performances are communal, it behoves the immediate relations of the deceased: daughters, female relations, and the women of the clan of the deceased to make their presence visible, often with sobs and weeping in the course of performance. This evokes an atmosphere of mourning among other sympathizers to join the immediate bereaved family at the centre of mourning.

The themes of Siwu dirges reveal deep-rooted traditional wisdom and philosophical assumptions of the individuals who composed them. The composition of Siwu dirges is inspired by eco-linguistics from which metaphors, imagery, and allusions are drawn. Siwu dirges are heritage products that are performed as received from those who composed and passed them on, and the structure of the dirges is not susceptible to any change, lest one changes a heritage.

In effect, Akpafu ethno-culture, social values, worldviews, and ecological praxis are the anchor on which Siwu dirges pivot. Structurally, the dirges are condensed poetic expressions with deep and different layers of meanings, meant for funeral occasions. This is because the lyrics have metaphorical meanings. The pathos of death and the associated emotional sentiments expressed in a dirge are the representations of the worldview of the people of Akpafu from socio-cultural and literary perspectives. Their expression on stage

collectively culminates into a performance with a common sociological and literary background that is in tandem with the broad African oral literature.

4.3 Continuity and Change in the Performance of Siwu Dirges

Afua Inyama Adiabu (the principal informant on Siwu dirges) reveals that traditionally, it is the performance of some particular dirges that formally usher in the period of mourning after the formal announcement of death by the head of the clan at the community square. These curtain raiser dirges are followed by midnight dirges and then the dawn dirges to end the vigil-keeping rituals in which dirges are part. Dirges that usher in the period of mourning, midnight and dawn performances are specialized solemn dirges, performed by elderly women relations of the deceased, who keep watch over the body until it is taken for burial. Throughout the fieldwork, only dawn performances could be captured live. This is because the playing of loud music (English, Akan, Ewe, and Ga songs, both secular and gospel) with the Public Address (P.A) system has completely overshadowed the first two performances. At Akpafu Odomi and Todzi however, some elderly women, most of the time engage in dawn or early morning performances, especially if the deceased is their kin. In contemporary times, it is possible not to witness the performance of dirges during a vigil and on the day of burial in the study area due mainly to social change and Christian religious activities that characterized the performance of funerals. The day after burial rites by women is however always heralded by dirges. Field inquiry reveals that there is no empirical evidence that the activities of colonialism, formal education, and early Christian converts impacted negatively on the performance of Siwu dirges. It is the emergence of charismatic churches and their attendant spirituality and songs that has discouraged the performance of dirges and their accompanied rites. However, the Evangelical Presbyterian

Church (the most dominant church in the study area), the Catholic church, and to some extent the Global Evangelical Church (the second most dominant church) encourage the performance of dirges when the weather and the funeral environment is conducive for their performance. It was also observed during the fieldwork that on some occasions, performers, bored with Christian religious service, separate themselves at a distance from the main funeral grounds to perform dirges, resulting in multiple activities at the same funeral ceremony.

Another element of social change that seriously strangulates the performance of dirges is music played from the public address system. Playing loud music and dancing has become the norm and is the most preferred at all funerals. Traditionally, the performance of dirges is by voice, and fieldwork experience reveals that excellent performances are those not accompanied by microphones. This is because the microphone echoes the call and this may result in an untimely response on a specific note, culminating in discord.

4.4 Analytical Frame for Siwu dirges in the Study

The approach to the analysis of Siwu dirges calls for an engagement with the socio-cultural complexities of the study area that inform the composition and performance of dirges. This is eco-linguistics, which shows how language (Siwu) interacts with its social environment. The circumstances surrounding the death, the age and gender of the deceased, the personality of the deceased, and the rumour surrounding the death among others also dictate the dirges that are performed. This is another angle at which Siwu linguistically interconnects with its social environment. How Siwu dirges interrelate with their socio-cultural environment, in addition to the stylistic features that embellish the dirges is the fulcrum on which the analysis revolves. The theory and practice of hermeneutics; the

interpretation of the socio-cultural meaning of the text, dictates the analytical process. It is about the interpretation of the text within the context in which the dirge is performed.

The dirges that were analysed in this thesis were collected in live performance. They were transcribed and translated into the English language before the analysis. The dirges were classified into two broad categories: solemn dirges performed with slow rhythm and quick rhythm dirges mostly accompanied by dance and other body gestures. The analysis of solemn dirges which are performed at specific times of the funeral is preceded by excerpts of their lyrics. The entire text of these dirges is avoided in the analysis to avoid repetition because the full text of the transcripts is compiled in Appendix A. Quick rhythm dirges that are danced to, due to their relatively high number, are classified into themes. The themes are generally analyzed with purposive sampling of unique dirges or their excerpts for analytical purposes instead of analyzing each of the 60 dirges collected. All the dirges collected are given unique identification codes under their themes in Appendix A.

4.5 Commencement of the Performance of Dirges in Akpafu

Public performance of dirges does not commence by way of mourning until the observations of some traditional protocols that publicly announce the death and funeral. The public announcement is preceded by the observation of traditional protocols such as the declaration that the deceased has fulfilled clan and communal responsibilities, most especially, financial obligations that pave the way for burial. It is after the deceased has been cleared of all obligations or fines that the clan head announces the death and the period of mourning. Any group or individual that failed to observe these protocols and start the performance of dirges, amidst wailing, could be heavily sanctioned, because the death and funeral have not been announced. The entire community is assembled at the meeting place

of the paternal clan of the deceased. The paternal clan is key because the people of Akpafu inherit patrilineal, and so individuals owe allegiance to their father's clan. In circumstances where the biological father is not from Akpafu, or could not be identified at birth, the maternal uncles of the deceased assume the responsibilities as surrogate fathers.

After the formal announcement comes the cleaning of the body and laying it in state, all executed by experienced elderly women who, in most cases are above childbearing age. These are mostly the maternal relations of the deceased. Nursing mothers and their young children are often not allowed close to dead bodies because of the trauma it can have on both the mothers and their children. It is after the successful execution of these traditional protocols that the performance of dirges begins.

There are specific dirges (to be discussed anon) that are performed to commence the period of mourning. To usher in the funeral, a deceased male gets three different symbolic dirges and a female gets an additional dirge. The additional dirge for deceased females stands for an extra honour for the troubles women go through during the period of pregnancy, labour, and as mothers and nurturers of humanity.

These dirges are traditionally performed solemnly by very elderly women present, in a very sombre atmosphere, shrouded by the weight of death and mourning around the deceased lying in state. Siwu dirges are started in two ways. The first involves tuning up a dirge that has no chorus for others to join and the second involves tuning the solo of a dirge, for others to join with the chorus in a call-and-response fashion. The lead singers with mastery over the art of tuning up dirges know themselves and take turns to lead the performers.

4.6 Curtain Raiser Dirges

1A

Onre sire o
Onre sire nii
Eee irɔ yɔn
Onre sire somolɔɔ

He/She is asleep
He/She is soundly asleep
Yes it is soothing for him/her
He/She is so soundly asleep

1B

Nna losen kuwe
Onre sire o
Onre sire nii
ɔna be

Who has laid him or her the mat?
He/She is asleep
He/She is soundly asleep
What did he/she get?

1C

ɔna be dzamana
ɔna be
Tete/Mma ɔna be

What did he/she get in this world?
What did he or she get?
Father/Mother what did he/she get?

1D

Katu ku adzadzen
Mare mairengen
Katu ku adzadzen
Makpi mairengen

A solemn flowing river
We do not sleep and wake up
A solemn flowing river
We do not die and wake

In the study area, it is common for the women mourners to comfort themselves that the deceased is asleep when laid in state. In some cases, the deceased lying in state appears to be soundly asleep and so for the people of Akpafu, and in particular the women, comforting themselves that the deceased is just comfortably asleep, like any other human being in this early transition stage is a source of consolation. Again, at this early stage of the period of mourning, the palliative conviction, by way of solace is that the deceased ‘would wake up’ since he/she *is asleep*.

The burial items of the people of Akpafu include the burial mat (*onyi kla*), which is provided by the maternal uncles of the deceased. This is one of the items the deceased is laid on and buried with. This burial mat signifies the 'baby cot' on which the deceased was laid when he/she was born. Upon death, the mother, (represented by maternal uncles and their male children and other relations) is concerned about where their deceased kin is to sleep and subsequently provides this mat-*kuwe*. In the Siwu language, *kuwe*, is also known as *ifera* (though *ifera* is never used in dirge 1B). This is a wooden tray, specially carved from a softwood in the forest and is used for winnowing rice and other related items. It is on this *kuwe* (wooden tray), with bedding lined with cloths to make it soft that babies are traditionally laid on as their cot.

Nna losen kuwe

Who has laid him or her the cot?

Rhetorically, the dirge questions who has laid this mat/cot (*kuwe*) that the deceased is now laid, and he/she is so soundly asleep. Names that reveal the ancestry and identity of the deceased are mentioned in the course of performing a dirge. The names in the full text in dirge 1B in appendix A are biographical names of the parentage and ancestry of the deceased when the dirge was recorded for the first time. These names are substituted in different performances depending on the ancestry and parents of those who have passed on. In dirge 1D above, the deceased, lying in state is metaphorically a quiet flowing stream. Like the deceased who is asleep and does not wake up, so is this stream that does not dry up.

The above dirges demonstrate the reflection of eco-linguistics features in them. Siwu language freely interrelates with its ecology physically and socially in the making of Siwu dirges. The first line of dirge 1B below

Nna losen kuwe

Who has laid him or her the cot?

reinforces the roles of kin to the dead in giving them a befitting burial.

Dirge 2A below

Katu ku asadzen so
Oromaro qe

River and its related items
They have consumed it all

This is the fourth curtain raiser dirge, meant only for deceased females, by way of tribute to women, for their indispensable roles in our societies. A focus group discussion opined that the role of women in human societies can be likened to the essence of water in human life. Water is essential to the human race, and for women in particular, the need for water in domestic spaces is a priority. The death of a woman, in effect, is an exhaustion of the *metaphorical water*, so useful to humanity. This tribute-paying dirge also draws from the Siwu social environment to recognize the role of women. Upon the death of a woman, water, firewood and related items that the deceased has used to feed her kin are what are used to honour her memory. By her death, the stream has metaphorically dried up and it is finished. The dirge further draws attention to the traditional core responsibilities of women in the study area, and stereotypically reiterates the cultural roles of women; drawing water, hewing firewood, cleaning, caring, and feeding of kith and kin.

After the performance of these curtain raiser dirges, other dirges, as below are performed solemnly before midnight dirges.

Si idzro kumekume
Sate se ori
Go kukpi aseri pia
Fie akpeseri na
5. Si idzro kumekume
Sate se ori

No matter the distance
The owner is on the way
There is the path that leads to the land of death
Yet no path leads back to life
No matter the distance
The owner is on the way

Ayo Mma/Tete mre	Yes our mothers/fathers
Solo II	
Si idzro kumekeme	No matter the distance
Sate sɛ ɔri	The owner is on the way
Gɔ boba kayi nɛ	What did we come
10. Be boba boadɔ boɔɔ	To the earth for
Si boye sɔ kukpi pia	If we had known that there was death
Tei boiba	We would not have come
Si idzro kumekume	No matter the distance
Sate sɛ ɔri	The owner is on the way
15. Ayo Tete/Mma	Yes Father/Mother
Chorus	
Solo III	
Si idzro kumekume	No matter the distance
Sate sɛ ɔri	The owner is on the way
Si boye sɔ kukpi pia nɛ	If we had known there was death
Te bɔsɛ Lama ku onre krɔɛ	We would have stayed with God and the wife
20. Bo fɔa kulɛ	And pleased them
Si idzro kumekume	No matter the distance
Sate sɛ ɔri	The owner is on the way
Ayo Mma mre	Yes mothers

Focus group discussion of the analysis of the above dirge resulted in two interpretations over who “the owner” is and both views are stated here. The first meaning of “the owner” represents the collective relatives of the deceased who are alive and have heard of the death, and because they are genuinely concerned, are on their way to the funeral. In the past when there were no mortuary facilities, dead bodies were buried the following day or on the third day after death. One reason why vigil is kept traditionally is to give relations far and near the opportunity to attend the funeral of their kin. In most cases, very responsible kin of the deceased, in good physical and financial health attempt to be present at the funeral because the deceased is theirs and they have a responsibility towards the burial. Consequently, those keeping vigil encourage themselves that “the owners of the deceased (other members of the family) are on the way” to the funeral.

The second interpretation of “the owner” refers to the ancestors who are on the way no matter how long one lives on earth, to welcome one of their kind who has joined them. In the Siwu worldview, just as in many African societies, ancestors and ancestress have a responsibility to welcome their newly arrived kin to the ancestral world. Lines 3 and 4 of the above dirge are stock lines that appear in many Siwu dirges and depict the worldview of the people of Akpafu as well as the frustrations and vicissitudes of life. Line 19 “we would have stayed with God and the wife” also reveals an aspect of Siwu's concept of God, that, Lama (God), is a man with a wife, which is similar to the Ewe's belief that God is a man with a wife, as stated in Dzobo (1990). The junctural prosodies in the form of extension of vowels or a combination of vowels (ao, ea, ii, etc) in the ending lines reflect an expression of despair and related forlorn despondency over death.

Literarily, the words *path*, *distance*, *owner*, and *there* in the above dirge represent metaphors associated with life, death, and life after death, and can be variedly deconstructed. The use of several stock lines, and the repetitions, poetically, gives the dirge aesthetic effects in performance.

4.7 Midnight Dirges

As women sit beside a dead body lying in state deep in the night, with nocturnal creatures like the owl hooting at a distance, death weighs heavily on the mourners.

4A

Ikumu nɔa kano
Olo ilo x 2

Can hear the owl hoot
It is now dead silent x 2

Olo ilo klaklana
Si boye so kukpi pia ne
Tei boi ba
Ikumu nɔa kano
Olo ilo klaklana

It is now dead silent
If we had known that there was death
We would not have come
Can hear the owl hoot
It is now dead silent

Chorus

Ikumu nɔa kanɔ
 ɔlo ilo x 2
 ɔlo ilo klaklana

Can hear the owl hoot
 It is now dead silent
 It is now dead silent

Solo II

Lɔnɔa kanɔ
 ɔlo ilo klaklana
 Yɔ lo so
 Gɔ ɔnyie pia
 Fie kua kɔn kuna
 Lɔnɔa kanɔ
 ɔlo ilo klaklana
 Ayo Tete /Mma

I have heard him/her before
 It is now dead silent
 Now it is quiet
 There is sickness
 Yet there is no cure
 I have heard him/her before
 It is now dead silent
 Yes Father/Mother

Dirge 4A above is a metaphor that illustrates the weight of death, and it is performed solemnly at midnight. In Siwu mythology, the owl signifies an evil omen, and its hooting, with that fearful sound, shrouded with the weight of death at midnight, evokes a sense of trepidation, distress, and despair. Lines 8 and 9 recall the voice of the deceased while alive, and this is compared to the sound of the owl at midnight. Unfortunately, the deceased's voice would be heard no more, unlike that of the owl, which echoes at a distance. Lines 3 and 7 are idiophones *klanananana..... dead silent*, which illustrates the silence at midnight.

Another midnight dirge is 4B

Karu ɔtrɛ gbin gbin
 Masate ɔbo

The earth has trembled with a loud noise
 The owners have arrived.

Focus group members who contributed to bringing meaning to dirge 4B were divided on the meaning of “the earth has trembled and the owners have arrived”. A section believed that after midnight, spirits of the dead (the owners) visit the living to welcome the ‘newly dead’ and their visit is accompanied by the trembling of the earth. Another section felt that the deceased’s arrival in the spiritual world is what occasioned the metaphorical trembling of the earth. The sound of the trembling “ *gbin gbin gbin*” is depicting spiritual events in the spiritual world.

Both interpretations make sense and dovetail with the traditional spirituality of the people of Akpafu. In the study area, there is the spiritual belief that lots of what cannot be seen in the physical world takes place in the spiritual world after midnight and these unseen spiritual events should weigh on mourners who are awake through the early hours of the day. Lines 12 and 13 of 4B convey greetings to the dead, while lines 21 and 22 request the dead to turn and assist the living in overcoming their daily challenges. This reveals the belief of the people of Akpafu that the ancestors/ancestress have the power to assist the living.

Like many African societies, the people of Akpafu, especially the traditionalists revere ancestors and ancestresses and consult them through divination and offering of libation for an explanation of phenomena and guidance. Interestingly, there is no resident traditional priest or priestess in any Akpafu community, at the time of collecting the data that offers this divination services. People in need of such services therefore travel to the neighbouring Guan and Eñe communities and sometimes as far as to the Republics of Togo and Benin for spiritual services.

Ɔwere ɔyi lɛlɛlɛ
Masia kuɖɛ si maba so

The river is flooded
They should use the bridge and come

As pointed out earlier, Siwu dirges contain many metaphors that convey deep and multiple meanings. Line 1 of dirge 4C above is one such metaphor that depicts the expanse of a metaphorical river between the living and the dead over which both the (living and the dead) cross. The living calls on the dead to use the unseen bridge over the expanse and cross to the land of the living for all forms of assistance, while the living, after death, cross this metaphorical river to the land of the dead. During the two major rainy seasons in the area, flooded streams are common scenes in the physical world and it is this physical reality that creatively finds a place in Siwu dirges from literary and spiritual perspectives. The dirge creatively draws from the physical ecology of the study area. Again, it illustrates the belief in the power of ancestors/ancestresses to cross the flooded river and to assist the living.

After the performance of dirges 4A, 4B, and 4C which are purposely for midnight, other solemn dirges may follow until about 3 a.m. when the dawn dirges start. Dirge 4D below was performed during the death of Dr. S.W.K. Atando (85) a medical doctor by profession at Akpafu Odomi in November 2022.

Ɔwereame boi lokpi kutu kãn
Nɛ mme go mesi okpokpo nɛ nda si lobra

An aquatic animal has died of thirst
What is the plight of terrestrial animals?

Very philosophical, the dirge draws the attention of the living to death as the ultimate end. More often when well-to-do people pass on, despite medical care at their disposal, the living, often not well-to-do, wonder about their fate on earth. This is the rhetorical question line 2 above poses. The assumption is that the well-to-do, metaphorically the ‘aquatic animal’ has water, (resources) in abundance and should be able to take care of

their health and live for a long time, unlike the poor (metaphorical terrestrial animals), who live at the metaphorical *bank*. The conclusion: though poverty makes people die of medical conditions that could be treated or cured, how long people live on earth, to some extent, is not about their resources or the social class to which they belong, but the parting words that the creator and the deceased agreed upon.

The metaphorical line 1, *an aquatic animal has died of thirst* is a common scene in real life in the study area during prolonged dry seasons. It can be concluded that the composer of the dirge creatively drew from the environment.

4.8 Dawn and Early Morning Solemn Dirges

Early morning dirges generally convey three sub-themes; they first drum home the finality of death on matters of life. Secondly, these dirges reflect on the uncertain fate of the dependents of the deceased and thirdly, the dirges convey valedictory messages, wishes, requests, and greetings from the living to the dead, through the deceased. It is common in the study area for elderly women who could not keep wake, and for that matter did not perform the late evening and midnight dirges to visit the dead body laid in state in the early hours of the day of burial (before covering the coffin) to perform these dawn or early morning dirges. The performance of dawn dirges is very much alive in the study area. However, it has become the preserve of very elderly women and this points to its possible extinction in the foreseeable future.

When vigil is kept, the mourners look up to see the morning, so they can conclude the obsequies with a burial and then rest. Dirge 5A below

Boo pɛpɛ wenge bonyor
Kapire kasɛ me o
Kaya sɛan simede so

We have seen the morning star x 2
What is my fate (in the coming day)?
Which language will I speak? (in the coming day)?

expresses elation at seeing the morning star(*wenge*) which signifies a new day, and yet the fate of what the morning brings in the coming days in the wake of the death, especially to the dependents of the deceased is uncertain. Focus group members decoded the meaning of dirge 5A as follows: How are the dependents to survive without their breadwinner? Who will they consult on a wide range of issues? How are they going to present their cases at the traditional courts now that the person they consult on such matters is gone? These and many more questions leave lingering doubts in the minds of the dependents of the deceased as a new day dawns and constitute the message of dirge 5A with a rhetorical question, *Which language will I speak?*

Dirge 5B

Kure ire loseisei iyo While dreaming, my door was opened

This dirge metaphorically likens the death of the deceased to a dream, from which the mourners/dependents are waking up. Like dirge 5A, the dependents/mourners wonder about their fate in the coming days.

In dirge 5C below, the mourners appear to be patting themselves on the back for having kept watch over their deceased kin till morning.

Bo kpladza
Bo se kadɛ

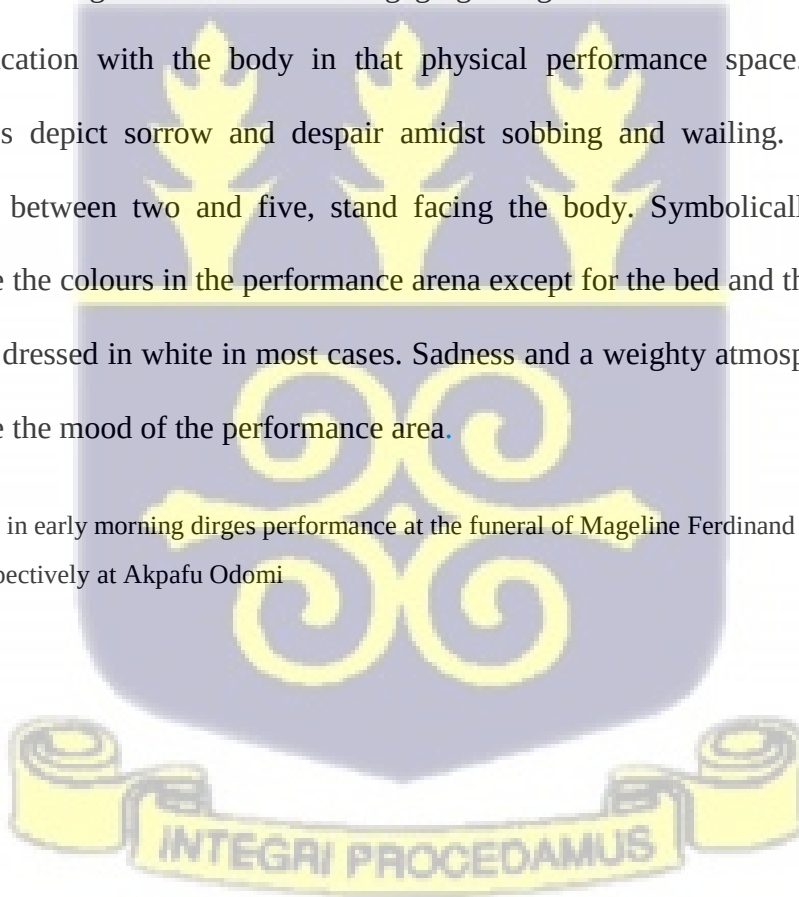
We have kept vigil
We have seen the morning (repeated several times)

The people of Akpafu have been associated with wild animals not only in present-day Akpafu, but also in their migration saga, and some of these animals feed on human beings.

There are stories in Akpafu of how some of these wild animals fed on some corpses that were left entirely alone. Even common rodents like rats and mice are known to have eaten body parts of corpses. This is another reason why relatives keep vigil over corpses to ensure that they bury their relations in whole, without any body part missing. The mourners are therefore proud of having kept eyes on their kin all night. It is also interpreted that they have kept vigil hoping our kin would wake up and yet he/she did not wake up.

Category 'A' dirges in Siwu dirges repertoire, appendix A, (1A-5C) are performed before the deceased, lying in state. The performers face the body mostly in standing or sitting position, waving at the dead or engaging in gestures with the hand by way of communication with the body in that physical performance space. The performers histrionics depict sorrow and despair amidst sobbing and wailing. The performers, normally between two and five, stand facing the body. Symbolically, red and black constitute the colours in the performance arena except for the bed and the deceased which are often dressed in white in most cases. Sadness and a weighty atmosphere of mourning constitute the mood of the performance area.

Image 10 Women in early morning dirges performance at the funeral of Mageline Ferdinand Yaw Adjisam. and Bertina Adjaglo respectively at Akpafu Odomi





Images **9&10 above** Women in early morning dirges performance at the funeral of Mageline Ferdinand Yaw Adjisam. and Bertina Adjaglo respectively at Akpafu Odomi. Source: Field data November 2022 & Feb. 2023

The performance of dawn dirges is very much alive in the study area, however, the researcher observed that only elderly women, above seventy years engage in their performance. There is a high possibility therefore that this sub-genre of dirges could become extinct in the foreseeable future.

Before the public performance of dirges that women dance to communally at the funeral ground, before burial, different women take turns to perform solemn dirges in solo or group performances. Some of these dirges are performed by way of tributes to the deceased by the daughter(s), female relations, or other community members. Women are therefore very important at funerals in the study area because they are not only in charge of the corpse but also have an additional responsibility of keeping the funeral ground alive with appropriate dirges depending on the social status of the deceased and the circumstances surrounding the death.

Some of the dirges in the study area are specific to particular deaths; death by a young man, young woman, accidental death, and deaths that are sudden and shocking have specific dirges. All the dirges collected are thematically classified in Appendix A. Dirge 8A below is used to pay tribute to a (responsible) husband.

Mma nkanya	Salt to my mouth
Sina nkanya	Meat to my mouth
Siri kanya	Yam to my mouth
Abre nkanya	Palm fruits to my mouth
5. Kanya ga bo ɔɛ ala	The mouth that we ate with
Laye wān ɔɔɔɔ	I will say it all
Ayo tete	Yes father

Chorus

Kanya ga bo ɔɛ ala o	The mouth that we ate with
Bɔa ye wān e	We will say it
Bɔa ye wān ee aa	We will say it
Kanya ga bo ɔɛ ala	The mouth that we ate with

La yɛ wǎn d̩uɖu oa I will say it all

In many African cultures, one of the many responsibilities of a husband is to ensure that there is always food for the family, according to Efua Inyama Adiabu, the principal informant on Siwu dirges. It is a cultural norm in Akpafu for a man to leave the house at dawn, with his gun, to look for game and then be on the farm and working before the wife prepares food and joins him. Though gender roles have changed due mainly to social change, it is a man's responsibility to provide raw food staples and meat/fish or housekeeping money with which to obtain these. A husband that fulfills these goals is traditionally honoured in a dirge. It is important to mention meat and yam because culturally, the men in the study area engage in hunting which is a pastime for males for all forms of game, either killed with a gun or trapped, since the study area as well as its historical habitats are forest zones with wild animals that are killed for game. Additionally, yam is the king of food crops grown by males in Akpafu and any man worth his salt must at a point grow yam or buy yam for his family according to Mr. Prosper Kallai an informant on Kawu culture. Salt, meat, and yam represent all the different kinds of foodstuffs and meat that the husband provided for the family for the period of their marriage and the widow makes it public, *I will say it all*, line 6.

It is no longer fashionable in the study area for widows to pay tribute to their deceased husbands in dirges because many do not know that such performance is part of Siwu arts and culture, unlike the past where it was a common practice. The practice was however captured twice during the fieldwork which means it is not completely extinct. Unfortunately, social change favours tributes that are written in the English language which are often read to mourners, some of whom can neither read English nor understand what is

read out to them. Tribute in a dirge reiterates cultural roles from an eco-linguistics perspective. The cultural responsibilities of a husband are re-echoed to mourners at funerals to ensure a peaceful and orderly society.

Stylistically, there is piling and association in the dirge 8A above. There is a piling of food items, *yam*, *meat*, and *palm fruits* and it is associated with the responsibilities of a husband. The last line *I will say it all*, is for emphasis on the execution of the roles of a responsible husband. It must be indicated that only responsible husbands get this tribute.

Boo ro qe	We have finished eating
Boo ro qe nii	We have indeed finished eating
Kpānkpāee	The crow
Ofō me ōnyraoo	Has snatched my ackee fruit

Dirge 8B above equally pays tribute in metaphorical language, with the reference to *the crow snatching the ackee fruit*. With the death of an individual, male or female who provided for the kin and other dependents, all that came from him or her has ceased. Thus *we have finished eating*. It is only responsible men and women who fulfill their obligations dutifully that get such tributes in dirges. This dirge also has imagery that draws from the Siwu language social environment. Foremost, social relations in the study area are such that one hardly lacks, especially food, because the person who has (food items) easily shares what belongs to him or her with neighbours and relations. Family, clan, and social networks constitute social capital in the study area. The death of benevolent individuals therefore creates problems for a wide range of people in the various Akpafu communities, and this is illustrated in an imagery in which a crow snatches ackee fruits from an individual.

In the study area, crows eating ackee fruits (*blighia sapida*), which are also eaten by natives of Akpafu is a common scene. One may set off to get these wild fruits only to discover that crows have eaten all of them as depicted in lines 3 and 4. Ackee fruits, represent all that the deceased has provided for his or her dependents, who are mourning him or her. Crows are metaphorically likened to death which has snatched the deceased, thus denying the dependents gifts and services from the deceased.

Dirge 7C below is performed only at the funeral of a relatively young man who dies in his prime.

Lama awa be	What was God going to cook?
Ɔkpɛti me ɔlɔkɔ ma	That He harvested my fresh leafy vegetable
Lama ku ɔre awa be	What was God and his wife going to cook?
Ɔkpɛti me ɔkɔma i siaa	That He harvested my vegetable on the farm

The young man is metaphorically *a vegetable* that the farmer (his parents and other relations in the funeral context) have left on the field for its seeds, only for God to harvest it. The poet rhetorically asks, *what was God going to cook?* As explained in chapter three, the people of Akpafu over the years have been farmers, growing all kinds of crops including different varieties of leafy vegetables. Farmers intentionally leave very good vegetable crops on the field to obtain quality seeds for the following planting season. It is from the above scenario that the imagery in 7C above was couched. Patrilineal inheritance, where it is the males that increase the family and the clan functionally plays a role in the performance of this dirge. A younger male has the potential to marry and increase his family and clan membership in the community.

Dirge 7C's female equivalence performed for a relatively young woman who dies in her prime is dirge 2B below.

Ma re ma ya manyɔ ɔsile so
ɔsile to bo

Stand out there and admire beauty x 2
Beauty is arriving

The dirge announces the arrival of a beauty in the ancestral world and all are to stare and admire her as she arrives.

4.9 Disclaimer Dirges

It is a common belief in the study area that some deaths are not natural, but linked to the spiritual activities of other people, witches/wizards, or events. Sometimes, deaths are attributed to the deceased's actions or inactions. Again, when some very productive people pass on and there are other less productive in the same family or community, the notion is that the productive person has been killed out of envy.

This same notion exists in the study area when relatively younger and more energetic people die while older people sometimes with health challenges continue to live. It is in response to such beliefs that dirge 6A below is performed to declare innocence of the cause of death.

Mme leitān Lama kuso x 2
N ɔwi lei wo ee
ɔwi lei wo me nii

I did not bribe God
It is not my turn yet
It is just not my turn yet

The principal informant of Siwu dirges in this project (Afua Inyama Adiabu) constantly performed the above dirge, at all funerals at which she was present to declare her innocence over the cause of any death in her community; Akpafu Odomi. This woman is over 106 years and the oldest in Akpafu Odomi and about the second oldest person in the entire study area, and is still in good enough health to go about her duties. Her message is to tell the world, that her turn to die *has not come yet, she did not bribe God to be alive*. The dirge

is a disclaimer that the performer has no hand in the death of the deceased. The above dirge is often performed by elderly women in public spaces to publicly state that, they (elderly women) are alive, by the grace of God, and not because they have ‘bribed’ God to allow them more time on earth. Bribe in context is also interpreted to mean *spiritually* exchanging their death with the life of the relatively young person who might have died. Line 3 sums it all up; *it is just not my turn yet*, their turn would come, but not yet.

Another popular solemn dirge performed at most funerals is 7D below.

Nna ire lofo nnya	Whose is more pathetic?
Makpakpa anya	That of adults is pathetic
Mabiete anyaa	That of children is pathetic
Maproproie anyaa	That of young men is pathetic
5. Mabite anyaa	That of young women is pathetic
Si boye so kukpi pia	If we knew there was death
Te bose Lama ku onre kre	We would have stayed with God and the wife
Bo fa kule	And pleased them
Boofufu ayaa e	That of all of us is pathetic
Boofufu ayaa kre kre kre kre	That of all of us is so so so so pathetic

The dirge reflects on whose death or which kind of death is more pathetic. In some cases when a very old person passes on, there is the consoling assumption that the deceased *has gone home* because he/she is old and has finished his or her God-given task on earth. In reality, however, all deaths evoke a sense of sympathy and each appears sympathetic and thus the question; *whose is more pathetic?* Lines 9 and 10 provide the answer; *that of all of us is so pathetic*. The idiophone *krekrekrekrekre- so so so so so* line 10 is prolonged for as long as the lead singer could prolong it for emphasis and aesthetic effect. The idiophone allude to how sympathetic all deaths are. The dirge is poetically structured with rhetorical questions, repetitions, and idiophones. The creative binary contrasts in the entire dirge,

adults and children, young men and young women, and men and women give the dirge (7D) aesthetic and stylistic values.

4.10 Accidental Death Solemn Dirges

Dirges 9A, 9B, and 9C below go together and are performed only at the funeral of accidental death victims.

	9A	
Ofo to bo		A visitor is arriving
Ma tofo ran		Welcome him/her
	9B	
Mi tan ndzo		Sympathize with him/her
Ndzo, ndzo		Our sympathy, our sympathy
	9C	
Ipo nyenene ide ma		It is a cold dense forest for them
Oyu odema		It is cold for them

It is a common practice among different African societies to handle accidental deaths, including suicide, with special burial rites, and the people of Akpafu are no different in these practices. In the Siwu language just like in Akan, accidental death victim is called *tofo*. In the study area, spirits of victims of accidental death are believed to stay among the living a little longer before departing to the spirit world because they are angry about their sudden exit from the physical world. The best the living can do for them is to sympathize and comfort their spirit. Dirges 9A, 9B, and 9C above recognize the status of these spirits as victims of accidents, most often not through any fault of theirs, and accordingly comfort them. Culturally, accidental death victim's funeral is organized in the forest at the outskirts of Akpafu communities and the body is buried separately, not at the public cemetery for natural death victims simply because their spirits are angry and need to be comforted. At another level, the reason for the funeral at the outskirts and the separate burial is meant to register communal protest at such deaths, most especially suicide, for the living not to

consider such thoughts. Dirge 9C above is an illustration of the cold dense forest in the physical ecology of the study area in which the victims are laid in state and subsequently buried. Culturally, that they are not buried in the public cemetery is another reason sympathetic feelings should be extended to them.

4.11.0 Dirges That Women Dance To In Public.

From about 8 am till the deceased is laid to rest, sometimes in the evening, women sing a sub-genre of dirges with quick rhythms and varied musical notes, with or without a rattle and a castanet and dance in a procession by way of performance at any available space/stage. To a casual visitor to a typical funeral in the study area, it is the performance of these dirges that he or she is likely to see. The dancing takes the form of walking, trotting, calculated steps, both hands on the head, above the shoulder, holding the chin, and using the hand for varied body gestures to symbolise mourning. The more spacious the performance area for the funeral, the more the audience joins the performance and for that matter the larger the participants that perform. The large number of performers appeal more to the audience mourners. The performers are not marked separately in any way from the audience, it is often the case of audience members as performers, because public dirges performance is a matter of interest for all women in good physical and mental health and willing to perform.

The improvised stage for this public outdoor performance largely depends on the venue for the funeral. An average space, measuring fifteen to twenty metres or more, by four metres, surrounded by audience mourners, is enough for performers to sing and dance with different body language from one end to the other by way of performance.

Christian conduct of funeral services has eliminated this cultural practice in most Christian funerals, and in some cases significantly reduced the time allotted for the public performance of dirges amid continuity and change. At Akpafu Todzi and Mempeasem, women are often given about five minutes or more in the course of the funeral service (if the funeral is held as an outdoor event) for this performance. Performance of dirges was not observed in any chapel where a funeral took place during the fieldwork. At Akpafu Odomi, it was observed that the communal outdoor performance takes place for about five minutes or more at the funeral grounds. The performance was also observed on the day after burial (*ikisira iyi*), when women assemble, and it lasts for at least twenty minutes. In Akpafu Adorkor, this performance takes place after the burial, when funeral rites, including donations, are taking place. The longest duration of the performance was recorded at Akpafu Odomi and it lasted for about twenty-seven minutes without a break. It is however not at all funerals that dirges are performed publicly. Weather conditions, the church of the deceased, the social status of the deceased, and other social conditions may or may not allow the performance of dirges.

A common observation during the fieldwork was that a smaller group of women, bored with prolonged Christian funeral service that does not allow women to perform at all or enough, would organise themselves at a reasonable distance from the funeral service and engage in this public performance of dirges to fulfill a cultural need. This would often result in multiple funeral rites for the same funeral without any conflict anyway.

The participants range from as low as five to over fifty women, with the lead singers who know themselves, tuning up the solo of the dirges in turns, for others to respond with the chorus. Thirty-two (32) quick rhythm dirges, in addition to twenty-five (25) slow rhythm

dirges, all totaling fifty (57) have been documented. Attempts to classify all of them (quick and slow rhythm dirges) according to their themes resulted in ten broad categories below. The categories are not ranked in any importance or popularity. Any could come before the other just as the dirges are tuned in, in no particular order of importance, but as the lead singer(s) recall them from memory.

4.11.1 Thematic Classification of Siwu Dirges

- (i) Dirges that convey greetings, messages, and wishes to the ancestral world.
- (ii) Dirges that mourn the irreplaceable loss of human beings.
- (iii) Dirges that remind the living of death as the ultimate plight of the human race.
- (iv) Dirges that pay tribute to the deceased.
- (v) Dirges that advise the living especially (orphans).
- (vi) Dirges expresses the dilemma of the living over death.
- (vii) Dirges that express the negative effect of death on the living.
- (viii) Dirges that abuse or cast insinuations (at the people perceived to have a hand in the death).
- (ix) Dirges that convey communal sympathy to the bereaved family on behalf of those absent at the funeral.
- (x) Dirge that expresses communal appreciation to mourners.

The entire collection is in Siwu dirges repertoire, appendix A. The themes, keywords, and extracts from the samples are broadly analysed below because the required length of the dissertation cannot allow detailed analysis of each dirge.

4.11.2 Dirges That Convey Greetings and Messages to the Dead and Seek the Assistance of the Departed in Overcoming the Daily Challenges of the Living (10A-10E)

Sia se bo ya ma	When you go, we greet them.
Sia wo bo ya m.a	When you reach, we greet them.
Kaɔe ɔɔɔɔ kapia mɔ go	The entire community is there

Extract from dirge 10A above reveals the belief in life after death among the people of Akpafu, a belief very common in many African societies (Mbiti 1969), (Kyeremateng 2010) long before the coming of Islam and Christianity. All those that have departed from the physical world are believed to be in the spiritual world and dirge 10A aptly conveys salutations of the living to all the departed souls through the deceased. Greetings are a very significant social value in the study area and the dirges in this category functionally aim at maintaining ties of kinship between the living and the dead.

It is the belief in the study area that the spirit of the dead has the potential to assist the living in diverse ways. For example, the spirits of the dead are believed to protect the living from danger, ward off evil, increase yield in crops, and even return through reincarnation.

Sia se kenken	When you have journeyed a little
Atui aya	You should stop
Anyor kama	Look back (Do not forget us)
Mabi so	Because of your children
Mawa so	Because of your grand-children

Dirge 10D above reminds the deceased in transit of his/her ethereal responsibilities to the living he/she has left behind for which reason he/she must *stop, look back*, and render spiritual services to the living when he/she has *journeyed a little* into the spiritual world.

In the study area, the deceased in transit or in the luminal state (Austin 1965) is

metaphorically expressed as embarking on a journey. This accounts for line 1 *When you have journeyed a little.*

Iyɔne lanyama nɛ
So ko layɔ me éé

The day I will see them
I will be comforted

Keywords of dirge 10E above crown it all with the hope and desire to see all the departed family members and the larger community reunited someday. That day would be a happy day of reunion. The dirge emphasizes the belief in life after death.

4.11.3 Dirges that mourn the irreplaceable loss of human beings (11A-11E)

The uniqueness of each individual in each community is what informs the lyrical text of dirge 11A below.

Tee bɔa ha ɔmama
Bɔa ha ɔmama x 2
Otrui awini dɛ ɔkati dɛ
Mee bɔa ɔmama
Bo sɛ

We would have bought another one
We would have bought another one
A human being is not like a cloth
Otherwise we would have bought another one
And replace (it) you

The living continue from where others end when they die, that notwithstanding, the unique distinctive qualities of people that pass on, are forever buried with them. Dirge 11A reflects on human behaviour that replaces lost or destroyed physical items, unfortunately, a human being, unlike a physical item like a cloth, is not replaceable once the person passes on. Once dead, the exclusive, unique inborn, and well-nurtured conduct of the deceased is irreplaceable. Fieldwork experience reveals that dirge 11A above is the most popular in the Siwu dirges repertoire because it was performed at all the twenty-two (22) funerals attended.

Katu isɔn ku ata o
Nɛ mme nkare sɔn ku ata lo

A stream does not dry up with the stones in it
Mine has dried up with the stones in it

Dirge 11B above was recorded for the first time when an octogenarian couple lost the last of their three adult children. Physically, when streams in the Siwu natural ecology dry up during the dry season, they leave stones on the river bed as evidence that the stream once had water. Unfortunately for this couple whose children, literary the stones, dried *up* (died) with the water, leaving nothing as evidence of parenthood. The dirge metaphorically draws from its language ecology because the mental picture painted by the dirge is physically common in the vegetation of the study area, especially during the dry season. The repetition is for emphasis and adds to the aesthetics of the performance.

Dirges 11C and 11D

Nnai iyo boa sora ato	In whose house shall we carry down our luggage?
Ato sia iti	Our luggage is on our head
Ato se inyamo	Our luggage is left outside
Nnai iyo boa sora ato	In whose house shall we carry down our luggage?

11D

Ileise ma bi abo	Where would the children be received? x 4
Masei karun maɛ	To relax and eat?
Ileise mawa bo	Where would the grandchildren be received?
Masei karun maɛ	To relax and eat?
Ileise ma bi abo	Where would the children be received?
Ileise ma bi abo kade	Where would the children be received, folks?

These dirges convey the same message of the value of elderly parents or kin that remain at home to receive their younger kin, whenever they (younger kin) visit the elderly. Death however severs this relationship hence the repeated rhetorical questions in dirge 11D, *where would the children and grandchildren be received/welcome and be given food?* Receiving younger relations, and giving them food is one socio-cultural responsibility of the elderly, especially (old women) in the study area.

4.11.4 Dirges that remind the living of death as the ultimate plight of the human race

(12A-12C)

Dirges 12B

Mi lɔ miɔsɔ ka boba

Take the lead, we are coming

This dirge serves as a constant reminder to the living that death is the ultimate plight of humanity and that the deceased has only taken the lead. Line two of 12A sums it up, we *are following them*.

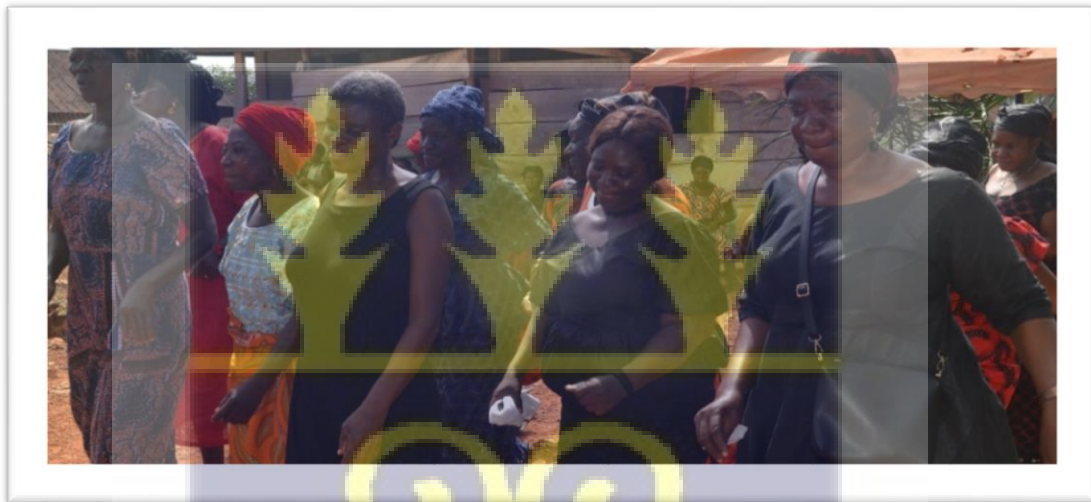


Image 11: Processional outdoor performance of dirges in Akpafu. Women in Akpafu Todzi dancing in a procession to the dirge *Mi lɔ miɔ sɔ kaboba*- *Take the lead, we are coming* at Albert Asempi aka Apuse's funeral (02/03/23). Source: Field data



Image 12: Women in Akpafu Todzi trotting to the dirge *Mma lei wo ɔba, so di si bo ma*- Those who could not come did so due to poor health at Albert Apuse Asempi's funeral (04/07/22) Source: Field data.

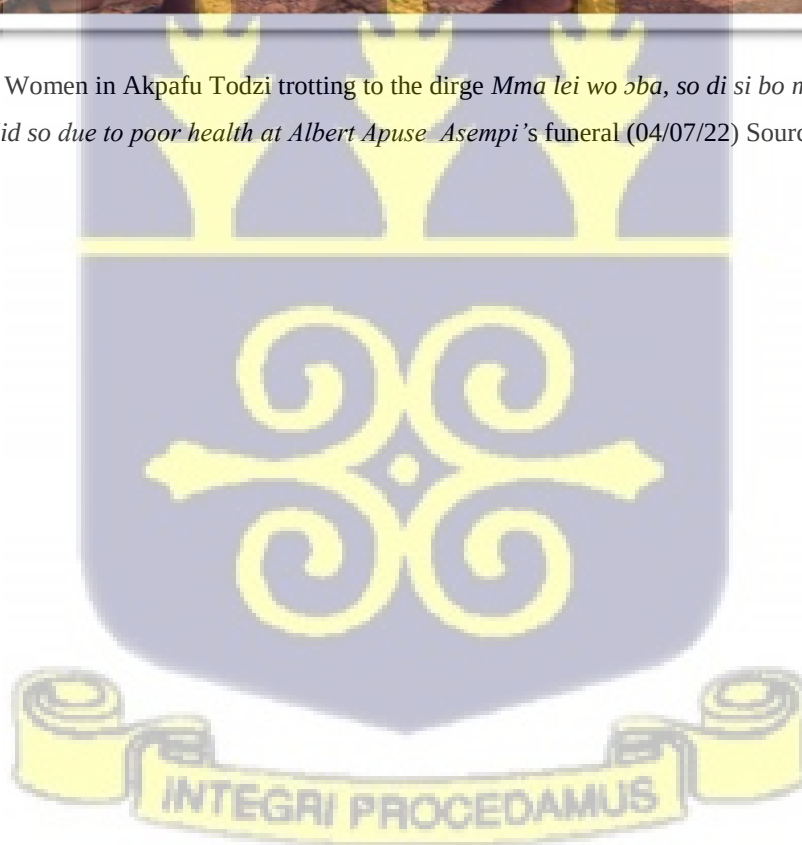




Image 13: Processional outdoor performance of dirges in Akpafu Odomi and a section of the audience watching the performance. Field data Nov. 2022.



Image 14: Processional outdoor performance of dirges in Akpafu Odomi. Field Data November 2022..



Image 15: Women in Akpafu Adokor trotting to the rhythm in communal processional performance of dirges at the funeral of Celestine Agboada-Akpabi. Field data Feb. 2023.



Image 16: A section of the women in performance at Akpafu Adorkor at the funeral of Emmanuel Ogbetey. Field data Feb. 2023.

Image 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16: Processional outdoor performance of dirges in the study area. Field data: October 2022 to April 2023.

4.11.5 Dirges that pay tribute to the deceased (13A-13D)

Atɔme loyi mme iti	My mind is full of issues
Ɔla kasia kɔn na me so	Because I have no avenue to air them
Ayi me iti	My mind is full of issues
Amanɛ kabɔkɔn na me so	Because I have nobody to tell my mission
Ayi me iti o	My mind is full of issues

Dirge 13A above is very common among the repertoire of Siwu dirges meant for outdoor performance and it is performed more often when responsible elders pass on. It is a cultural norm in African societies for younger people to consult elders with vast experience in communal history, cultural practices, and arbitrations of different kinds. Some of these elders are very experienced in how to handle and resolve all manner of local issues and conflicts. They provide virtually free services to kith and kin on such matters, as and when they arise. The death of such a person is therefore a worry because the person to report to or consult is gone and one has to battle with his or her issues. In effect, *my mind is full of issues* because *I have no avenue to air the issues*. The dirge is a tribute to the memory of the deceased, whose services are no longer available to the living.

Ɔran ku u re ne Ikaɖe mremre maɖe	They engage in interesting conversation
Ikaɖe mremre maɖe	They engage in interesting conversation
Ɔbi ku nyi ne ikaɖe mre mre maɖe	A child and the mother engage in interesting chat
Ikaɖe mremre maɖe	They engage in interesting conversation

Dirge 13B above recounts good relationships between husband and wife and between children and parents who often engage in interesting conversations under normal circumstances. Following the death of either a parent or child or a spouse, one can only remember these moments of *interesting conversation* and use them to pay tribute to the memory of the deceased.

4.11.6 Dirges that advise the living especially orphans (14A)

There are unfortunate situations where one of the parents or both die leaving young orphans. When such unfortunate incidents happen, especially in rural communities, the responsibility to raise the children becomes a communal affair. Communal responsibility to these children more often hinged on humility, obedience, and how the children render services to the extended family members and the community at large. If only the children would run errands like drawing water, pounding, fetching wood, and working on the farm among others, they would eat and live. The communal attitude towards orphans is illustrated in dirge 14A below.

Kpise obi kanya iyawe sikua
Si ose katome otan na oqe

An orphan does not feed on weeds
When he/she runs errand, he/she would eat

The dirge performs dual functions; advising the orphans to be humble and render dedicated and honest services to their foster parents and the community at large. Again it reminds the extended family and the community at large of their collective responsibility towards raising these orphans. Despite social changes everywhere, social ties extend beyond consanguinity in the study area, and the entire community is a social capital on which an individual can rely.

4.11.7 Dirges That Express the Dilemma of the Living over Death. (15A-15D)

To be in dilemma in many life situations is a common human experience and in matters of death, such dilemmas are more severe as death weighs on members of the bereaved family.

Si lo ye be ke la nya
Si lei ye be ke la nya.

When I say it, what will I gain?
When I do not say it, what will I gain?

The paradoxical statement expresses the helpless state of the bereaved in the face of the irreversibility of death.

All deaths are painful but sometimes when the impact of death 'A' is weighed against death 'B', 'A' has graver significance and consequences than 'B' and thus dirge 15B

Boere bôle Ours is difficult,
Boeye ine bobara We do not know what we have done *wrong*

This dirge is performed when a breadwinner or a prominent member of a family dies. It is a tribute in memory of the deceased.

4.11.8 Dirges That Express The Negative Effect of Death on the Living. (16A-16C)

The death of a particular person has great potential to change the destiny of the close kin dependents, children, friends, and other associates that the deceased leaves behind. A father or mother who dies in his or her prime leaving young orphans, who cannot care for themselves certainly would make it impossible for the children to realize their dreams in most cases. Similarly, a productive young man or woman who dies leaving elderly parents or dependents also leaves a negative impact on the dependents. There are rare occasions when interventions help the cause of the dependents but in most cases, they suffer adverse effects of the vicissitudes of life. An extract from dirge 16A below

Kukpi so lonyanyani I am dirty because of death
Fie anya me ama me That is why you laugh at me

reflects on the negative effects of death on the living and presents the case of dependents whose life course has been changed for the worse as a result of the death of the person who

provided for them. The lyrics of dirge 16B below illustrate how death can negatively affect and change their fate and the course of their progress.

Kade ɔro me koko	Night has fallen on me
Lo tere ise	I have run
Lei na ma	I could not catch them up
Lo fêrêré	I have flown
Lei tu ma	I could not catch up with them

The dirge(16B) implies that no matter what the dependents of a deceased do, *they cannot catch up* with those who have not suffered their fate. It is a commentary often on the plight of orphans.

4.11.9 Dirges that insult or cast insinuations (at the people perceived to have a hand in the death). (17A-17D)

Using different sub-genres of oral literature to abuse or insult perceived or actual enemies is a sub-field of study in African oral literature and (Avorgbedor 1994) and (Agovi 1994) have published on the subject of insults in African literature. Siwu dirges are also used to insult and cast insinuations at perceived enemies. In the study area, it is common to ascribe some deaths to some individuals because such individuals might have threatened the deceased or may be contesting a parcel of land or some other property. Sometimes, such conflicts are over love relationships, theft, land, political position, or related issues. It is also a common belief in the study area that the spiritual activities of witches and wizards are also responsible for some deaths.

The dirges that abuse and cast insinuations are directed at perceived enemies or a party to a dispute with the deceased. Land disputes are often attributed to some particular deaths in some Ghanaian societies and the study area is no exception. Once a member of party ‘A’

to a property in dispute passes on, the members of party ‘B’ become prime suspects responsible for the death. The dirges under this theme are directed at perceived enemies.

17A

Nɔme ɔtãn mi karu ne
Misu mi karun simise

Today he/she has given you the land
Take your land and live

17B

Yɔɔyɔ ma
Marenren yɔyɔ ma
Marongo yɔyɔ ma

They are satisfied
The men are satisfied
The women are satisfied

The above dirges are performed to abuse and cast insinuations upon the suspected party. The *Halo* practice (formal songs of abuse contest) that (Avorgbedor 1994) refers to is now extinct among the Anlo in the Volta region of Ghana. It is however a social practice among the Anlos to date to abuse rivals and enemies in songs composed extempore just as is the case in some Siwu dirges.

Again, it is common to suspect people, often not members of the deceased’s family as responsible for the death. Upon divination and other spiritual consultations, “people discovered to be responsible” for the death may be linked right to the family of the deceased. Dirge 17C and 17D below are performed to cast insinuations at such family members who are suspected of being behind the death. Metaphorically, the enemies are members of the deceased’s family that are seen as a *snake* and a *dog*, respectively, in the deceased’s backyard, which have bitten their victim to death.

17C

Segbe wû iyo
 Ayɛ lotsuɛ me
 Mmɛ lo bu lo nyor
 Sɔ inyamɔr ayɛ lotsuɛ me
 Segbe ɲu iyo
 Ayɛ lotsuɛ me

It turned out I have been bitten by x 2
 A snake in my own room/house
 I thought it was
 A snake from elsewhere that had bitten me
 It turns out I have been bitten by
 A snake in my own room/house

17D

Kpekpe gɔ lo ye
 Oɔfome kukpa kama
 Ayo ayo ayo ayo
 Kpekpe gɔ lo ye
 Oɔfome kukpa kama

The dog I know
 Has bitten my ankle
 Yes, yes, yes, yes
 The dog I know
 Has bitten my ankle

It came up strongly during focus group discussions that it is the performance of *dirges that abuse mourners* that prompted some churches to completely ban the performance of dirges at their funerals. It was deemed inappropriate for insults and abuses to be publicly performed at a Christian religious gathering. It must however be stated that the dirges that abuse and cast insinuations at perceived enemies are not generally sanctioned communally for performance within the main performance space of the funeral. These dirges are often performed by a self-selected group of women, very close to the deceased, and their performance is outside the main funeral space, resulting in multiple performance activities at the same funeral. Dirge 17C also has creative binary constructs that imply irony; *a snake in my own room, a snake from elsewhere*. It also has an aesthetic effect.

4.11.10 Dirges that convey communal sympathy to the bereaved family on behalf of those absent at the funeral. (18A and 18B)

In the study area, nobody is supposed to go to the farm on the day of burial because everybody must contribute in one way or the other towards the burial and funeral rites. The burial and the period of mourning are a communal affair. It is against Siwu customs to be at your farm or any other business, especially on the day of burial. This is because intermarriages and other ethnic relations have resulted in widely connected social ties in all Akpafu communities. In practical terms, however, not all can attend all funerals in a community for various reasons, including ill health.

Mma leiwo oba
So disiboma

Those who could not come
Are not in good health

The dirge 18A above is performed to console the bereaved family and the mourners that, those who could not make it to the funeral did so due to ill health and not because they have any issue against the deceased and his or her family.

4.11.11 Dirges that express communal appreciation to mourners.

One dirge that is constantly sung at all funerals falls in this category and it expresses appreciation to all members of the community, who in diverse ways assisted the bereaved family in burying their kin. When one is offered a gift or service in the study area, apart from showing appreciation immediately, it is cultural to personally visit the person the following day and show the person appreciation. Dirge 19 below fulfills this Kawu culture that shows appreciation for mourners during the funeral, and it is performed mostly on the day after burial. Different people who assisted in the funeral and burial rites, including

those who supplied firewood, fetched water, palm-wine tappers, and grave diggers among several others are mentioned in the dirge and appreciated.

Solo: Bo pé mi siba ibuéi né mitã bo	We thank you for the assistance you gave us x4
Call: Kaḍe ɔḍuḍu	The entire community
Response: Bo pé mi siba ibuéi né mitã bo	We thank you for the assistance you gave us
Call: Matuḍu dze	Those who fetched water
Response: Bo pé mi siba ibuéi né mitã bo	We thank you for the assistance you gave us
Call: Ndrɔ matudze	Those who fetched firewood
Response: Bo pé mi siba ibuéi né mitã bo	We thank you for the assistance you gave us
Call: Marɔkpai	Palm-wine tappers
Response: Bo pé mi siba ibuéi né mitã bo	We thank you for the assistance you gave us
Call: Marunkrudze	Those who dug the grave
Response: Bo pé mi siba ibuéi né mitã bo	We thank you for the assistance you gave us
Call: Kaḍe ɔḍuḍu	The entire community
Response: Bo pé mi siba ibuéi né mitã bo	We thank you for the assistance you gave us

Different individuals, groups, and organizations who assisted during the funeral are mentioned and appreciated in line with Akpafu communal customs and values. Poetically, the call and response structurally emphasizes the message of gratitude intended in the dirge.



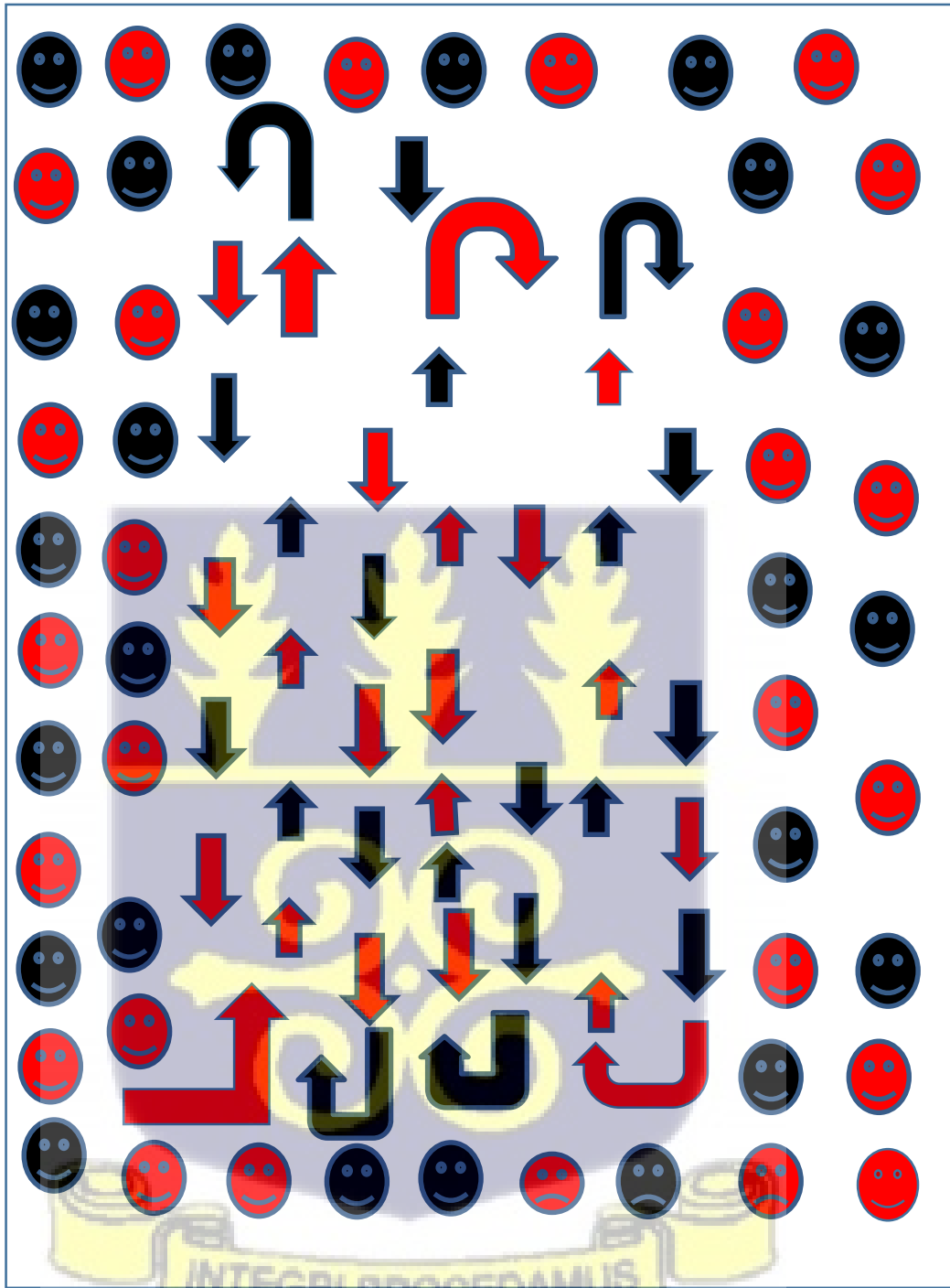


Figure 4. Diagrammatical illustration of the outdoor performance of dirges. Credit: The researcher.

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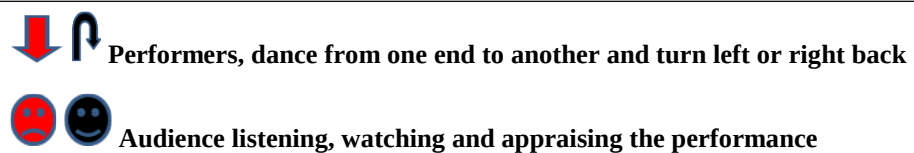




Image 17: The researcher in a focus group discussion with *sino iqi* (dirges) performers with two active performers and two elderly women who were once performers, but are now just among the audience due mainly to their age and health. The venue is Akpafu Odomi.

Field data: December 2022.

4.13 Sociocultural Significance and Functions of Siwu Dirges and how they resonate with the Siwu Language Ecology.

Siwu dirges serve different functions for the performers and for the audience mourners who listen to and watch their performance. These functions include the expression of emotions for psycho therapeutic effects, especially on women, who are caregivers in traditional settings. The performance of dirges momentarily takes attention away from the pain of loss unto a performance art that therapeutically heals mourners from the pain of loss of kin. Paying tributes to the deceased is another function. Specific dirges are meant to recount the deceased's devotion and services to the family, clan, and the larger community, and the

performance of dirges is used as a medium to make these virtues, services, and achievements public by way of tributes. There are other functions (which are extensions of tributes) that express ideal husband and wife or children and parental relationships.

In the course of the performance of Siwu dirges, especially slow rhythm dirges, a knowledgeable and skillful performer narrates within the resting moments of the dirge, important biographical events in the life of the deceased, and at the same time provides insight into the maternal and paternal ancestry of the deceased. This is similar to the cultural roles of the griots and griottes in the Sahelian region in many West African societies as stated by (Sidikou 2001). In effect, individual and family identity construction through biographical enactment is another key function associated with the performance of

Siwu dirges.

An equally important function is the use of dirge medium by the living to communicate with the ancestors/ancestress. While singing, a performer may pause and convey wishes, express lament, or put a request before the departed through the deceased, lying in state, to be conveyed to the ancestral world. The performance of dirges, in effect, provides an opportunity for the living to communicate greetings, wishes, and thoughts to their folks in the spirit world with the hope that the dead can provide some form of assistance to the living. This again signifies a continuum of kinship relations between the living and the dead.

A sub-genre of Siwu dirges is also used to abuse perceived enemies present at the funeral. These dirges cast insinuations at people suspected to be responsible for the death and create a tense environment during the period of mourning. Some dirges functionally advise the

living on how to conduct themselves and the need to love one another and live in peace with the entire community. Other dirges remind the living of their communal responsibilities to orphans left behind. In general, the performance of Siwu dirges lightens the burden of the funeral weight on the bereaved family and other mourners present at the funeral ceremony. Siwu dirges provide refreshing moments by way of entertaining the audience/mourners during the period of mourning and it is common to see the audience mourners clap after a performance.

One of the commonest literary motifs in Siwu dirges are metaphors of different kinds that vividly frame and represent specific ideas and concepts, providing concrete and distinct mental picture (s) that draw from the ecology and farming-related activities of the study area. The deciduous evergreen rainforest, plants, and non-plant species, water bodies, the entire ecosystem, and the associated farming-related activities are resources that oral artists looked up to for the composition of Siwu dirges.

The metaphors in the Siwu dirges speak to the socio-psycho orientation of life and death in the study area. The dirges, therefore, interconnect with all domains of life of the people that perform and appraise them. Conclusively, Siwu dirges as a sub-genre of Siwu literature have a direct relationship with the ecology of the study area.

4.14 Women, Funeral Space and the Politics of Orature

In Akpafu, women use the performance of dirges to visibly and audibly register their relevance in the public space because it is exclusively their domain as caregivers. Women use the performance of dirges to reflect their positive self-esteem,, as argued by Kolawole (2007). In this regard, Finnegan's assertion that in Africa, "with a few striking exceptions,

men rather than women tend to be the bearers of the poetic tradition,”⁴⁷ is inaccurate. When storytelling performance, lullaby singing, work-songs, and the use of proverbs among others are added to the repertoire of African women's oral art space, it can be concluded that women are equally significant as men in African oral art performance space.

The reflection of imagery of the physical environment of the study area, and deep philosophical and metaphorical thoughts in the Siwu dirges repertoire, all composed by women is an ample demonstration of the great intellectual capacity of women, not only of formally educated (women), but also, of the non-literate African women with rich indigenous knowledge. That women's voices may appear effaced in public space is certainly not in the funeral culture in the study area. It is in their creative performance of dirges that the intangible Siwu cultural heritage, values, and ecology are made visible. As the women perform, there is the collective consciousness, combined voice, female bonding, unity of purpose, ethnic identity, and positive positioning of womanhood and femininity. “They act as a metaphor and a repository for the predicament, problems, hopes, aspirations, burdens and ideals of womanhood.”⁴⁸ As the women perform Siwu dirges, they make their intellect and emotions audible (Harding 2002).

The performance of dirges cuts across different African societies, and there are similarities and contrasts in their performances. The researcher has observed that among the Volta and Oti Guan speaking communities and among the Eves, the performance space for dirges is

⁴⁷ Finnegan R.(1970:98) *Oral Literature in Africa*, Oxford, Clarendon Press

⁴⁸ Kolawola e, M.M.E. (1997:95) *Women's Oral Genre in African Literature An Anthology of Criticism and Theory* ed by T. Olaniyan and A. Quayson. Oxford U. K. Blackwell Publishing Ltd

for women and the lyrics of the dirges perform nearly the same functions of praising the dead in tributes and mourning the irreplaceable loss among others. Dirges performance culture is nearly the same in Akan-speaking communities in Ghana, except for the communal processional dance.

In sharp contrast, the researcher has observed that dirge performance among the Dagao of the Upper West region of Ghana is done by men. According to my informant, Pascal Bayondeme Bouroku, a Dagaba who performs dirges, there are two genres of Dagaree dirges; dirges that are heritage products, (composers unknown), and dirges that performer(s) compose extempore at a funeral. Their performance is always accompanied by xylophone playing, while the performers are stationary on their feet. Their number ranges from about five to fifteen singers. It is unlike the Guan and Eve communities, where the performance of dirges is communal and an obligation on women at a funeral.

4.15 Stylistic Qualities and Literary Devices in Siwu Dirges

The lyrical composition of Siwu dirges fits within the poetry genre in literature, and many of these dirges use literary devices, drawing from the language ecology of Siwu. Stylistically, call and response is the most common feature in the performance of Siwu dirges. Metaphors, synecdoche, repetition, symbols, and junctural prosodies, among others, are common literary devices in Siwu dirges. Dirges 4B, 4D, 7C, 8A, and 11B are good examples where metaphors and synecdoche are conspicuous. Repetition as a device applies to all dirges during performance. Through stylistics, Siwu creators draw inspiration from forest vegetation, streams, farming practices, and food crops grown in the study area, among other sources, for the content of the dirges, revealing

the ecological stories that Siwu speakers have lived by. This connects Siwu's dirges to ecological linguistics principles.

4.16 Conclusion on Siwu Dirges Performance.

The rituals surrounding the performance of Siwu dirges in all Akpafu communities do not differ. The common motif that runs through them is the public expression of lamentation over the loss of kin. When death occurs in Akpafu, the period of mourning and burial imposes agency on women, as caregivers, to fulfill a cultural rite by way of public performance of dirges.

Public performance of Siwu dirges is culturally a domain for women, and interest and participation in their performance is the only means of acquiring the art, because there is no formal training of any kind for staging dirges. As an art form, Siwu dirges have meaning and they perform specific functions. Contextually, their performance is mainly during the transition of the dead from the earthly mode of existence to the spiritual mode. Siwu dirges are rooted in the philosophy and cosmology of the Siwu-speaking people and the dirges draw imagery from the ecology of the study area. Their performance evokes a sense of reflection on the reality of life and death among the people of Akpafu.

Structurally, the dirges draw imagery from the ecology of the study area. The varied repetition of the short lines over and over again, with a prosodic end that varies, cuts across Siwu dirges repertoire. Additionally, proverbial language, piling and association, tonality, imagery, rhetorical questions, and idiophones are common stylistic devices of the Siwu dirges' structure. These literary devices that form the fulcrum of literary creativity in Siwu dirges are socio-culturally tangible in the physical and social environment of the Siwu

language and they substantiate the strong relationship that exists between a language and its ecological setting from an ecolinguistics perspective.



CHAPTER FIVE

SIWU CEREMONIAL RECITATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter attempts textual and performance analysis of five different genres of ethno-cultural poetry of the people of Akpafu that are associated with different ethno-cultural ceremonies. This sub-genre of Siwu indigenous poetry is associated with funerals, marriage, and joyous celebrations and all are associated with sharing a drink (palm wine or spirits). All the recitations have elements of poetry similar to dirges, and their performances are meant to crown their respective ceremonies and disperse the audience. These poetic recitations are integral to the events for which they are performed and the audience looks up to them to climax the occasion(s). In all these poetic recitations, there are non-verbal aspects that are para-linguistics in character. The para-linguistic (non-verbal) activities precede and pave the way for the actual poetic recitation, and are therefore part of the entire poetic performance. Like dirges, the intellectual property right of this indigenous poetry is communal, and the setting of their composition and performance dates to antiquity.

The pouring of the drinks, before these poetic recitations, followed by the recitations must not be confused with the offering of libation with a drink to God, deities, and ancestors/ancestress, where there is an invocation that simultaneously accompanies the pouring. Again, the poetic recitations are not oaths such as those recited by traditional political office holders assuming political positions. The genre of indigenous ceremonial poetry discussed in this chapter forms part of Siwu literary (poetic) traditions, that are culturally different from libation and oath text performance. They are recited by performers with the knowledge of this Siwu art form to “crown” ceremonies. The pouring of the drink

in a specific direction (outwards or inwards) depending on the event that assembles the kith and kin and positioning of the calabash or glass to the left, to signify a bad omen or to the right, to signify a good omen comes as a prelude to the recitation. The recitation starts after the preliminary para-linguistics activities. Just like the performance of dirges of dirges by women, these poetic recitations are gendered performances executed strictly by men before an audience. The recitations appeal to the masses because they expect it to crown the gathering and disperse the audience.

The messages in the different sub-genres of Siwu indigenous poetry in this chapter also draw from the ecology of the study area and capture communal values of fraternal love of sharing, encouragement of one another, collective responsibility, and re-enactment of salient historical antecedents of the people of Akpafu's migration saga. Again, the recitations call for communal resilience and alertness against an external attack that the people of Akpafu battled with as a minority ethnic group in times past. Functionally, these recitations define Siwu ethnic identity and continually rekindle the communal spirit, peaceful co-existence, and mutual communal inspiration. As the performer recites the poetic lines by way of call, there is a response from the audience to each line recited. The recitations, therefore, collectively involve the entire gathering and community for that matter.

5.1 The Form, Structure, and State of Siwu Ceremonial Poetry.

This genre of Siwu verbal art is completely structured in a call-and-response style. But for the recitation performed during accidental death, where there is no response at all from the audience, each line recited by the performer is responded to by the audience. The recitations in effect constitute a call-and-response oral work of art, communally owned.

The audience participation/response is as important as the performer at the centre of the performance. Contextually, the audience, by their response, is in effect a performer. The audience response performs a dual function of affirming the declarations of the performer, and as well inspiring the performer to deliver the text.

The length of the different sub-genres of this Siwu poetry ranges from as short as two lines for *accidental death* performance to thirty-eight lines for *supreme appreciation* performance, with stock lines that appear in different but similar sub-genres. In addition to the socio-cultural values and historical antecedents in some of these recitations, literary devices, mainly parallelism, metaphors, and allusions, are conspicuous in some of these traditional compositions by way of stylistic qualities. Some of the lines also end with linguistic prosodies, common in the socio-linguistics of the Siwu language. Five different genres of these ritual recitations exist in Siwu and were collected during the fieldwork.

These are:

- (i) Recitation for accidental death
- (ii) Recitation for natural death
- (iii) Recitation for sharing a drink informally on a joyous occasion
- (iv) Marriage blessing recitation and
- (v) Supreme appreciation recitation (executed after joyous celebration).

The first four recitations were collected in live performance, while the text for the fifth recitation was provided by three elders. No event necessitated its recitation during the period of data collection. Recitations associated with natural death are common and remain an integral part of funeral gatherings where drinks are shared.

Social change in all Akpafu communities has influenced the traditional authority to set the first Saturday of every month for (residents and non-residents) who were taken to the mortuary. On rare occasions, bodies of non-residential citizens are buried in the residential and other communities where the person might have lived. The cultural norm, however, is for the body to lie with ancestors and ancestresses on Akpafu soil. Where the body is buried outside Akpafu, the day after burial, and the fifth-day rituals that call for communal gathering are observed in the respective Akpafu community where the person hailed from. These practices, in addition to bodies that are buried immediately after death, have resulted in a relatively high frequency of funerals.

The recitations associated with joyous occasions and marriage, however, are gradually being replaced by Ewe and English-style *vote of thanks*, due mainly to social change, and perhaps a lack of performers. The absence of performers (during a celebration of party and marriage) is a result of the relatively lengthy nature of the text meant to be memorized and recited in performance before an audience. These verbal arts must therefore be learnt with all seriousness in addition to possessing the clear loud voice for delivery. The ability to memorize the structure and the lines and recite them to the audience with clarity elicits the necessary response from the audience for a good performance. Faithful recollection of the detailed order of the lines can be a challenge due to the limitations of human memory, especially if one is not gifted with such art. This limitation often results in performances/recitations that are not *word order perfect*, nonetheless, the variations sit within the general structure of a particular genre and it does not necessarily make the performance a bad one but rather unique in its own right. All performers said they had studied these Siwu art forms informally and rehearsed the recitation before a performance.

5.2.0 Accidental death recitation.

The people of Akpafu do not celebrate accidental deaths because such deaths are seen as a very bad omen and signify individual, family, clan, or communal misfortune. In the study area, victims of accidental death, including suicide (*ɔtɔfo*) are associated with people who deviate from the normative Siwu worldview, especially in traditional religious settings. Traditionally, the funeral of an accidental death victim is organised at the outskirts of the community, and the body is not brought home. It is laid in state at the outskirts (a special cemetery meant for them), and special rites that culturally register communal protest at the nature of the death are performed there. Christianity has, however, changed many things, and victims of accidental deaths, where the person is a Christian, nowadays are sent to homes for normal funeral celebrations in the study area. It is a common Siwu cultural phenomenon for certain body parts (nails and hair) of victims of accidental death who were Christians to be taken for separate burial at the specially designated accidental death victims' cemetery. These body parts are believed to carry the soul of the deceased. Whole bodies of traditionalists who die accidentally are, however, buried at the accidental death victims' cemetery. This practice, though part of traditional religion, may be extended to Christians when close family members allow it. It is, however, not a community-sanctioned practice for the body parts of victims who profess Christian faith and die accidentally to be taken for special burial rites. The principal architects who execute the key rites for victims of accidental death are traditionalists, though not all the mourners who take part in these rites profess traditional faith. Like any other funeral in the study area, palm wine is culturally shared by all present at the burial ground, accompanied by accidental death rites. The last rite at the accidental death cemetery after sharing the palm wine is a two-line poetic performance below that crowns the ceremony and disperses the audience mourners.

5.2.1 (a) Recitation One (Accidental Death Recitation)

Call

Siwu

English

Boɔnɛ kato

We have taken the best

Miɔnya mi ɔkpiti.

These are your dregs

Thereafter, the rest of the drink, no matter the quantity, is poured away in anger, and the mourners disperse to their homes.

5.2.1(b) Textual and Performance Analysis of Recitation One.

Among the people of Akpafu, the best of the palm-wine is not the portion with dregs but the top, which is plain and devoid of dregs. The dregs (*ɔkpiti*), are poured away. Therefore, to culturally offer it to the spirits of victims of accidental death is to register the communal detestation of such death. To be offered the dregs is proverbial: you are insignificant and not welcome in this particular context.

Symbolically, the recitation is intended to express communal protest at the accidental death and to send a message to the ancestral world that such death is not welcome and this kind of death must not recur. That the recitation is short is not for a paucity of words, but it is intended to culturally register and communicate communal disdain to the ancestral world without any ambiguity. The performer who pours the dregs to the ancestors pours it away from the pot or whichever container in which the palm wine is brought to the outskirt in anger, which is an extension of the protest and part of the performance. All Siwu poetic recitations have a *call* from the performer and a *response* from the audience, except the recitation associated with accidental death. The mourners' silence is significant and adds to the mood to register communal protest at accidental death. The performance environment (outskirts of the community/special cemetery for accidental death victims) is an extension of the communal protest.

The performance space for the accidental death recitation cannot be left out of the performance review. Foremost, all accidental deaths evoke a sombre atmosphere and this sadness permeates all rituals associated with the death. No chairs are taken to the outskirts in the course of this performance and this is part of the protest. Everything is done while standing or squatting or at best sitting on a stone, a piece of log, or on bare ground. Long recitations are therefore obviously not ideal.

The performance space is a dense deciduous and quiet forest, where this recitation is executed. With two major rainy seasons in the study area, May-July and September-November, performing a funeral ritual in a natural forest environment certainly calls for brevity. The performer is any male knowledgeable in the customary demands of the occasion. He dare not falter, lest he incurs the wrath of *ɔtɔfɔ*-singular and *matɔfɔ*-plural (the non-gendered terms associated with the spirit(s) of the victims of accidental death).

5.3.0 Recitation Two (Crowning natural death ceremony)

The death of adults calls for meetings of different kinds before the funeral, during the funeral, and after the funeral. It is common to share alcoholic drinks (palm wine and gin) at such gatherings. There is a four-line recitation that crowns these gatherings and disperses the audience in the study area. Though it can be recited/performed at all funeral gatherings, these recitations are common mostly on the day of burial, the day after burial (*ikisira iyi*), and during the fifth-day rites. Culturally, the elder or his spokesperson, presiding over the gathering gives the order for the recitation to dismiss the audience.

The performer is no special person, but any male capable of executing the recitation. Often, he is the one who presides over the sharing of the drink. Non-verbal acts precede the actual recitation. The performer sitting on a stool with legs open, holding a quantity of palm wine

in a calabash (about 20 milliliters) with both hands, takes a sip and pours the drink away outwards (picture on page 162), which signifies driving away the bad omen of death. The calabash is then positioned to the left (picture on page 163), to signify evil and that the recitation about to be performed is about death, and such events are not welcomed because they deplete the community of its kith and kin. The Recitation then follows:

Call		Response
Siwu	English	
1. Mi sɛoa	Sit tall	Aaa
Lo wri lota mi	I poured it away for you	Yoɛ/Yes
Mme ɔɖui eme boisi nɛ	This one must we not drink again	Yoɛ/Yes
Isɛ kpri	It should come to pass	Isɛ kpri

5.3.1 Textual Analysis

Line 1 is greetings, which is very important in the study area with people who are at peace with one another. Greetings are used to build bridges and ensure a peaceful communal co-existence. In the Siwu language, *mi sɛoa*, with the prosody *oa*, directly translates as a *good afternoon to you all*. It is, however important to note that some of these meetings are held at the time of the day when *good afternoon* is not appropriate, and yet, it is always *mi sɛoa*. “Sit tall or sit courageously” is therefore more appropriate pragmatically. Another significance of the greetings (*mi sɛoa*) in this context is to draw the audience's attention to the end of the gathering.

Line 2 tells the audience that the drink brought to the gathering has all been shared and none has been reserved anywhere for any personal use. Among the people of Akpafu, a drink brought to the funeral ground must be consumed at that funeral. Unjustifiably reserving a drink meant for a funeral and taking it to your house, culturally, means carrying

death to your house. In a disclaimer position, therefore, the performer reminds the audience that it is they (the audience mourners) who consumed the drink. *I shared it for you* (line 2).

Line 3 appears as the climax of this Siwu poetic sub-genre. One of the functions of a drink is to bring people together. The death and the associated drink have naturally brought the family or clan or the entire community together, but it is not an assembly for people in a delighted state, and so this type of drink *must we not drink again*. Significantly, it is not the desire of the community to be entertaining death(s) and sharing drink(s) in the course of mourning. The performer, in effect, declares the communal desire that death should not assemble them again to share a drink. Line 4 ends all such indigenous poetry, except the recitation of accidental death. The last line is a prayer for the collective wish of the people not to meet because of death to come to pass. It is the Siwu version of the Christian *Amen*. The audience response- *yoε* (*yes*), at the end of each line, significantly demonstrates agreement and an endorsement of each line recited by the performer. The audience in effect, is publicly declaring their collective acquiescence and support for the entire recitation.

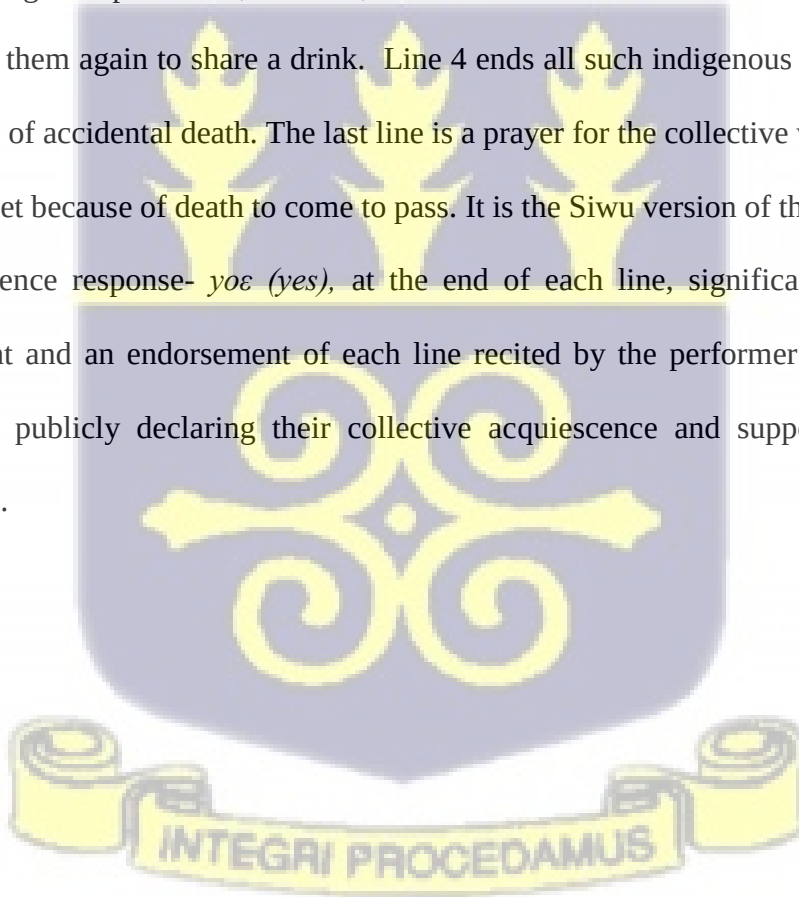




Image 18: Above, Kallai Prosper aka Okain-Asafo kyeame of Akpafu Odomi pours a drink outward during the performance of the fifth day rites to signify a rejection of death at the funeral of A.S P. Rtd Aduo-Ofosu at Akpafu Odomi (06/03/23)

Field data 2023.

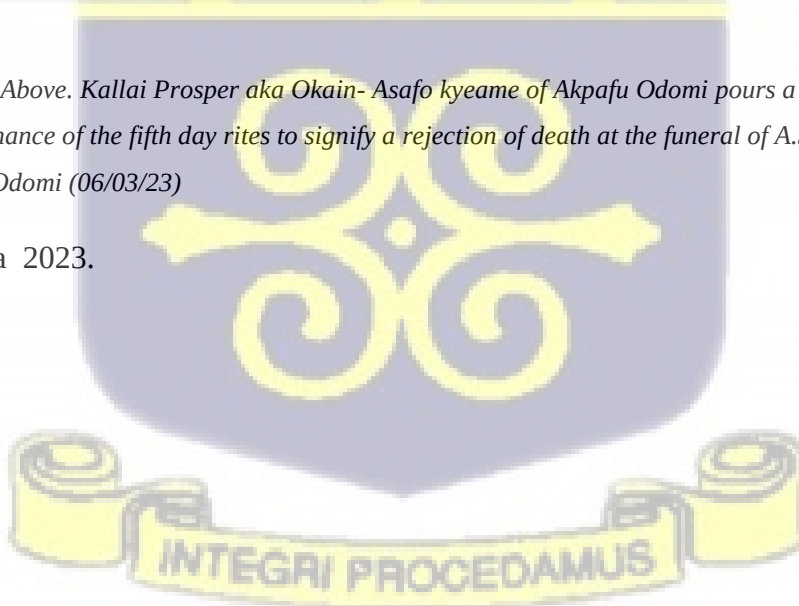




Image 19: Kallai Prosper aka Okain positions the calabash to his left to signify that the occasion is for a bad omen at the funeral of A.S P. Adu Ofori (06/03/23) This is done prior to the recitation. Source: Field data. 2023

Lending communal support during a funeral and communally sharing a drink to thank the mourners is sociologically bound to Siwu culture. Palm wine is the preferred drink for communal rituals and it is tapped from the wild and planted palm trees that grow in the forest vegetation of the study area. The calabash that holds the wine is equally grown on the creeping plants in the study area. In effect, the non-verbal aspects of the recitation (palm wine and the calabash) draw from the physical Siwu language ecology made up of forests and palm trees from which palm wine is tapped. The Siwu literary genre above, the occasion that necessitates its performance, and the non-verbal properties that aid the

performance are complexly related. It is by understanding the diverse complexities and their interrelationships, rather than just the text of the recitation in isolation that an understanding of the entire performance, its function, and its relationship with the Siwu language ecology can be brought to light.

5.4.0 Recitation Three (For a joyous occasion other than marriage)

It is common in the study area for anybody with the wherewithal to order palm wine or any alcoholic drink and sometimes prepare food and invite his kith and kin to share in it. People mostly in white-collar jobs in urban areas or abroad organize such drinking sessions when they visit home. To climax such feasts, a poetic recitation is performed by way of appreciation and invocation of blessings and prosperity on the benevolent giver. It must be stated that this performance is executed only if there is a performer who knows the text. Unlike for funerals, marriages, and supreme appreciations where the ceremonial recitations are a must, and for that matter, the performer is looked for before the commencement of the function, it is convenient to say that ‘Recitation Three’ is optional and its performance depends solely on the availability of a performer who is familiar with the text. In effect, many of such feasts end without their performance.

The performance below took place at the residence of the researcher in Akpafu Odomi on Sunday, Dec. 18, 2022, when the researcher offered a drink to his kinsmen. After the drink had been shared and all present had received enough, the performer poured a quantity in the calabash and called for the attention of all present -*Agoo* and the response from the audience was *Amee*. The *agoo* and *amee* call and response practice is used by many ethnic groups in Ghana such as Eves, Gas, and Akans to draw attention to important activities. This is meant to draw the attention of the audience to the performance/recitation about to

take place. In a sitting position with legs opened, the performer shows the drink in the glass to the audience and begins.

5.4.1(a) Prelude to the Recitation

Siwu	English
Call: Mionya bo nda karun.	These are the dregs of our drink (shows it to the audience)
Response: Bo lone mi ro	We drank and finished it
Call: Lo wri lo	I am crowning it
Response: Bue	Peacefully

The performer sips the drink, holding the calabash with both hands and pours the rest of about 20 millilitres towards his direction in between his opened legs. He then positions the glass to his right-hand side to signify peace, prosperity, and good omen among the kin gathered and leaves it there before starting the actual recitation.

5.4.1(b) Recitation For A Joyous Gathering

Call		Response
Siwu	English	
Mi se oa	Sit tall	Aaa/Good afternoon
Lo ye lo tã mi	I shared it for you	Yoε/Yes
Lo wri lo tã mi	I crown it for you	Yoε/Yes
Bo iyo bue	Peace to our extended family	Yoε/Yes
5. Bo kayi bue	Peace to our world	Yoε/Yes
Mme ɔɖui me bo ne	This one must we drink again	Yoε/Yes
Obi guame tatata	Our precious child	Yoε/Yes
Lo sira bo kanya	Who assembled us	Yoε/Yes
Obɔ bo ifue	And offered us a drink	Yoε/Yes
10. So bo pia so isoyo	To excite us	Yoε/Yes
On ngbã iso	To his life/health	Yoε/Yes
On awale iso	To his prosperity	Yoε/Yes
Bo ma me ɔnyi matrui	Those of us maternal relations	Yoε/Yes
Ku ɔse matrui	And paternal relations	Yoε/Yes
15. Orɔ bo abi aru	That he respected	Yoε/Yes
Bo ngbã iso	To our life	Yoε/Yes
Bo awale iso	To our prosperity	Yoε/Yes
So si ɔbo iputu ame	That when he entered into the forest	Yoε/Yes
Miyu ku akrɔa	All manner of thorns	Yoε/Yes

20. Si atan ɔri	Should give him way	Yoe/Yes
Adzriku si atān ɔri	Tree stumps should give him way	Yoe/Yes
Siwarān igbā biara kēkē	Every kind of bad spirit	Yoe/Yes
Nē la srɔgun	That would confront him	Yoe/Yes
Si si itan ɔri	Should give him way	Yoe/Yes
25. Sɔ si ɔbo ipotu ame	That when he enters into the forest	Yoe/Yes
Ogbarin ayata	And pluck leaves	Yoe/Yes
Si akpese sikati	They should turn into cloths	Yoe/Yes
Si ɔmɔe atai	When he holds pebbles	Yoe/Yes
Si akpese atalebi	They should turn into money	Yoe/Yes
30. Ibiara nē iso ɔn trua	Everything on which he stumbles	Yoe/Yes
I iputu ame	In the forest	Yoe/Yes
I iyo ame	In the house	Yoe/Yes
Futututu, kpoglooo	Should be white and big	Yoe/Yes
Si ɔtrua	When he stumbles	Yoe/Yes
35. Sikan retēa iso	It should be on gold	Yoe/Yes
Sikan fudzaa iso si ɔtrua	He should stumble on diamond	Yoe/Yes
Sɔ ɔn ira biara nē ɔn bra	That any venture he should engage in	Yoe/Yes
Si ire ɔri	Should be successful	Yoe/Yes
Iseoa	It should come to pass	Ise kpri

5.4.2 Textual Analysis

Among the people of Akpafu, Recitation 5.4.1(b) aims at the invocation of peace, good health, and prosperity among the kith and kin so gathered. Lines 1-6 can be termed as stock lines or core cliches that also appear during the invocation of blessings on marriage. The prelude performance in 5.4.1a also applies to marriage performance and significantly, it is meant to seek the permission of the audience to execute the actual performance. Again, the above performance and marriage performance (yet to be discussed) are all recitations performed on joyous occasions. Lines 1-6 can therefore be termed as the *opening formula* for these sub-genres of indigenous Siwu poetry.

Drinking sessions socially bring people together and an invocation of peace in the life of the benevolent provider of the drink and among relations gathered is socially relevant for

continuous engagement as kindred. Peace and tranquility are key to social order and progress, and it is the reason lines 4 and 5 are invoked. Line 6 encourages more such drinking sessions compared to the funeral recitation where the wish is not to meet to share such a (funeral) drink. If the drink has been provided and there are no consumers, there would not be a gathering and for that matter a performance. It is the reason for which prosperity and good health are wished on both parties (benevolent provider and consumers) and any other person so present in lines 11 to 17.

Lines 18 to 21 draw metaphors from the Kawu physical ecology that is made of forest vegetation, stylistically making use of imagery. The vast majority of kin in the study area are farmers who encounter all manner of obstacles in their daily farming activities. In reality, it is common for shrubs, twigs, creeping plants, and climbing plants of different kinds, with thorns that constitute the flora and fauna in Akpafu to become obstacles to farmers and sometimes cause them injury. One cuts these thorny sprigs and thorny crawling and climbing plants to chart his/her way into the forest. Sometimes, bad spirits of all sorts attack people in their daily duties in the study area.

The poetic recitation above uses imagery that draws from the Siwu physical ecology to stylistically invoke obstacle-free working experience and success at business for the benevolent giver in all endeavours. This sits with eco-linguistics which spells out an interaction between any language codes and the physical environment of that language. The metaphors from Siwu language ecology in the above recitation, functionally prepare the mind of the audience to close their ranks from a sociolinguistics perspective and forge on in life.

Lines 25 to 36 are all about good wishes for prosperity and success in the life of the benevolent provider. Metaphorically, leaves are to become clothes and pebbles are to become money. Want of material things must not be the portion of the benevolent giver. The giver should chance on gold and diamonds, not in reality, but in promotions at work or prosperity in business. Fortunes should be big and white; the colour white symbolically represents victory and success in the study area. This is all about an interplay of imagery and symbolism. Naturally, it is only when these fortunes befall the benevolent donor that the kindred can continue to get the opportunity to be part of such ceremonies. It must be stated that the open sharing of drinks is just a small fraction of the gifts that the benevolent giver shares with his or her kindred. In reality, cash, clothes, and material support of different kinds are shared with the kith and kin and it is another reason for which peace, prosperity, promotion, and fortune are invoked on the benefactor, so the largesse can continue to trickle down. The recitation ends with a common stock line, a wish for all that has been said to come pass. The audience response *yoe* (yes), functionally affirms all the aspirations that the performer invokes for the benevolent giver and the audience, it is these responses that inspire the recitation and add to the aesthetics of the performance.

One of the most distinguishing features of recitation 5.4.1b is the reflection of parallelism. Urban (1990) defines parallelism as “similarities between discourse segments that are sequentially juxtaposed.”⁴⁹ To Frog (2017), parallelism is “a perceivable quality of recurrence of sameness or similarity in commensurable units that co-occurs with

⁴⁹ Urban, G. (1986:60) **The Semiotic Functions of Macro-Parallelism in the Sholkeng Origin Myth** In *Native South American Discourse*. Ed by Joel Sherzer and Greg Urban. Berlin, Mouton de Gruyter.

difference, in relation to a metered frame.”⁵⁰ Okpewho (1992) situates parallelism within the balanced relationship of ideas and images that are independent of one another. Okpewho (ibid) illustrates further, that, parallelism also appears in two different elements that are in contrast and yet are structured in two similar statements.

Parallelism in the verbal arts is seen in terms of the artistic repetition of verses or words that are paired and communicate the same motif in different words. Though parallelism uses repetition, the repetition is not the same as the previous word(s) or verse, yet, there are similarities in the frame (Frog and Tarkka 2017). The pattern of sameness of parallel integers may be in syntax, lexis, morphology, or even sound or rhythmic structure, where images or symbols are communicated. In some instances, parallelism is used to show diversity and contrast as explained by (Agyekum 2007). Metaphorically, the same propositions are expressed in different words in parallelism. Where present as a formulaic poetic device, parallelism creates images on which performers hang for the sake of convenient rendition of verbal arts. Frog (2017) identifies seven different forms of parallelism as follows:

- Image-Based Parallelism in Multiforms
- Parallelism through negation
- Complementary or Additive Parallelism
- Contrastive Parallelism of Opposed Images
- Motif-Based Parallelism
- Extended Motif-Based Parallelism and
- Higher Order Parallelism

⁵⁰ Frog (2017:427) **Parallelism and orders of Signification (Parallelism Dynamics I)** In *Oral Tradition* 31/2(2017):425-484.

Lines 2 and 3 of ‘recitation three’ are in parallel just as Lines 4 and 5 and these are the first and second parallel pairs. Though in parallel, line 3 complements Line 2 without which line 2 is incomplete. A similar structure is expressed in lines 26-27 and 28-29. Lines 27 and 29 complement lines 26 and 28, respectively. This can be termed *complementary or additive parallelism*. The parallel nature of lines 4 and 5 is to communicate the same motif- *peace* on two different levels *our extended family* and *our world*, respectively. Lines 4 and 5 can therefore be termed *motif-based parallelism* with the same lexical meaning. The same motif-based parallelism is expressed with the *prosperity* motif in lines 11 and 12 and repeated in lines 16 and 17. Lines 11 and 12 for the individual benevolent giver, lines 16 and 17 for the kindred so gathered.

Lines 19-24 are an *extended metre in parallel*, communicating the same prosperity motif, and can therefore be termed as *extended motif-based parallelism*. Lines 34 and 36 can be termed *image-based parallelism* because of the visual lucidity of unlimited opportunities and favours, metaphorically represented in physical gold and diamond. For poetic expediency, line 36 is clipped, yet retains its literary meaning.

The performers revealed in an interview that these parallelism devices (s) functionally help them to memorize and recite the entire poetic genre. The imagery inherent in the poetry is also revealed in parallelism. Once line x is memorized and recited, there is the possibility of recalling line y and the ethnically complex symbols that constitute the metered frame, and are part of the form and substance of this sub-genre of Siwu poetry.

The performance space is often outdoors, though it can be indoor, and it is not time-bound though more often, such ceremonies take place in the late afternoon through to the evening.

The performer gets inspiration from the audience response- *yoε* (*yes*) and the response

inspires the recitation as the performer breathes in, sometimes with seconds of pause, during which he recalls the next line to deliver the entire performance.

5.5 Recitation Four (For Crowning Marriage Ceremony in Traditional Setting)

Marriage between young adults; a man and woman, is a joyous occasion and comes with all forms of rites in different African societies. In the study area, marriage processes include the introduction of the bride and groom to their respective families, knocking rites by the groom, and payment of the bride's wealth by the groom. Included in the items for cementing customary marriage in the study area is a big pot of fresh palm wine (about 25 litres) that a groom offers his father-in-law. When the pot of palm wine has been brought as the last item for cementing the marriage, maternal and paternal relations of the bride, as well as prominent elders of all the clans and political office holders and their assistants and age group leaders in the community are invited to a drinking session as witnesses to the marriage.

A male performer, very versed in the recitation for crowning marriage is informed to be prepared for the recitation of this performance. After the marriage rites are complete, the performer crowns the marriage with the recitation. The performer is given about 200 millilitres in a calabash and sitting on a low stool, two hands holding the calabash with both hands, sips the drink and pours the rest inwards in-between his legs (see pouring and the position of the calabash on the next pages below). The inward pouring is to signify an acceptance or a welcome of such events. The calabash is positioned to the right to signify a good omen and blessing on the marriage. The right hand in many Ghanaian societies symbolises respect, humility, civility, good wishes, and good omen in traditional protocols. The performer's engagement with the above para-linguistics is part of the performance,

and the audience is knowledgeable in what must be done and consequently observes the performer's execution of these preliminary activities, with keen interest before the recitation.

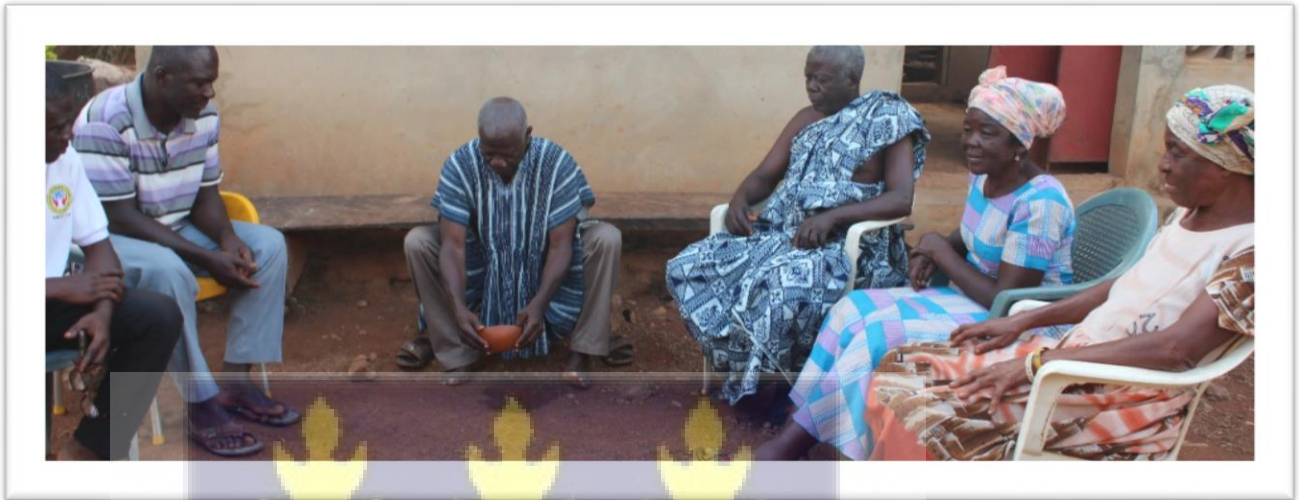
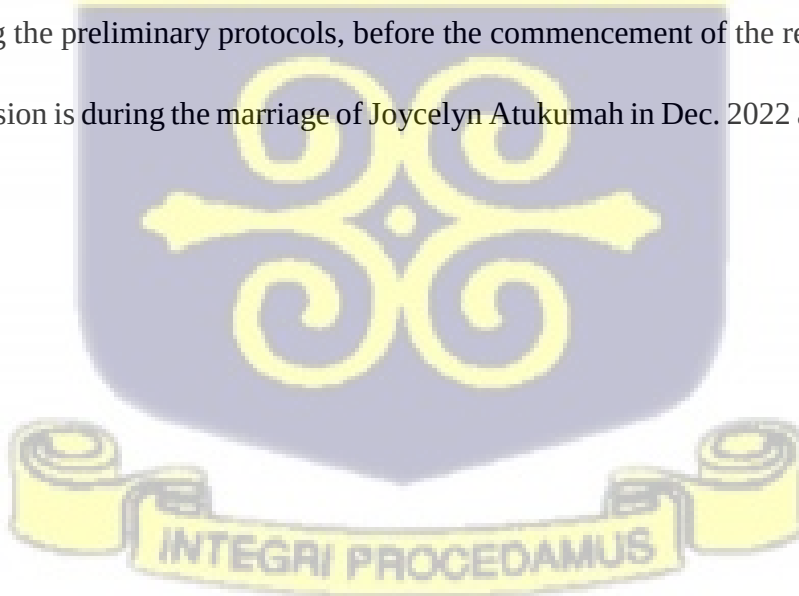


Image 20: Lord Benjamin Boni (the performer) pours the palm wine in a calabash towards his open legs to signify an acceptance of the marriage, with a section of the audience keenly observing the preliminary protocols, before the commencement of the recitations.

The occasion is during the marriage of Joycelyn Atukumah in Dec. 2022 at Akpafu Odomi.



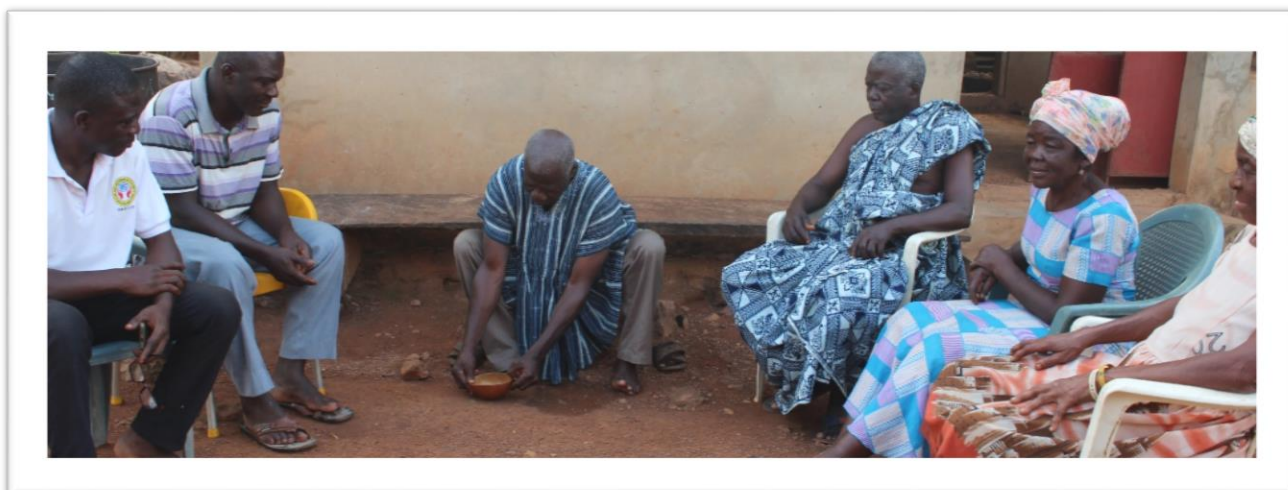


Image 21; The performer (Lord Benjamin Boni) positions the calabash to his right to signify a good omen, while a section of the audience keenly looks on. The occasion is the marriage of Ms Joycelyn Atukumah in Dec. 2022 at Akpafu Odomi. Field Data 2022.

It is common for the audience to become a source of meta-data as they (audience members) pass comments on what is to be done by way of instruction to the performer to demonstrate their familiarity and knowledge of the performance event.

The starting formula is the same as recitation 5.4.1(a). There is a call for order where the performer asks permission of the sort or prompts the audience for the commencement of the performance. He begins:

5.5.1(a) Prelude to the Actual Performance of Crowning Marriage Ceremony

	Siwu	English
Call:	Mionya bo ndã karun	This is the dregs of our drink (shows it to the audience)
Audience/Response:	Bo lone mi ro	We drank and finished it
Performer/Call:	Lo wri lo!	I am crowning it!
Audience/Response:	Bue	Peacefully

In a sitting position, he sips the drink and leaves a quantity which is poured inwards in-between the open legs of the performer and begins the recitation:

5.5.1(b) Marriage Recitations

Call		Response
Siwu	English	Response
Mise ooa	Sit tall	Aaa/Yes
Lowiri lotã mi	I crown it for you	Yoe/Yes
Bo iyo bue	Peace to our (extended) family	Yoe/Yes
Bo kayi bue	Peace to our world	Yoe/Yes
5. Mmẽ ɔɖui bone	This one must we drink again	Yoe/Yes
Mabi maẽme tataata lonya so	The two young adults who have met	Yoe/Yes
Fie tamayiri so	And have decided to marry	Yoe/Yes
Mã ngbã iso	To their health	Yoe/Yes
Mã awalẽ iso	To their prosperity	Yoe/Yes
10. Mã mayese	Their parents	Yoe/Yes
Mã ngbã iso	To their health	Yoe/Yes
Mã awalẽ iso	To their prosperity	Yoe/Yes
Bo ma ɖe adansie	Those of us who are witnesses	Yoe/Yes
Bo ngbã iso	To our health	Yoe/Yes
15. Bo awalẽ iso	To our prosperity	Yoe/Yes
Si mabo iyo inyɔ.	When the two of them enter into the room	Yoe/Yes
Si mabɔrẽ ite	Three of them should come out	Yoe/Yes
Si mabo iyo inyɔ	When the two of them enter into the room	Yoe/Yes
Si mabɔrẽ ina	Four of them should come out	Yoe/Yes
20. Si magbari ayata	When they pluck leaves	Yoe/Yes
Si akpese sikati	It should turn into cloths	Yoe/Yes
Si mamɔẽ atai	When they hold pebbles	Yoe/Yes
Si akpese atalebi	It should turn into money	Yoe/Yes
Si manya ɔreteã iyo	When blood is seen in their house	Yoe/Yes
25. Ɔbi maye, yee	It is a child that has been born	Yoe/Yes
Boi maɖue	It is an animal that has been killed/dressed	Yoe/Yes
Iseoa	It should come to pass	Ise kpri

5.5.2 Textual Analysis

As pointed out earlier, there are stock lines that cut across recitation 5.4.1b and 5.5.1(b) with the same interpretation by way of analysis. There are however specific lines that are unique and purposely meant for marriage and are selected for analysis to avoid needless repetition. Marriage between two adults, a male, and a female, is a cultural obligation expected from any matured man and woman in the study area. Among the people of Akpafu, like many African societies, marriage confers respect and communal recognition of adult status on individuals who are married. Inviting as many people as possible to a marriage ceremony, and crowning it signifies public endorsement of the marriage of the marriage for communal acknowledgment.

After the invocation of peace for all present, health and prosperity are invoked on the couple, their parents, and, witnesses in that order. Good mental and physical health, foremost to the married couples, and by extension to their relations is key to a happy marriage and thus its invocation. In many African societies, the single most important reason why young people in particular come together in marriage is to give birth and groom children into adulthood. In Ama Ata Aidoo's *the Dilemma of Ghost* Act Four, Petu puts it more succinctly, "When two people marry, everyone expects them to have children. For men and women marry because they want children."⁵¹ Bringing forth children to the gross-all the children in the stomach of the woman (Soyinka 1963) was the norm in many African societies, and it was common in Akpafu for married couples to give birth to over ten children which is no longer fashionable in the 21st century. This explains why lines 16 to

⁵¹ Aidoo A.A. (1965) **The Dilemma Of Ghost**, Longman Publishing Group, England. Act Four closing pages of uncle Petu's speech.

19 are all about the invocation of the gift of children, including twins (18 and 19), expressed in metaphorical language for married couples. Lines 22 to 23 are metaphorical, invoking blessings in material wealth on the couple. It is significant that the imagery, drawn from the forest and stony environment in the study area also has both semantic and lexical parallelism, with syllables in the parallel structure that enhance poetic melody.

Lines 24 and 25 also have cultural significance. Intentional spillage of blood is strongly abhorred in the study area and it comes with grave consequences including the slaughtering of a ram and its associated items; a keg of palm wine and a crate of schnapps to cleanse the land on which blood is intentionally spilled and to pacify the ancestors. Blood sustains life and any attempt to spill blood is an attempt to take out life, which is an abomination in the study area, for which reason the perpetrator is severely punished to serve as a deterrent to others. However, if blood is seen because a child is born, then it is *welcome blood*. If blood is seen because *game or domestic animal has been killed and dressed*, then it is welcome because neither childbirth nor killing and dressing of an animal can be accomplished without some form of blood spillage and *this blood spillage* brings joy and induces smiles, and therefore welcome.

Five conspicuous stylistic qualities are associated with the recitation 5.5.1 *namely pilling and association, symbolism, imagery, parallelism, and tonality*. Lines 6 to 14 invoke good health on the couple, their parents, and the witnesses in that order. It links the recitation and builds it up to the peak with poetic symbols and imagery that ease the burden of memorization and recitation. This is the pilling and association that (Okpewho 1992:83) describes. Pilling and association are also used in lines 20-23 in the invocation of material wealth in the form of *clothes* and *money* for the couple. The symbols of *health* or *life* and

prosperity in lines 8 and 9, 11 and 12, and 14 and 15 are important motifs on which marriage thrives for the building of the family, the clan, and the larger community. The invocation of the blessing of children in large numbers is intended to fulfill the communal expectation of marriage. Other symbols like *clothes* (line 21) *money*, (line 23) and *blood* (line 24) are weighty societal issues that have been symbolically condensed and reduced to familiar objects (Agyekum 2007). By way of imagery, lines 16-25 vividly paint mental pictures of prosperity and childbirth that appeal to human understanding by drawing from the physical environment of the study area.

Complimentary parallelism and motif base parallelism are widespread in the marriage crowning recitation above. Very significant, other than the earlier discussion on parallelism, is the complimentary parallelism depiction in lines 14-19 and lines 24-26 where the blessing of childbirth is invoked on the newly married couple. The marriage recitation, like other indigenous Siwu poetry in this chapter, thrives on the good and audible voice of the performer and an equally good response from the audience in a reciprocal gesture that brings to the fore the aesthetics of the performance.

5.5.3 Performance Analysis for the First Four Performances/Recitations.

Any attempt to analyse the first four recitations above without inclusion of non-text related activities is a reduction of the entire performance to only text, which does not carry the full impulse of the performance. As explained by Okpewho (1992), in “many an oral performance, the words spoken are only part of a general spectacle designed to please both

the ear and the eyes.”⁵² All the poetic recitations above have active characters, a stage, costumes, context, gestures, tone, and props among others that frame the performance.

The middle belt and southern Ghana symbolic colours of black for the period of mourning and white for the period of celebration (Sarpong 1974), most of the time frame the performance environment. Again, these symbolic colours affect the performer who is either in a serious mood or elated, and that naturally affects the audience. But for accidental death recitation, where the performer steps out of the midst of the audience to pour away the dross, all other performances position the performer most of the time in the middle, surrounded by the audience. This semi-circular or completely circular sitting arrangement is the stage for the enactment of the performance, often in the courtyard. This circular or semi-circular sitting arrangement permeates all communal assemblies in the study area and it signifies bonding and keeping watch over one another in all directions. Utmost silence is maintained in the performance space to bring the text/call and the response to the fore.

All the indigenous poetic recitations above are accompanied by a drink and an inward or outward pouring of a kind, depending on the occasion, and finally, positioning of the calabash or the glass to the left or right (except accidental death recitation) to signify what the occasion is meant for. These activities are the non-verbal elements of the performance and may not mean anything to non-literates in Siwu language arts. However, to the indigenes of Akpafu, that are literate in these textless and yet communicative arts, these non-textual properties of the performance constitute Siwu literary heritage that is intrinsically bound up with Siwu verbal arts that draw from Siwu language ecology. Each

⁵² Okpewho, I. (1992:48) **African Oral Literature**. *Background, Character and Continuity*.

Siwu language element of the performance is in an interaction with the environment along which Siwu has migrated and currently resides.

5.6 Siba Siare – Supreme Appreciation Recitation

The last indigenous Siwu ceremonial poetry discussed in this chapter was not collected in actual performance because it has not been performed in the study area for well over twenty years for two main reasons. The first reason is the replacement of the performance with an English-style *vote of thanks* because the performance is the Siwu version of the *vote of thanks* during such occasions. The second reason has to do with the lack of performers since the text is relatively lengthy and demands intellect and skills to master delivery competence.

The text was provided by three elders-two males and a female who joined three other elders for a focus group discussion on the meaning of the text and the performance environment. The recitation is titled *siba siare* in the Siwu language, which directly translates as *big thanks*. However, the term *supreme appreciation* is more apt because the performance/recitation is supreme in terms of formal indigenous poetry not associated with the assumption of political office recitations.

It is a performance executed when an individual survives a misfortune or recovers from a serious sickness and his or her kin decides to organize a communal eating and drinking session/party to rejoice with the victim and to reinstate him or her among his or her kindred. A day is set aside, often a rest day during traditional or Christian festive occasions for this celebration normally between December and April, when harvesting of different food crops, especially rice is over and serious planting is yet to start. As many people as

possible, especially elders of all clans, political office holders, age group leaders, and extended family members in the community are invited to a feast.

The performance is the last item on the programme and it is executed after prayers have been said, the purpose of the gathering announced, musical performances have been staged, speeches made, and food and drinks have been served. It is one performance/recitation not accompanied by para-linguistics because it is executed when the drinking session is over. It is an independent recitation associated with a special occasion but not necessarily hinged on the sharing of a drink unlike the previous recitations discussed.

The attention of all present at the gathering is called to the effect that *supreme appreciation* is about to be performed to crown the gathering and disperse the participants. The performer, a male, assumes his position in a standing position, in front of the special guests and the celebrant, facing the larger audience who remain in the sitting position. When total silence has been restored at the function, he begins.

5.6.1.

Call		Response
Siwu	English	Siwu (English)
Kaɖe misii?	Community are you there?	Bo si (We are here)
Misi gu ngbã?	Are you sitting lively	Bo si (We are)
Misi gu awalɛ?	Are you sitting with prosperity?	Bo si (We are)
Bo iidi kaɖe	We do not fail to heed the call of the community	Yoɛ/Yes
5. Kaɖe ɔɖi bo	The community does not fail to heed our call	Yoɛ/Yes
Boise alɛwu	We do not go empty-handed	Yoɛ/Yes
Bo kpese alɛwu	And return empty-handed	Yoɛ/Yes
Boɛɖe Makpre	We are not Bakpele (the people of Likpe)	Yoɛ/Yes
Bosɛ dunn	To sit quietly	Yoɛ/Yes
10. Bota dunn	And get up quietly	Yoɛ/Yes
Si mabɔkamɔ	If they bring unmilled rice	Yoɛ/Yes

	Ma kpesegu sirɔn	They would return with chaff	Yoe/Yes
	Mawu ku ati	The people of Akpafu with heads	Yoe/Yes
	Malalei ku aku	Strangers with headless bodies	Yoe/Yes
15.	Kabe krebeee bose	In hot afternoon we are on a journey	Yoe/Yes
	Karo guduuu bose	Deep in the night we are on a journey	Yoe/Yes
	Bo karinya sasaaa sa	Our journey- a success	Yoe/Yes
	Igɔ kaɖe bo se/ɔnyi /ɔbi	Recently our father/mother/child	Yoe/Yes
	Oyu ɔsian iso	Became seriously sick	Yoe/Yes
20.	Ma fɛ ayataiti	They plucked herbs	Yoe/Yes
	Ma krui siɖu	They dug roots	Yoe/Yes
	Ma pɛ adzriklo	They harvested the bark of trees	Yoe/Yes
	Ma kle gun mabrɔfo krɔe	He/She was taken to orthodox hospital	Yoe/Yes
	Itikulɛ, ɔna isosare	Luckily he/she regained health	Yoe/Yes
25.	Nɔmekadɛ	Today	Yoe/Yes
	Osate sɔ wuiyasɛgbɔ	The next of kin deems it expedient	Yoe/Yes
	Boa kpeseran	To reinstate him or her	Yoe/Yes
	Bo pia matrui ame	Among human beings	Yoe/Yes
	Obebreɔ ɔya ɔka	Food has been served	Yoe/Yes
30.	Ikanbe ɔya ɔka	Palm wine has been served	Yoe/Yes
	Boɔɖe	We have eaten	Yoe/Yes
	Bo froe sinyatu	To reunite	Yoe/Yes
	Boɔne	We have drunk	Yoe/Yes
	Boɔ froe sinyatu	To reunite	Yoe/Yes
35.	Bo pɛ kpikpikpi	Our planting size may be small	Yoe/Yes
	Bo fɛgboglo	Our harvest is in multiple fold	Yoe/Yes
	Iseoa	It should come to pass	Ise kpri

5.6.1. Textual Analysis of (Siba Siare) Supreme Appreciation

Supreme appreciation recitation embodies Akpafu ethnic and communal values, migration history, and inspiration of confidence among the Siwu/Kawu kith and kin. It is rooted in historical antecedents. Stylistic devices such as piling and association, symbolism, imagery, metaphor, and parallelism among others constitute the fabric of this Siwu literary sub-genre. The questions in line 1-3, which involves *piling and association*, are meant to invoke a lively atmosphere among the audience gathered and their responses are as important as the initial questions for the performance to gather momentum and continue.

The study area, a rural community thrives on the support of the larger community by way of social capital, and it is the reason the entire community is invited and asked if it is alive and in prosperity (perhaps as the celebrant) because the misfortune of an individual, is the misfortune of all, and so is the prosperity.

Lines 4 and 5 reflect the symbiotic relationship that exists between the individual and the larger community by way of African reciprocity. The larger community responds to the call of the individual for help, and so is the individual to the call of the community. Technically, lines 4 & 5, 6&7, 8 &9 are representations of complementary or additive parallelism because both starting lines introduce the same image and the second lines (5,7 and 9) complement the first (4, 6, and 8) respectively.

Lines 6-7 are metaphors that stand for the community to be prepared at all times for any eventuality and these lines (6-7) are intricately linked to lines 13-14 which have historical antecedents in the many years of the migration saga of the people of Akpafu, during which they engaged in wars of survival as a minority ethnic group. During these wars, which were either waged against the people of Akpafu or the people of Akpafu attacking their enemies, killing your enemy and taking his head (lines 13-14), was the norm and the sign of victory. In that regards, the recitation is meant to serve as a constant reminder to the kin so gathered of the historical wars the people of Akpafu encountered and survived, and at the same time urge the community to be prepared for any eventuality that might call for the need to ‘fight’ and win, just as one of their kin has won against misfortune or ill-health.

Lines (6-7) (13-14) are also good examples of *contrastive parallelism of opposed images* because both sets of lines have contrasting images in their parallel constructions. Lines 11-

12 are perfect examples of *parallelism through negation*, where there is an equivalent of the same motif at two levels but with a disagreement on the second level.

Si mabɔ kamɔ	If they bring unmilled rice
Ma kpesegu sirɔn	They would return with chaff

The extract above is a metaphor that demonstrates how the Akpafu ethnic group is confident to overcome their adversaries or challenges by taking from the enemy, the rice which symbolised life, which is of importance, and to the enemy, chaff which is of no value. The excerpt also draws from the Siwu rice industry which has no value for rice chaff (*sirɔn* line 12).

Lines 15&16 illustrate the migration ordeal of the ancestors of Akpafu before settling at their present location. According to oral accounts by Mr. I.K. Krabor, the Akpafus migration saga was all on foot, day and night from Nubia, in present-day Northern Sudan, through to the Sahara desert to the Sahelian and Savana regions, to the Oti region (forest zone) in the eastern middle belt in the Republic of Ghana across time. Some people in the present day doubt this claim, but if slaves could be captured from as far as present day Mali and Burkina Faso and matched in very undignified manner to the coast in present day Ghana (Boahen 1966), then the oral account is a possibility. To the people of Akpafu, if their ancestors prevailed in this migration ordeal, then the kindred would also prevail, thus line 17, *Bo karinya sasaa sa Our journey-a success.*

Lines 1-17 are stock lines and serve as the opening formula for the performance of *supreme appreciation* and do not vary at any time.

Lines 18 and 19 are very significant because these are metaphorical statements that reveal the purpose of the gathering and performance for that matter. Though *ɔyu ɔsian iso* is

translated as *became seriously sick*, the transliteration should be *cold fell on him or her*. *Dyu asian iso* is thus a metaphorical statement that expresses and sums up the severity of the sickness or the misfortune of the celebrant.

Before the coming of the Europeans to Africa, and the introduction of orthodox medicine, herbs, roots, and the bark of trees and related herbal products were administered to sick people for a cure. Even in the 21st century, many of these herbal products are very efficacious on certain ailments and are gaining acceptance in modern health care in Ghana. This explains their presence, relevance, and functions in lines 20- 22.

Supreme appreciation poetry is Siwu indigenous poetry that sits with the universal ethno-poetics and the researcher is convinced the composition of its text and performance predates the people of Akpafu's formal contact with the Europeans in 1889 and subsequent exposure to orthodox medicine. Consequently, the researcher is strongly of the view that line 23

Ma kle gun mabrɔɔ krɔe He/She was taken to orthodox hospital

which directly translates as he/she was taken to *brɔɔ-whites/Europeans* is originally not part of the *supreme appreciation* text, but a coinage and inclusion by a performer at a point in history. In effect, what a performer includes or deletes in a performance has the potential to change the text of a performance.

There is a belief in the study area that when one encounters some misfortunes or experiences some sicknesses, *the soul of the victim temporarily leaves him or her*. When elders are convinced that per one's ordeal, their soul *has left* them, the person traditionally undergoes a ritual to *reinstate the soul* because the belief in the study area is that, a

complete human being is made up of the body, the soul and the spirit (Sarpong 1974). In some cases, this soul reinstatement ceremony is performed in the quiet by a select few family members, and in other cases, it is a grand communal ceremony. Socio-cultural changes are no longer strictly in tune with the ceremonial activities connected with this *soul reinstatement belief*, and it has become optional per the victim and his or her family's faith. In the past, it was compulsory to celebrate and have the recitation recited when an individual survives a misfortune. It is this *soul reinstatement belief* that lines 27&28 are about.

Line 29 starts with *ɔbɛbrɛa- that which has pepper*. It is an idiomatic expression for food. Pepper is used as a synecdoche for all the vegetables that constitute part of the meals served at the ceremony. Similarly, *ikanbe* line 30, is the indigenous Siwu word for palm wine, though rarely used in the area today. It is also a synecdoche that represents all manner of drinks; alcoholic and non-alcoholic served at the ceremony. The Akan name for palm wine-*nsanfofu* is more popular in everyday Siwu language today than the indigenous Siwu word-*ikanbe*. The use of the name *ikanbe* as the authentic Siwu name for palm wine implies that the people of Akpafu knew palm wine before coming into contact with the Akans. In effect, the Siwu term has suffered glottophagy which refers to a major language swallowing up speech form of a minority language. Culturally, special Akpafu heritage food(s), made of fried brown rice flour and mashed lima beans with red oil as well as palm wine feature prominently at ceremonies where *supreme appreciation* is performed. It is a communal feast where many people eat together in the same earthenware bowl. Symbolically, the communal eating and drinking together is to unite, renew ties of kinship, and close ranks as a minority amid potential and real foes.

Lines 35 and 36 are a symbolic invocation of blessing on the gathering to harvest in abundance when they plant. It is only when harvest is good that ceremonies like that can be held. Lines 37 and 38 as core clichés that, inspire and encourage the gathering to continue their endeavours in confidence and courage.

5.6.2. Conclusion on Supreme Appreciation Recitation

Supreme appreciation is one of the forms of Siwu poetic recitations that captures diverse aspects of the culture and history of Siwu language and speakers. The various aspects of the Siwu culture included in the recitation are communal values of being there for one another, recounting Kawu's history, invocation of good health for the celebrant and the audience, and stating the worldview of the people of Akpafu. These are some of the core Siwu pillars on which the performance of *Supreme appreciation* is hinged. The text for *Supreme Appreciation Performance* is the lengthiest of all indigenous Siwu poetry and most threatened with extinction. This is because though the ceremonies where it is performed are still held, its performance has been replaced by English and Ewe style vote of thanks and its text, functions, aesthetics, and performance culture are almost on the verge of extinction.

5.6.3. Conclusion on Siwu Ethnopoetics

An expression of Akpafu ethnocultural beliefs, socio-cultural values, and communal experience in figurative language is at the core of Siwu ethno-poetics. All Siwu poetic performances, like those of other cultures, are expressed to meet a specific need as argued by Montenyoul (1993). The use of literary devices, notably metaphor, parallelism, symbolism, repetition, piling and association reflect in the text, and help to concretize imagery and sensory reception of Siwu poetry. But for accidental death recitation, all the

recitations are audience centred, and the performer's tonal/audible recitation and equally important audible and prompt response from the audience are key to excellent performance. This is because the responses uphold the recitation and urge the performer on, just as the tonal recitations stimulate response from the audience. A reciprocal symbiotic relationship therefore exists between the performer and the audience, with regards to the recitation of Siwu traditional poetry. It must also be stated that the ability to memorize the lines by hanging on to the stylistic qualities of piling and association and parallelism, and above all, the tone that articulates the entire text systematically and audibly, while looking up at the audience in the face, enhances the performance. In conclusion, the display of communicative competence, Bauman (1977) by the central performer is key to the success of the performance of Siwu indigenous poetry. Pictorially, the performance space and stage are in the open courtyard of an elder, the extended family, or the clan meeting square where the audience sits around the performer, with close eye contact between the performer and the audience. It can be concluded that, whether dirges or ceremonial recitations, the functions and meaning of Siwu poetic traditions come under different layers that collectively function to make the performance. The performer layer, the non-verbal components layer, the text layer, the performance space layer, and the audience layer all play different roles that collectively bring out the meaning of the performance.

The different sub-genres of Siwu indigenous poetry discussed in this chapter demonstrate the Siwu language's interaction with its physical environment from eco-linguistic perspective.

CHAPTER SIX

SIWU RITUAL DRAMATIC PERFORMANCES

6.0 Introduction

This chapter attempts a discussion of Siwu indigenous ritual performances that can be termed as ritual drama. It is associated with funerals for both females and males. Among the people of Akpafu, the performance of funeral rites that bring the period of mourning to an end, and the rites associated with the rice festival celebration provide opportunity for public ritual performances that qualifies as indigenous drama in the study area. The data for this chapter was collected at funeral ceremonies because the rice festival was not celebrated during the period of data collection.

6.1 African Ritual Performances with Dramatic Content.

Several African literary scholars Nketia (1965), Kirby (1974), Owomeyela (1985), Asagba (1986), and Omigbule (2017) have contributed to the debate as to whether African indigenous ritual performances that are publicly staged should be literarily termed as African indigenous drama or social drama, or ritual drama. Enekwe's (1981) states that drama differs from one culture to another because in each culture, drama performs different function(s), and its function(s) dictates its performance. Omigbule (2017) argues that African ritual enactments and public performances like masquerades and other mask-wearing ceremonies in different parts of Africa should be addressed as African indigenous ritual performances and analyzed in their own right without any comparison, especially to Western drama because different cultures have different public performances that function as drama.

One of the foremost contributors to the indigenous African drama debate is Nketia (1965) who states that formalized occasions such as birth, puberty, and funeral rites in many Ghanaian communities, especially among the Akans follow dramatic patterns and have dramatic elements like actors, plot, stage, audience, and more importantly music and dance. Owomeyela (1985) cautions against the juxtaposition of African indigenous dramatic traditions with Western dramatic elements because, in Africa, festivals and other communal ceremonies perform the same functions that drama evokes in Western traditions.

Finnegan's (1970) has been critiqued in diverse ways by many African scholars such as Soyinka (1976) Okpewho (1992), and Olaniyan (2004) among other African scholars for looking for African drama through European and Oriental lenses. Nonetheless, her landmark publication *African Oral Literature*, outlines elements of African indigenous drama, which include enactment and imitations of persons and events and representing them through actors before an audience.

A further illustration of indigenous African drama by scholars such as Nketia (1965), and Asagba (1986) identify elements such as linguistic contents, scriptless plot, an improvisation of the stage, and interaction of several characters amidst music and dance in an indigenous language as elements of traditional drama. This point is also stressed by Anyidoho (1991) and Echeuro (2002). These elements are prominent in Siwu indigenous ritual performances thus its classification as Siwu indigenous drama, observed as part of funeral ceremonies. Turner (1984) contends that " Social drama is universal, although it might vary from culture to culture; it is also "not yet an aesthetic mode, for it is fully

embodied in daily living. But it contains the gems of aesthetic modes...”⁵³ Social drama is the raw material for the development of theatre that functions to hold the social fabric of communities together and correct the ills in different societies(Tuner *ibid*).

Siwu dramatic ritual performances observed as part of funeral rites involve the enactment of cultural practices that are expected of Kawu indigene, male or female, while alive. It takes the form of a performance of biographical excerpts of the deceased by a performer on stage, in the full glare of an audience. There are specific props that accompany the enactment of specific gender’s ritual drama. Different *acts* and *scenes* segment the entire biographical enactment process as part of the drama, with audience members assuming the role of stage directors in the performance of Siwu ritual drama.

It is similar to what Harding (2002), Echeruo (2002), and Ossie (2002) have written about. It is a drama that has its dramatic content in rituals associated with funerals and makes the line that separates death rituals and indigenous drama blur. Siwu funeral drama described in this chapter generally lacks verbal content because props and actions do the performance and talking and people who are not familiar with the Siwu customs may not understand the essence of the public performances. However, there are many elements of drama such as performer(s), audience, improvised stage, songs, and props. There is also an active audience participation that results in actor- audience relationship.

Rituals associated with mourning are dramatically enacted exactly three months for males, and four months for females from the day of burial in the study. The extra one month for females is to extend the period of mourning for women by way of honouring, their

⁵³ Tuner(1984: 25)

invaluable services. The people of Akpafu Odomi, in their quest to cut down on the formal period of mourning, observe these rituals on the fifth day (counting the day of burial as the first day) for both males and females. From a ritual drama perspective, the people of Akpafu socially call the drama the *room of the deceased inspection rituals*.

6.2. The Day After Burial (Ikisira Iyi) Dramatic Rituals.

The day after burial (ikisira iyi) therapeutic rites in the study area are complexly dramatic. In Akpafu Todzi, Mempeasem, and Adorkor, men, and women, communally meet together from about 6:30 am to 9 am, and women, in particular, engage in either solo or group dramatic performances that primarily aim at re-enacting the life of the deceased, especially those lived incidents, experiences, events and utterances, during his or her lifetime, that are biographically significant. Other events re-enacted are those amusing incidents in the life of the deceased that are intended to induce laughter among the audience and are intended to therapeutically heal them from the pain of loss. Dramatic events enacted may include the deceased's birth and childhood, puberty, marriage, family life, occupation (farming) experience, interpersonal relationships with the larger community, faith, and significant contributions to the progress of the larger Akpafu community among others. The performances are meant to demonstrate Akpafu's communal values and expectations of individuals while alive, which contributes to the peaceful co-existence of the larger community, using traditional drama as the medium. Interviews with the performers reveal that they often rehearse the script less plots that they performed and the accompanying songs before the occasion. Where women are involved, the performances are accompanied by dirges or Christian religious songs and dances. Psychologically, the gathering of the

clan, kith and kin, and the dramatic events provide emotional support for the immediate members of the bereaved family in the short to medium term.

In Akpafu Odomi, the men (from the clan in which the death occurs) constitute one group, and all women in the community, another group. The drama is at the residence of the deceased and the gender of the actors/actresses is also determined by the gender of the deceased. While both males and females engage in dramatic enactments, the drama is more intense, elaborate, and ritualistic if it is a female who has passed on. For the women, these communal gatherings and the performances on the day after burial are heralded by three constant solemn dirges; 10F, 10G, and 15F in Appendix A.

In the study area, greetings, ideally from a younger person to elders are greatly valued, and failure to extend or exchange greetings with your folk(s) could be taken as a sign of enmity between any two parties. In the Siwu language, the day after the burial gathering is called *kayaso* which translates as *greetings*. The ceremony, foremost is meant to communally exchange greetings and to thank the entire community for mourning with the bereaved family. It is in the course of these *greetings* that biographical excerpts of the deceased are dramatically enacted intermittently by way of tributes. The dirges that herald these gatherings are meant to extend greetings from the living to the ancestors and ancestress. In the course of performing these dirges, a good artist that tunes in any dirge, mentions her relations as well as relations of the deceased that have passed on and can be quickly remembered and extends greetings to them. The ancestors/ancestress are also greeted and urged to welcome and accommodate the new member (s). Dirge 10G, line one “munu munu” is more of an idiophone that paints a mental picture of the countless number of the departed kith and kin in the ancestral world that must all be greeted.

In the various communities of the study area, women appoint a spokeswoman who is their spokesperson in public. This woman or her deputy is the first to greet the gathering and preside over the ceremony and receive greetings.

Image 22 Gladys Adade on stage in A solo melodramatic performance at Akpafu Odomi



Image 23: Gladys Adade on stage in A solo melodramatic performance at Akpafu Odomi



Audience watching the drama. Field data. Oct. 2022.



Image 24: From left to right (standing) in a dance performance:

Patience Owusu Akua aka Akua Todɔ (84) Vinolia Akpetey (75) Comfort Aboagye (62) in group performance during *ikisira iyi* rites at Akpafu Odomi.

Field data Field data. Oct. 2022.

6.3 Dramatic Exhibition of Ritual Cloths

The day after the burial gathering presents an opportunity for the traditional exhibition of the burial cloths to the gathering customarily meant to recognize the status of the deceased (male and female) as responsible men and women. For a deceased female, three cloths are dramatically exhibited, and for a male, two. For females, the first cloth is the next of kin cloth, known in Siwu as *biarase ɔkati*. The next cloth is that of the children of the deceased known in Siwu as *mabi ɔkati*, irrespective of not having biological children. Both cloths should be half-piece wax prints and they signify the fulfillment of the responsibilities of both the next of kin and the children respectively to the deceased while she was alive and during the death and burial. An additional hand-woven two-yard kente cloth is also dramatically shown to the gathering for deceased females. It is termed *motherhood cloth*

known in Siwu as *ɔtalepo kati* and it signifies the conferment of motherhood status on the deceased which is an honour. The hand-woven kente cloth also symbolises the cloth that the deceased (female) used to traditionally carry her children as infants. At death, the children honour their mother with this hand-woven kente cloth. A deceased male gets the first two clothes for the same significance, but not the hand-woven kente cloth, with the explanation that motherhood is supreme, and a difficult task, reserved only for women.

The elderly woman designated to show the cloths, from the clan of the deceased, raises and indicates which one she is presenting to the audience by saying:

	Siwu	English
The Performer:	Biarase ɔkati ngbene.	This is the cloth from the next of kin.
The audience:	Ma ya ooo	They bought it.
The Performer:	Mabi ɔkati ngbene	This is the cloth from the children.
The audience:	Ma ya ooo	They bought it.
The Performer:	ɔtalepo ɔkati ngbene	This is the cloth that signifies motherhood.
The audience:	Ma ya ooo	They bought it.

According to Afua Inyama Adiabu, all these cloths were buried with the deceased in the pre-colonial and colonial eras. From about 1960, a piece of each of these cloths was torn and put into a coffin to be buried with the deceased, and the rest was kept to be used by the living. However, from about 2000, it was agreed that the dead and the living could not use the same piece of cloth and that practice was discontinued. The cloths are now given to the living to use, and the public display is just dramatic to fulfill a cultural function.



Image 25: *Drogokpakpa (Elderly woman) Okra Kpei dramatically displays Mabi okati at Akpafu Odomi.*
Field data Jan 2023.

This public display of cloths for the deceased in the traditional setting is not only dramatic but also ironic because the cloths are returned to the living who brought them. The public exhibition is to signify that the deceased fulfilled his/her cultural obligations while alive, and the living equally fulfilled their responsibilities to the deceased.

It was observed during the fieldwork that though these biographical re-enactments of dramatic activities are still alive, the time allotted for them has significantly reduced. Instead, health talk, farmers' education, information on government policies, unit committee programmes, and other social announcements, among others are taking centre stage on the day after burial instead of the traditional therapeutic rites performed using the medium of indigenous drama that psychologically heals the mourners. Again, most burials are on Saturdays, and Christian Thanksgiving services are scheduled for the following Sunday morning. The thanksgiving service is meant for the same people engaged in ritual

performances, and consequently, most dramatic activities are truncated once the bell tolls for church service. Christian religious activities, for that matter, negatively affect these indigenous dramatic performances. There are no significant dramatic activities where the males gather on the day after the burial. Males review the funeral, follow up on funeral levies, and correct things that go wrong, if any.

6.3 The Room of the Deceased Inspection Rituals (Female).

Traditionally, three months after the death of a male and four months for a female, the room of the deceased is customarily inspected to see what the deceased left behind for the living. The rites associated with ‘room inspection of the deceased’, signify the end of the communal mourning. Ritual drama is performed at the deceased’s residence for both males and females in the full glare of the public, to symbolically bring the period of mourning to an end. The gender of the deceased dictates the actor/actress, audience, and the cultural props for the performance. It is, however, not taboo or prohibited for a male to sit among a female audience to watch the performance and vice versa.

A deceased female’s room drama attracts all the women in the community by way of audience. Before the event, crops that women are culturally expected to grow, namely, unmilled Kawu rice-*Kawumɔ*, (*Oryza sativa*) dry lima beans (*Phaseolus lunatus*) *kakpei*, and dry groundnuts (*Arachis hypogaea*) *akɔtɔa* in the shells (about two to three kilograms of each crop) are assembled by the immediate maternal head of the deceased. These crops are culturally reserved for women to grow and use in feeding their families by Akpafu traditions. Irrespective of the deceased’s profession while alive, these crops are core to the ritual drama. The clay stove on which the deceased cooked is inspected to be broken. A quantity of the deceased’s everyday clothes that can be shared on the day (not the most

precious of her clothes), a bag containing the deceased's most precious clothes and valuables, her cutlass, her kitchen stool, her bucket and earthenware bowls, her rice winnowing wooden or silver tray- *ifera* or *kuwe* and other cooking wares are all assembled before the day. These are the props of the ritual drama for the deceased female(s).

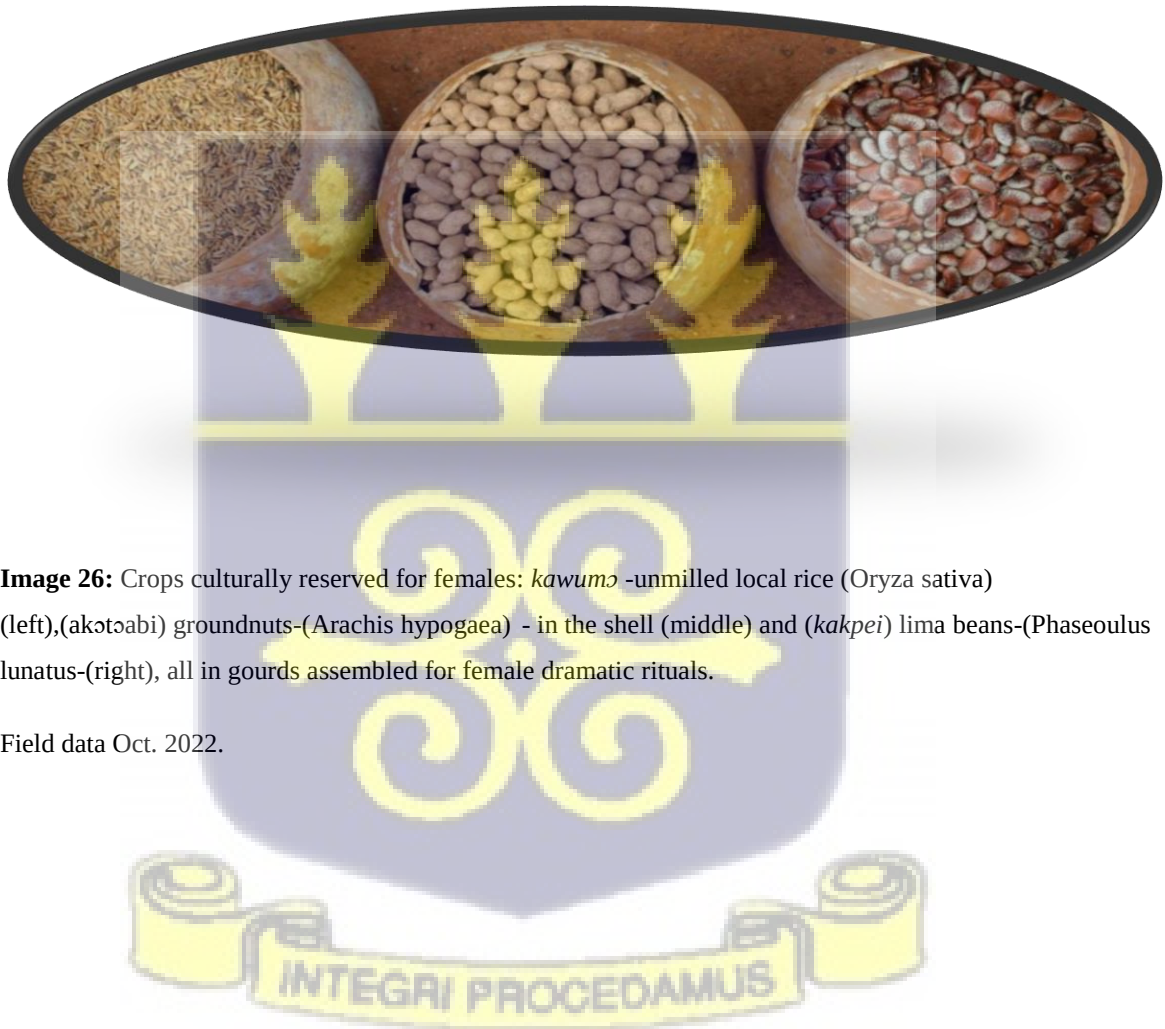


Image 26: Crops culturally reserved for females: *kawumɔ* -unmilled local rice (*Oryza sativa*) (left),(akɔɔabi) groundnuts-(*Arachis hypogaea*) - in the shell (middle) and (*kakpei*) lima beans-(*Phaseolus lunatus*)-(right), all in gourds assembled for female dramatic rituals.

Field data Oct. 2022.



Image 27: Props for the indigenous drama for a deceased female.

Field data Oct. 2022

The ritual drama starts at about 9 am and the deceased's niece (maternal uncle's daughter or any relation from the maternal kin of the deceased) is at the centre of the performance. The audience takes their real and improvised seats and most elderly women stand close to the entrance of the room (traditionally the deceased's kitchen) where the props are assembled. Dirge 11G below is performed to commence the drama.

Siwu

English

Mɔ̃ ʏ̃ kamale They have said all that needs to be said.
Mɔ̃ sɛn ayo They have closed the door

The dirge significantly brings funeral obsequies to an end to mark the end of the deceased's life on earth and metaphorically, *the door* that opened and ended the deceased life is to be closed forever. It is performed by the elderly women in standing positions, while the props are brought out by the maid of honour to the stage one after the other.



Image 28: Elderly women perform dirge 11G to commence room inspection dramatic rituals while the props are brought out. Field data Oct. 2022



Image 29: A section of an all-female audience watching the drama unfold at Akpafu Odomi. Field data Oct. 2022.

The drama begins with the sharing of earthenware bowls among the elderly women as they represent their clans. Groundnuts, lima beans, and rice are shared in that order, first to the

elderly women and then to all the audience members present and willing to receive them. There is excitement among the audience when the items are received, with remarks such as:

“Bless us so that when we plant them, we will harvest in abundance.”

“Your children and grandchildren would eat, let it rain when we plant.”

“We will plant per our tradition, bless our hands.”



Image 30: Women receive the crops

Field data Oct. 2022.

The crops shared are meant to be planted during the planting season. There is conviviality among the audience, coupled with jokes directed at the principal performer who does not speak throughout the performance, but simply engages in actions to biographically re-enact

the cultural (farming) life of the deceased. As the crops are shared, comments as below are also directed at the central performer or audience by the audience members.

Si ikpase fɔ karana kaɖe ta ka kpakpase
Si iro i ikɔkɔ ame, kusa ɔsɔra ato i fɔ iyo
Boɔɖuɖu si bonɔ , oko sɔ sako, iɖe sɔ sa wa we

Translation

“If the grains falls, you are dropping your fortunes.”

“If it gets finished in the gourd, poverty carries its luggage into your house.”

“All should take note, it is meant to be planted and not to be eaten.”

These jokes, among other remarks, liven up *the deceased room inspection* drama session with laughter and momentarily turn the audience into performers. The remarks of the active audience inform and encourage the performer in her acts, creating a dyadic relationship between the performer and her audience (Harding 2002). Completion of the sharing of the crops, meant to be planted, is followed by the return of the bag or trunk containing the deceased’ precious clothes and other personal valuables, with her cutlass on top to her next of kin’s (a male) house. The return of the deceased’s wealth to her immediate next of kin’s house, often from the deceased’s marital home is very symbolic and culturally significant. What belongs to the deceased (her bag/trunk and its contents and cutlass) must traditionally be returned to her paternal kin’s family where she was married from. This bag is opened and left outside till the sun sets, (unless it is about to rain). The reason is for the deceased’s spirit to spiritually pick what she treasures before the living share the rest.

The last dramatic act by the central performer is breaking the deceased’s traditional clay/swiss cooking stove, to symbolically bring the deceased’s life story to an end. The cooking stove is broken completely into pieces with a pestle, and the broken pieces are

carried in a bowl and thrown away. The performer at the centre of the performance should be seen breaking it and carrying it to the outskirts to completely dispose of it. The stove-breaking process is very emotional and evokes wailing, crying, and sobs, often from the close relations and close associates of the deceased, because it signifies that the person who used the hearth is indeed gone forever.

The cultural significance of breaking the clay stove is to sever all earthly relationships between the deceased and the living. The clay stove on which the deceased cooked while alive belongs to her and should be broken when she dies. After the hearth-breaking process, a few daily dresses of the deceased are put on the floor and scrambled for. Drinks, soft and alcoholic are provided by the bereaved family for the mourners to refresh themselves. The performance lasts for over one hour.



Image 31: *The traditional clay stove breaking process.*

Field data Oct. 2022



Sweeping completely the remnants of the pieces of the hearth while the audience watches on. It signifies the end of the deceased's life on earth. Field data Oct. 2022.

Image 32: The traditional clay stove or hearth-breaking process.

The completion of these dramatic/cultural rites by the living puts the living's mind at rest that they have fulfilled their cultural obligations to the deceased.

6.3.1 The Significance of the Female Room Inspection Drama

The deceased's female room inspection *props* and the actual drama define the cultural expectation of a woman in Akpafu. The core cultural responsibility of a woman which is biographically re-enacted after her death, is productivity to sustain life. The purpose of the crops shared is for planting, for continuity in sustaining human life. The crops that are shared have been grown by Kawu women throughout their migration experience and final settlement at present-day Akpafu. The nutritional values of the crops, coupled with their adaptability to the physical ecology of the study area are culturally significant to the people of Akpafu. These are *female crops*, grown by the women themselves, and are used in nurturing their families. That the items are brought from the kitchen is also culturally

significant. The kitchen, where food is prepared symbolically represents the source of life for humanity, which is also the extension of productivity. Conclusively, cultural expectations of an Akpafu woman are to be productive biologically, on the field, and at home which is exactly what an ideal Akpafu woman is, while alive. Upon death, the productive life she lived while alive, is re-enacted in indigenous drama to seal the mark of productivity. At the same time, the sharing of the crops meant to be planted is to remind all the women audience of their core productive and nurturing responsibilities to humanity while alive. *The deceased's room inspection drama* for females in the study area recreates and affirms models of the familiar productive agrigagarian and communal life of an Akpafu woman for a continuum of tradition.

6.4 Room Inspection Dramatic Rites For Males

Deceased male's room inspection dramatic rituals are different from females and are not as dramatic and elaborate as that of females. No crops are shared, however, the ideal items that a traditional Kawu male is expected to acquire while alive are brought out by way of props for the drama. These items are a bag or trunk containing the deceased's clothes, a cutlass, a gun, an axe, a mortar, a bucket, and bowls from which the deceased ate while alive.

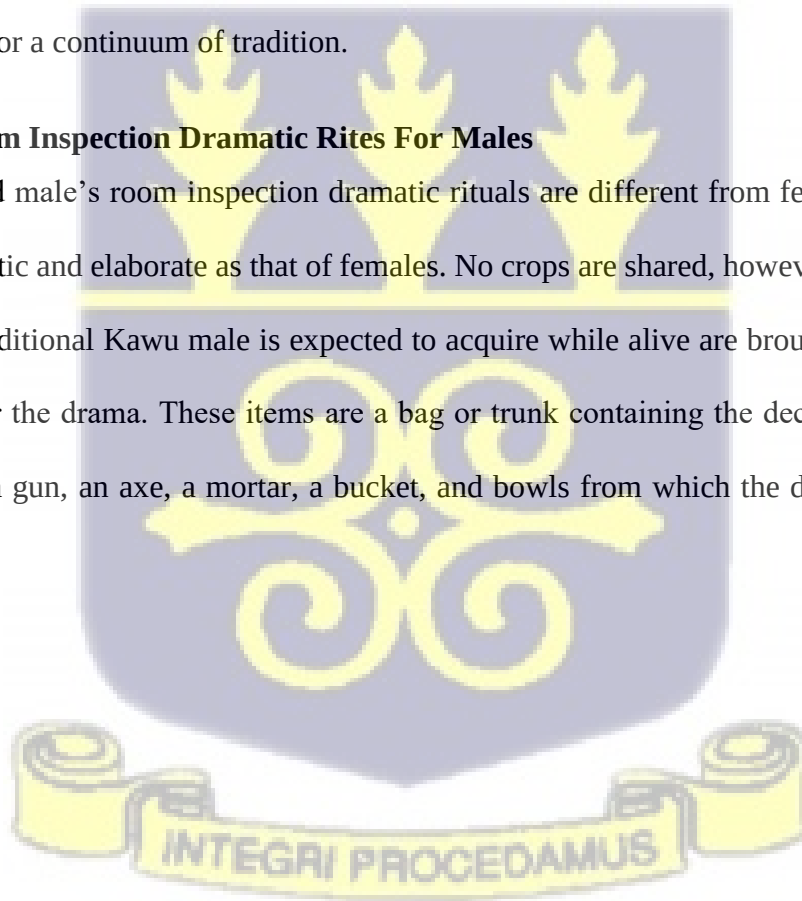




Image 33: *The props for the indigenous funeral drama in Kawu for deceased males*

Field data Nov. 2022

The dramatic ritual starts at about 9 a.m. when all the men of the clan take their seats at the deceased's residence. A maternal relation (*onyibi*) of the deceased who was closed with the deceased while alive and younger than the deceased is at the centre of the drama. The first to take their seat are the deceased immediate paternal family members due to the deep-seated patriarchy in the study area. When the clan members arrive for the house inspection dramatic ritual and take their seats, the immediate paternal head of the deceased's family, dramatically asks the guests/audience about their mission in his house to which the clan's spokesperson replies that they have come to inspect the deceased's room.

Onyibi brings out the cultural items/props one after the other to the improvised stage in a solemn mood and opens the bag. The deceased's wife, or the female relation that cooked for him while alive, is the first to be called to inspect the items and tell the audience whether

any of her items are among the property to which she responds in the negative. The husband's bucket and bowls in which he ate are returned to the wife or the woman who executes that role and she leaves. About six or more clothes are taken from the bag and put on the bare floor in the middle of the audience. In one of the dresses to be put on the floor, is an amount of money, about Gh¢ 50.00 (Fifty Ghana cedis) intentionally put there by the family for the person at the centre of the drama. He dramatically takes this amount secretly and pockets it, though the audience sees the removal. A man must always have money with him traditionally, and this amount, though is not known to the audience, signifies the money that the deceased had on him at the time of death. The three most elderly clan heads select any dress of choice. The next of kin and select clan members of the audience also select dresses as their inheritance. The rest of the dresses are returned into the bag and are put outside and opened. An unloaded gun (that belong to the deceased or his family) is put beside the bag. The bag is opened for the deceased's spirit to pick any clothes of choice before the living uses the rest. The clothes and the gun are left outside until sunset, unless it rains just as is done for females.

The next dramatic action is for a section of the audience to go into consultation (*adjina*) to determine the fate of the widow and children in the interim. They would return with the message that the wife and elderly child should go to the next of kin. The rest of the children would be taken care of at a formal family gathering after the funeral. That the *onyibi* should be spending the amount of money found in the dress until a formal family gathering is held for him to account for it. The ritual verbal utterances are always the same, irrespective of whether there is a formal wife and biological children or not. The family head provides about five litres of palm wine to the gathering for refreshment to end the drama.

6.4.1. The Significance of the Male Room Inspection Properties

Unlike the females, no crops are shared and the items used for the ritual drama aim at showing the audience the cultural expectation of a man. The gun for hunting and protection in the dense forest in the study area. The cutlass was for farming and the axe to chop wood and carve out planks and beams that were used for the traditional flat mud roof buildings among others. Again, the axe and the cutlass are used to make mortar for different pounding purposes by women and to hew wood among others. It is a man's responsibility to possess all these items, thus their display during the biographical life enactment ceremony. Today, the chainsaw machine is used to saw the lumber, and yet the axe is culturally displayed to showcase Siwu cultural heritage. Male dramatic ritual properties in effect are to signify the cultural functions of males the general role of man to farm, build a house, hunt, protect, and provide for the family and community.

6.5. Conclusion.

This chapter looks at the dramatic traditions of the people of Akpafu within the funeral context. The Siwu cultural rituals associated with the post-burial funeral rites attract an audience and these rituals constitute the indigenous drama of the people of Akpafu. The drama primarily has two aims; the living fulfilling their cultural obligations to the dead and re-emphasizing the cultural roles of men and women in biographical enactments, using the frames of ritual drama to fulfill a cultural function. Siwu drama associated with funeral rites can best be described as making visible “that which is in the past or in the future, manipulating space and time and challenging social and natural order.”⁵⁴ This is because the drama involves the secular enactment of the life of the deceased (past) and challenging

⁵⁴ Harding. F.(2002:2) Introduction to The Performance Arts in Africa. New York, Routledge

the living of their cultural expectations (future), within a space. Consequently, Siwu ritual drama points to the cultural expectations of indigenes either in the past or future in the form of a human being communicating with his or her fellow human beings(not any spirit or deity) by stimulating thoughts and feelings as stated by (Omigbule 2017).

The funeral ritual performances associated with females are more elaborate and well-attended than those of males. The large participation in female rituals is because all the women in the community take part in the performances whereas only the males from the clan of the deceased participate in male rituals.



CHAPTER SEVEN

Conclusion

7.0. Introduction

This concluding chapter demonstrates how the theory and the methodology that influenced the research have helped to address the set objectives. This chapter again ties the active Siwu literary genres examined in this study, dirges, ceremonial recitations, and dramatic enactments to their language ecology by way of conclusion. The researcher further represents graphically, the active literary genres in the study area, the occasion for their performance, and the audience that witnesses their performance in *a literary model*. The chapter further examines the relevance of the continuous performance of the genres in relation to the Siwu language's ecology before outlining recommendations on areas for further research.

7.1. The Scholarly Study of Siwu Literary Culture

As an ethnic group, the Mawu who speak Siwu has existed since antiquity and have preserved their indigenous arts in poetic oral traditions that are exhibited in performance. Memorizing and singing or reciting as a medium of preservation is the most common preservation process. Oral performance with the appropriate body language and paralinguistics where applicable, on a stage, before an audience, in what can be termed as drama, are core to all Siwu literary traditions. The performer (s) demonstrate familiarity and competence with the text on the appropriate occasion for the performance. In that regard, the performer-centred theory that unites the performer, the text, the occasion, and the audience, adopted, is appropriate for this study and provides the frame for the study.

The methodology employed in this research involves, the collection of video performances and still pictures, participation in the performances for observation purposes, writing field notes, generating Siwu transcripts of the text of the literary form, translating the transcripts into the English language before engaging in textual and performance analysis in focus group discussions and interviews that involved the performer(s). This method of data collection and analysis ensure complete intellectual exhaustion of the literary forms examined, for the realization of the objectives of the study.

In addition to everyday socio-linguistic usage of the Siwu language, the Siwu art forms, which are rooted in the Siwu language ecology, are expressed in Siwu poetry on specific occasions. The art forms that constitute Siwu literature are in constant interaction with the Kawu physical environment and are intricately woven into the culture of the Siwu speaking people. Siwu speakers seize any available opportunity in the study area or urban community to express their art forms and pass them on to posterity for preservation, continuity and ethnic identity.

Like most African societies, distinct transitions in the life cycle consisting of birth, puberty, marriage, and death are marked by elaborate communal ceremonies (Nketia 1954; Sarpong 1974), and are ideally accompanied by literary expressions in Akpafu. The literary expressions associated with the first two stages of the life cycle are almost extinct because they have been taken over by Christian religious practices. The child-outdooing ceremonies that the researcher witnessed before the fieldwork and during the fieldwork were all Christian religious practices of naming children and did not have any indigenous Siwu oral literary expressions that accompanied the ceremony. Siwu poetic recitations associated with the cementing of marriages are still alive in most Kawu communities,

however, their continuous expression is no longer fashionable. It is common to formalize a marriage without the traditional Siwu oral literary/cultural protocols associated with marriage because of social change. Sometimes the parents who are charismatic Christians see the recitations, accompanied with the use of alcoholic drinks as heathen and must not be associated with Christian marriage.

Ceremonies associated with death during the life cycle stage are where Siwu's literary expressions are very much alive. The explanation for this phenomenon is the belief in the study area that the living must fulfill their cultural and spiritual obligations to the dead, lest they incur the wrath of the spirit of the dead. In the study area, there is a general belief in the power of the spirit of the dead to kill the living when they (the spirits of the dead are offended). People, and the elders in particular, are very careful to fulfill all cultural obligations to the dead for fear of death or misfortune that might be associated with the spirit of the dead. This explains why ceremonial gatherings associated with death and burial rites in the study area are all accompanied by different genres of Siwu literary performances, to satisfy the spirits of the dead. Dirges, ceremonial recitations, and funeral rites related to ritual biographic enactments are the three literary forms in the study area that stand tall as Siwu literary art forms. Their cultural significance and functions, as well as their relationship with the Siwu language's ecology from the indigenous knowledge perspective, as shared by the indigenous people with in-depth knowledge of their art forms. This is the state of Siwu literary traditions.

7.2 The content of the Siwu Literary Genre Examined

The composers of Siwu indigenous poetry and dramatic genres infused Kawu cultural values, history, and beliefs, drawing largely from the Siwu language ecology to creatively

represent their thoughts. The contents of the literary genres serve as constant reminders of the people's identity, values. The communal living of sharing in pain and joy and being one another's keeper by way of social capital, is at the core of many Siwu literary expressions.

The dirges, in particular, communicate communal values of hard work, good neighborliness, kindness, gratitude, irreplaceable unique features of every human being and the belief in life after death among others to the living. Tributes and praises are heaped on the dead in transit to the ancestral world and greetings and requests for assistance are communicated to the ancestors and ancestresses.

The contents of the ceremonial recitations are event-specific, either to ward off death or to invoke good wishes and prosperity for the living, as well as comradeship among the people. Marriage recitations are for good health and long life for the couple and all stakeholders in the marriage and above all, abundance of children. The dramatic enactments at post-burial ceremonies dictate gender roles and cultural expectations of men and women. For women, it is continuity in production on the field and in the domestic arena and nurturing humanity, while men display physical power and protection. Some Siwu literary genres also recount Kawu's history, providing clues and pointers into the migration experience of the people of Akpafu

7.3 The Performers, Performances, and the Performance Space

There is no formal training school for the performers, and in many cases, performers acquire the art by frequent participation in the performances. The performance of dirges is a communal responsibility for all women, and any Kawu woman in good health, irrespective of the Akpafu community she comes from, her religion, or clan affiliation, is

free to join the performers. Those who tune up the solo of the dirges know themselves by having been at it for years, and they always rise to the occasion. The rest of the women sing the chorus. Women who constitute the audience, and often for health reasons, could not join the performers singing out the dirges and engage in all forms of body movement by way of dance on their seats. Other male audiences watch with admiration for all that go with the performance of all categories of dirges.

Communal gatherings in the study area, whether for open forum discussions, arbitrations, funerals, and their attendant literary performances, are organized mostly in circular sitting arrangements, with the explanation never to allow an enemy during any gathering. For the performance of dirges, communally designated circular funeral grounds provide spacious performance grounds for performance from one end to another, which provides the opportunity for a lot of women to join the performers. The women of the immediate bereaved family, children, sisters, cousins, and granddaughters of the deceased, among others are very conspicuous among the performers. The women often perform dressed in their traditional clothes, in the symbolic red and black colours. Post-burial performances do not necessarily demand symbolic colours and dress.

Performance of ceremonial recitations by men puts the performer that calls at the centre with the audience that responds playing an active role in the performance. All the male performers interviewed went through informal training, especially for relatively lengthy recitations. An excellent ceremonial poetry performer relies on retentive memory, excellent oratory skills, creativity, and eye contact with the audience to carry his audience along for a superb performance. The relatively shorter indigenous poetry with stock lines mostly associated with funerals does not pose any problem to the performers. It is common

however for a performer to miss a line or two with the relatively longer poetry associated with marriage. It is never the case however to re-start the poetry because a line has been missed. Performers creatively make up for the line missed, and deliver to the end. Some audience members who are not very familiar with the poetry often do not even realize a portion is missed, but certainly, most elders who have watched such performances over time draw the attention of the performer to the shortcomings after the performance. This is the reason why *the occasion, the text, the performer, and the audience* theoretically frame this study.

Siwu dramatic performances that enact the biography of the deceased do not have verbal dialogue. Dramatic props are used for the performance that pivots on the performer's non-verbal interaction with the audience. Very conspicuous in these dramatic enactments are the remarks and comments about the deceased and the dos and don'ts of the ceremony by the audience that liven up the performance. The performers though have witnessed the performance of such ceremonies over time and are properly briefed before the ceremony, and the audience members issue instructions to the performer during the ceremony. Though the drama is non-verbal, there is no doubt that its message conveyed through actions and gestures resonates with its ecology. The properties displayed and scenarios established speak to the cultural expectations of women and men in the Siwu ecological space.



7.4 Siwu Literary Traditions Model (Propounded By Godswill Tetteh Arikor)

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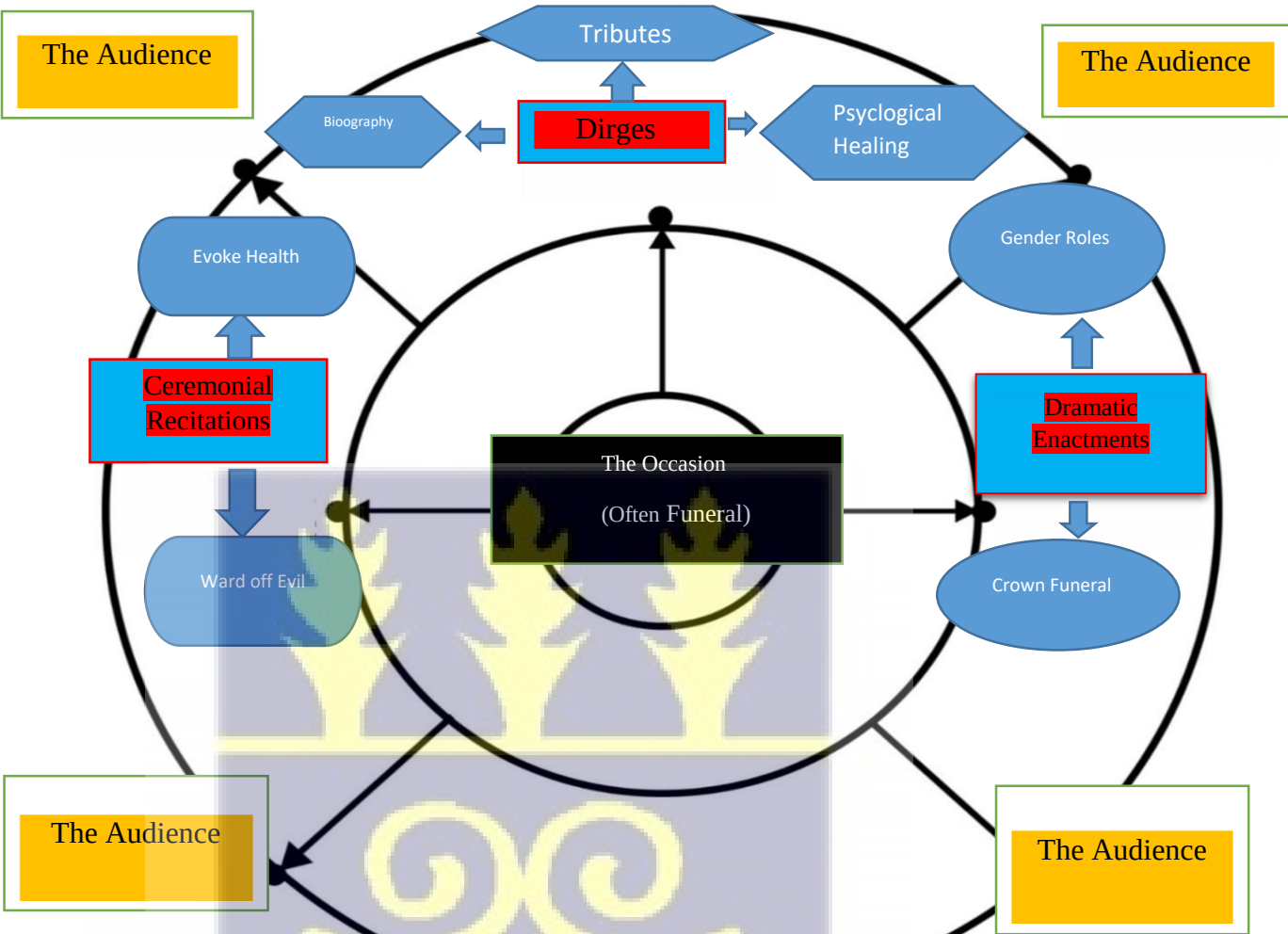


Figure 5: Graphical representation of the study and a model for Siwu oral literature.

Credit: The Researcher

The scientific study of Siwu literary genres in performance led the researcher to develop the model above. In the inner circle is the occasion; funeral, marriage or dramatic

enactment that warrants the performance of the literary genre. Of all the occasions that warrant performance, the funeral was found to be the most recurrent in the study area during the fieldwork. Celebration of marriage and fortune could pass without any Siwu literary performance of any sort due mainly to social change, the influence of Christian religious activities or the absence of a performer. Funerals however are always celebrated with literary performances of different kinds. The rice festival was not celebrated during the period in which fieldwork was undertaken. However, it is also another occasion where Siwu literary performances are staged.

In the model above, the funeral occasion provides an opportunity for the performance of dirges by the women (on top of the “occasion”) in the model. The recitation of ceremonial poetry by men (to the left of the “occasion”) and biographically dramatic re-enactment of the Siwu cultural values and expectation of deceased males and females (to the right of the “occasion”). The various functions of dirges, ceremonial recitations, and dramatic enactments are indicated as products of each genre. At the periphery of the performance of all the literary genres, to appreciate, evaluate, and appraise the performances are the audience, who may either be a mixed audience for the performance of dirges or a largely gendered audience for the dramatic enactments and ceremonial poetic recitations. The circular frame of the model is symbolic, and represents the seating arrangement of all these performances.

7.5 Siwu Literary Genres and their Ecolinguistics Orientation

One of the leading contemporary scholars in the field of ecolinguistics is Arram Stibbe. Indeed, he is the chair of the *International Ecolinguistics Association*. His landmark publication, Stibbe (2015) also makes a strong case to use the stories in the various

languages of the world to evaluate humanity's interaction with our environment. The stories that degrade the environment should be discarded and are to aid "the search for new forms of language that inspire people to protect the natural environment".⁵⁵ The *natural environment* contextually includes the language ecology and the associated ecological philosophy of a particular language, which includes, socio-cultural interactions in human societies that sustain human life and ensure peaceful co-existence. Siwu lore expressed in its literary performances constitutes *stories* that sustain the environment, encompassing human relations, worldviews, related cultural practices, and the Siwu language itself. These stories are in the minds of the Siwu speakers and influence, their day-to-day thoughts, narratives, relationships, and actions. Their continuous expression demonstrates that they are *stories to live by*. Okri's (1996) essay on the explication of language and its power to shape our lives states that "Stories are the secret reservoir of value: change the stories that individuals or nations live by and you change the individuals or nations themselves." ⁵⁶ Siwu literary traditions in effect constitute the spirit and soul of the Siwu speaking people and their continuous expression show how the Siwu language interacts with its social environment and sustain Siwu language and its people. This demonstrates how the Siwu language lends itself to ecological linguistic principles.

7.6 Conclusion.

The research has demonstrated that though the Siwu language's culture is largely oral, the language is not rudimentary but capable of conceptualizing creative and philosophical ideas in literary language. The literary genres in the Siwu language are central to the

⁵⁵ Stibbe, A (2015) *Ecolinguistics, ecology and the stories we live by*. London, Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.

⁵⁶ Okri, B(1996:21) *Birds of Heaven*. London, Phoenix

interactive process of its ecology. Additionally, the continuous expression of the genres is ample proof of the sentimental attachment Siwu speakers have to their language and arts, just as is the case with other human languages. The performance arts under study are the pivot on which Siwu speakers' lives revolve, that is why they are enacted and re-enacted for the survival of the ethnic group and its language. The genre's continuous expression is an extension of the survival coping strategies of the Siwu-speaking people and their language for that matter. Bewaji (2002) states that language protects unique traditions and socio-cultural traits from invasive tendencies and enhances linguistic identity and pride. This is what Siwu literary forms identified and examined in this study have conferred on the Siwu language. This research demonstrates the close affinity between language, cultural values, ecology, philosophy, and worldviews.

7.7 Areas for further Research.

One conspicuous oral literary tradition in the study area that this research recognized, but did not investigate is the drum and horn language. All the six clans in the study area have their appellations expressed in the poetry of drum and horn language. Preliminary investigation reveals that the drum language in the study area is largely in the Akan language. The panegyric poetry of chiefs, traditional leaders, and men of title, and clan appellations, all expressed in drum language, is mostly Akan. Initial assessment revealed that the complexities involved in getting to the bottom of the “Siwu drum language” expressed in Akan, a phenomenon which has also been observed among the Gas, would require far more time than is available for the submission of the thesis. Interestingly, the researcher’s association with the Akan communities for over fifteen (15) years has not seen

the same horn and drum language in the Akan communities. There is therefore the need to probe deeper into how this oral literary genre came to be shared by Akans, Siwu, and Gas.



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APPENDIX

Appendix A.

Thematic Classification of Siwu Dirges Repertoire

Category A Dirges (Slow Rhythm Dirges)

Dirges That Metaphorically Liken Death To Sleep

Dirge 1A

- | | |
|-------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. Onre sire o | He/she is asleep |
| Onre sire nii | He/she is deeply asleep |
| Yee ɪɔ yon | Yee it is soothing for him/her |
| Onre sire sɔmɔlɔɔ | He/she is soundly asleep |

Dirge 1B

Solo

- | | |
|------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Nna losen kuwe x2 | Who has laid him or her the cot? |
| Onre sire sɔmɔlɔɔ | He/she is soundly asleep |
| Ayiko obi , Korkor obi, etc. | Ayiko child, Korkor's child etc |
| Atukumah, Boni obi | Atukumah's child, Boni's child |
| 5. Nna losen kuwe | Who has laid him or her mat? |
| Onre sire o | He/she is asleep! |
| Onre sire nii | He/she is deeply asleep! |

Chorus

- | | |
|--------------------|--------------------------------|
| Nna losen kuwe eee | Who has laid him or her mat? |
| Onre sire o | He/she is asleep! |
| Onre sire nii | He/she is deeply asleep! |
| Nna losen kuwee | Who has laid him or her a mat? |

Onɛ sɪɛ sɔmɔlɔɔ

He/she is soundly asleep

1C

Ona be

What did he/she get?

Ona be dzamana

What did he/she get in this world?

Ona be

What did he or she get?

Tete/Mma ɔna be

Father/Mother what did get?

Dirge 1D

Solo

1. Call: Kade ɔɛ nɛ ɔɛsɪɛ

It is morning yet he/she is still asleep

Kade ɔɛ nɛ ɔɛsɪɛ

It is morning yet he/she is still asleep

Orɛnɛn/Orogo gɔgbe

This man/woman

Tete gɔgbe

This father

Mma gɔgbe

This mother

Response: Kade ɔɛ nɛ ɔɛsɪɛ

It is morning yet he/she is still asleep

Dirge 1D

Katu ku adzadzen

A solemn flowing river

Marɛ mairɛngɛn

We do not sleep and wake up

Katu ku adzadzen

A solemn flowing river

Makpi mairɛngɛn

We do not die and wake

5. Katu ku adzadzen

A solemn flowing river

Dirges That Metaphorically Illustrate the Values, Roles, and Beauty of Women

2A

(Performed as the fourth dirge when a woman passes on)

1. Katu ku ɔsɔdzen so

Water and its related items

Ɔromaro ɔɛ	They have consumed it all
Gɔ ɔnyie pia	There is sickness
Fie kua kɔn kuna	Yet there is no cure

Chorus

Katu ku ɔsadzen oo	Water and its related items
Ɔromaro ɔɛ	They have consumed it all
Katu ku ɔsadzen so	Water and its related items
Ɔromaro ɔɛ oo aa	They have consumed it all

5. Katu ku ɔsadzen so Water and its related items

Ɔromaro ɔɛ They have consumed it all

Katu ku ɔsadzen so Water and its related items

Ɔromaro ɔɛ They have consumed it all

Ayo Mma Yes mother

Dirge 2B

Solo

1. Ma re ma ya manyor ɔsile so Stand out there and admire beauty

Ma re ma ya manyor ɔsile Stand out there and admire beauty

Ɔsile to bo Beauty is arriving

Ayo mma Yoo mother

Chorus

Ma re ma ya manyor ɔsile so Stand out there and admire beauty

Ɔsile to bo Beauty is arriving

Ɔsile to boo aaa Beauty is arriving indeed

- | | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 5. Ma re maya manyor ɔsile so | Stand out there and admire beauty |
| Ɔye ɔre mma | Ɔye's child |
| Tetteh ɔre mma | Tetteh's child |
| Kallai ɔre mma | Kallai's child |
| Kafei ɔre mma | Kafei's child |
| 10. Mare maya manyor ɔsile | Stand out there and admire beauty |
| Ɔsile to bo aaa | Beauty is arriving |
| Ayo mma | Yoo mother |

Dirges That reflect the responsibilities of kin to the deceased.

3A

Solo I

- | | |
|----------------------|---|
| Si idzro kumekume | No matter the distance |
| Sate sɛ ɔri | The owner is on the way |
| Gɔ kukpi ɔseri pia | There is the path that leads to the land of death |
| Fie ɔkpeseri na | Yet no path leads back to life |
| 5. Si idzro kumekume | No matter the distance |
| Sate sɛ ɔri | The owner is on the way |
| Ayo Mma/Tete mre | Ayo our mothers/fathers |

Chorus

- | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| Si idzro kumekeme e e | No matter the distance |
| Sate sɛ ɔri | The owner is on the way |
| Sate sɛ ɔri | The owner is on the way |
| Si idzro kumekume ee | No matter the distance |
| Sate sɛ ɔrio aa | The owner is on the way |

Solo II

- | | |
|-------------------|-------------------------|
| Si idzro kumekeme | No matter the distance |
| Sate sɛ ɔri | The owner is on the way |

	Gɔ boba kayi nɛ	What did we come
10.	Be boba boaqi boqɛ	To the earth for
	Si boye sɔ kukpi pia	If we had known that there was death
	Tei boiba	We would not have come
	Si idzro kumekume	No matter the distance
	Sate sɛ ɔri	The owner is on the way
15.	Ayo Tete/Mma	Ayo Father/Mother

Chorus

Solo III

	Si idzro kumekume	No matter the distance
	Sate sɛ ɔri	The owner is on the way
	Si boye sɔ kukpi pia nɛ	If we had known there was death
	Te bɔsɛ Lama ku onre krɛ	We would have stayed with God and the wife
20.	Bo fɔa kule	And pleased them
	Si idzro kumekume	No matter the distance
	Sate sɛ ɔri	The owner is on the way
	Ayo Mma mre	Ayo mothers

Chorus

Dirges That Draw From The Natural Environment and Have Deep Philosophical Meaning

Dirge 4A

Solo I

1.	Ikumu nɔa kano	Can hear the owl hoot
	Olo ilo x 2	It is now dead silent x 2
	Olo ilo klaklana	It is now dead silent
	Si boye sɔ kukpi pia nɛ	If we had known that there was death

5. Tei boi ba	We would not have come
Ikumu nɔa kanɔ	Can hear the owl hoot
Olo ilo klaklana	It is now dead silent

Chorus

Ikumu nɔa kanɔ	Can hear the owl growl
Olo ilo x 2	It is now dead silent

Solo II

Lɔnɔa kanɔ	I have heard him/her before
Olo ilo klaklana	It is now dead silent
10. Yɔ lo so	Now it is quiet
Gɔ ɔnyie pia	There is sickness
Fie kua kɔn kuna	Yet there is no cure
Lɔnɔa kanɔ	I have heard him/her before
Olo ilo klaklana	It is now dead silent
Ayo Tete /Mma	Yes Father/Mother

Solo I

Dirge 4B

1. Karu ɔtrɛ gbingbingbin	The earth has trembled gbingbingbin
Masate ɔbo	The owners have arrived
Kuru ɔtrɛ gbingbingbin	The earth has tremble gbingbingbin
Masate ɔboe	The owners have arrived
5. Ayo tete/mma	Ayo father/mother

Chorus

Karu ɔtrɛ gbingbingbin	The earth has trembled gbingbingbin
------------------------	-------------------------------------

Masate oboe	The owners have arrived
Masate oboe aa	The owners have arrived
Karu ɔtræ gbingbingbin	The earth has trembled gbingbingbin
Kɔtræ gbingbingbin	The earth has trembled gbingbingbin
Masate oboe aa	The owners have arrived

Solo II

10. Karu ɔtræ gbingbingbin	The earth has trembled gbingbingbin
Masate ɔbo	The owners have arrived
Siawo nɛ	When you get there
Sɔ boya ma	Extend our greetings to them
15. Karu ɔtræ gbingbingbin	The earth has trembled gbingbingbin
Masate ɔboe	The owners have arrived
Ayo tete/mma	Ayo fathers/mother

Solo III

Karu ɔtræ gbingbingbin	The earth has trembled gbingbingbin
Masate ɔbo	The owners have arrived
20. Si awo nɛ	When you get there
Sɔ makpese kama	(Tell them) that they should turn back
Si manyɔ kama matrui	And look at those behind
Karu ɔtræ gbingbingbin	The earth has trembled gbingbingbin
Masate ɔboe	The owners have arrived
25. Ayo tete/mma	Ayo father/mother

Solo IV

Karu ɔtræ gbingbingbin	The earth has trembled gbingbingbin
Masate ɔbo	The owners have arrived
Si awo nɛ,	When you get there
30. Sɔ boyama ɔɖuɖu	We greet them all
Karu ɔtræ gbingbingbin	The earth has trembled

Masate ɔbo

The owners have arrived

Ayo Tete/Mma

Ayo Father/Mother

Dirge 4C

1. Ɔwere ɔyi lɛlɛlɛ

The river is flooded 'lɛlɛlɛ'

Masia kuɖɛ si maba so

They should use the bridge and come

Si boyɛ sɔ kukpi pia

If we knew there was death

Te boɛ Lama ku onre krɛ
wife

We would have stayed with God and the

5. Bo fɔa kulɛ

And pleased them

Ɔwere ɔyi lɛlɛlɛ

The river is flooded 'lɛlɛlɛ'

Masia kuɖɛ si maba

They should use the bridge and come

Ayo tete mre or mma mre

Ayo fathers or mothers

Chorus

Ɔyi lɛlɛlɛ o

It is flooded

Sima sia kuɖɛ

They should use the bridge

Masia kuɖɛ oa

Use the bridge

Ɔwere ɔyi lɛlɛ lɛ

The river is flooded

Sima Masia kuɖɛ oa

They should use the bridge

Dirge 4D

Solo I

1. Ɔwereame bɔi lokpi kutu kɔn

An aquatic animal has died of thirst

Katuame bɔi lokpi kutu kɔn

An animal that lives in water has died of thirst

Ɔwereame bɔi lokpi kutu kɔn

An aquatic animal has died of thirst

Nɛ mme gɔ mesi okpokpo nɛ

I who live at the bank

- | | |
|---------------------|------------------|
| 5. Nda si lo bra ni | What is my fate? |
| Agoo | Agoo |

(The solo is repeated over and over)

Chorus

- | | |
|---|---|
| Agyeeei | Agyeei (sign of grieve or pain) |
| Ɔwereame bɔi lokpi kutu kãn lo ayo | An aquatic animal has died of thirst |
| Katuame bɔi lokpi kutu kãn lo ayo
thirst | An animal that stays in the water has died of
thirst |

Dirges That express Uncertainty of the Future Following the Demise of X or Y

Solo

- | | | |
|----|-----------------------|---|
| 1. | Boɔ pɛpɛ wengɛ bonyor | We have seen the star |
| | Gɔ ɔnyie pia | There is sickness |
| | Fie kua kɔn kuna | Yet there is no cure |
| | Boɔ pɛpɛ wengɛ bonyor | We have seen the morning star |
| 5. | Kapire kase me o | What is my fate (in the coming day)? |
| | Kaya sɛan simede so | Which language will I speak? (in the coming day)? |

Chorus

- | | |
|--------------------------|--|
| Boo pepe wenge bonyor eé | We have seen the star |
| Kapire kase me o | What is my fate (in the coming day)? |
| Kaya seán simede so | What is my language (in the coming day)? |
| Boo pepe wenge bonyor eé | We have seen the star |
| Kaya seán simede so | What is my language (in the coming day)? |

Dirge 5B

Solo

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| 1. //:Kure ire loseisei iyo:// | While dreaming, my door/house was opened |
| Gɔ ɔnyie pia | There is sickness |
| Fie kua kɔn kuna | Yet there is no cure |
| Kapire kase me o | What is my fate (in the coming day) |
| 5. Kaya sɛan simede so | What is my language (in the coming day) |

Chorus

- | | |
|-----------------------|------------------------------------|
| Kure ire loseisei iyo | While dreaming, my door was opened |
| Ooh loseisei iyo | Ooh my door/house is opened |

Dirge 5C

- | | |
|------------|---|
| Bo kpladza | We have kept vigil |
| Bo sɛ kaɖe | We have seen the morning (repeated several) times |



Dirges In Which The Living Declare Their Innocence of The Death of X or Y

Dirge 6A

Solo

- | | |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Mme leitān Lama kuso x 2 | I did not bribe God |
| Nwi leiwo ee | It is not my turn yet |
| Ɔwi leiwo me nii | It is just not my turn yet |

Chorus

- | | |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Mme leitān Lama kuso é é é | I did not bribe God |
| ńu ɔwi leiwo ee | It is not my turn yet |
| Ɔwi leiwo me nii | It is just not my turn yet |
| Mme leitān Lama kuso | I did not bribe God |

Dirges That Rhetorically Question The Dead, God, or The Circumstances of death/Nature

Dirge 7A

- | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. Abran be | What have you done to her? |
| Fie arɔn kaɣɛ | And you have summoned him/her |
| I itri ndɛ | At the public square |
| Abran be | What have you done to her? |
| 5. Sɔ ɔba ɔn ɣɛ simeɖɛ | To come and speak which language? |

Chorus

- | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Abran be ooo ayo ayo ayo aaa | What have you done to her? |
| Abran be eee | What have you done to her? |
| Sɔ ɔba ɔn ɣɛ simeɖɛ | To come and speak which language? |

10. Obrɔ be	What has he/she done to you?
Fie arɔn kayɛ	And you have summoned her
I itri ndɛ	At the public square
Obrɔ be	What has she done to you?
Sɔ ɔba ɔn yɛ simeɖe	To come and speak which language?

15. Obrɔ be	What has she done to you?
Fie arɔn kayɛ	And you have summoned him/her
Abusuasem ba kareɔ atɔme	Abusuasem is going to query you
Olapɛ Tetteh ba kareɔ atɔme	Olapɛ is going to query you
Tetteh Attu ba kareɔ atɔme	Tetteh Attu is going to query you

20. Obrɔ be	What has she done to you?
Fie arɔn kayɛ	And you have summoned her
Sɔ ɔba ɔnyɛ simeɖe	To come and speak which language?

Chorus

Abran be ooo ayo ayo ayo aaa	What have you done to her?
Abran be eee	What have you done to her?
Sɔ ɔba ɔn yɛ simeɖe o aaa	To come and speak which language?

Dirge 7B

1. Ona be	What did he/she gain
Olaba dzumana (Buem language)	You did not (gain from this work ie sleep)
Ona be	What did he/she gain
Tete/Mma ona be	Father/Mother What did he/she gain

Dirge 7C

Solo

1. Lama awa be	What was God going to cook?
----------------	-----------------------------

Ɔkpeti me ɔlɔkɔ ma	That He harvested my fresh leafy vegetable
Adom ɔbi	Adom's child
Adade ɔbi	Adade's child
Lama awa be	What was God going to cook?
Ɔkpeti me ɔlɔkɔ ma i sia farm	He harvested my fresh leafy vegetable at the
Ayo tete	Ayo tete

Chorus

Lama awa be o	What at all was God going to cook?
Yo ayo ayo aa	Oh oh oh
Lama awa be o ee	What was God going to cook?
Ɔkpeti me ɔlɔkɔ ma	That He harvested my fresh leafy vegetable
Ayo	Yoo

Dirge 7D

Solo

1. Nna ire loɔŋ nnya	Whose is more pathetic?
Makpakpa anya	That of adults is pathetic
Mabiete anyaa	That of children is pathetic
Maproproie anyaa	That of young men is pathetic
5. Mabite anyaa	That of young women is pathetic
Si boyɛ sɔ kukpi pia	If we knew there was death
Te bɔsɛ Lama ku onre krɛ	We would have stayed with God and the wife
Bo fɔa kulɛ	And pleased them
Boɔɔɔɔɔ ayaa e	That of all of us is pathetic
Boɔɔɔɔɔ ayaa krekrekrekre	That of all of us is so so so so pathetic

Chorus

Nna ire loɔŋ nnya oo	Whose is more pathetic?
Boɔɔɔɔɔ ayaa e	That of all of us is pathetic
Boɔɔɔɔɔ ayaa krekrekrekre	That of all of us is so so so so pathetic

Nna ire loḡo nnya oo
Booḡuḡu ayaa krekre

Whose is more pathetic?
That of all of us is so pathetic

Nna ire loḡo nnya
Maréré anyaa
10. Marogo anyaa
Matelepo anyaa
Malema anyaa
Booḡuḡu ayaa e
Booḡuḡu ayaa kre kre kre kre

Whose is more pathetic?
That of men is pathetic
That of women is pathetic
That of mothers is pathetic
That of barren women is pathetic
That of all of us is pathetic
That of all of us is so so so so pathetic

Chorus

Nna ire loḡo nnya oo
Booḡuḡu ayaa e
Booḡuḡu ayaa krekrekrekrekre
Nna ire loḡo nnya oo
Booḡuḡu ayaa kre kre

Whose is more pathetic?
That of all of us is pathetic
That of all of us is so so so so pathetic
Whose is more pathetic?
That of all of us is so so pathetic

Dirges That Pay Tribute to the Deceased

A widow's Tribute To A Deceased Husband in A Dirge

Dirge 8A

1. Mma nkanya Salt to my mouth
Sina nkanya Meat to my mouth
Siri nkanya Yam to my mouth
Abre nkanya Palm fruits to my mouth
5. Kanya ga bo ḡe ala The mouth that we ate with
Laye wān oḡuḡu I will say it all
Ayo tete Ayo father

Chorus

Kanya ga bo dɛ ala o	The mouth that we ate with
Bɔa yɛ wɔn e	We will say it
Bɔa yɛ wɔn ee aa	We will say it
Kanya ga bo dɛ ala	The mouth that we ate with
Bɔa yɛ wɔn dɔdɔ oa	We will say it all

Dirge 8B

Boɔ ro dɛ	We have finished eating
Boɔ ro dɛ nii....	We have finished eating
Kpɔ̃nkpɔ̃ee	The crow
Ɔfo me ɔnyrao	Has snatched my nut or fruit

Dirge 8C

Atɔme loyi me iti o	My mind is full of issues
Atɔme loyi me iti o	My mine is full of issues
Atɔme loyi mme iti	My mine is full of issues
Atɔme loyi mme iti	My mine is full of issues
5. Ɔla kasia kɔn na me so	Because I have no avenue to air the issues
Ayi me iti	My mine is full of issues
Amanɛ kasia kɔn na me so	Because I have nobody to tell my mission
Ayi me iti o	My mine is full of issues
Atɔme loyi mme iti pɔpɔ	My mine is so so full of issues

Dirge 8D

Solo

Ikaɖe mremre maɖe	They engage in interesting conversation
-------------------	---

Ɔbi ku nyi nɛ ikaɖe mre mre maɖex2 A child and the mother engage in an interesting chat.

Chorus

//:Ikaɖeee

Conversation

Ikaɖeee ://

Conversation

NB: Child, mother and father are substituted in the chorus depending on the gender of the dead.

Ikaɖe mremre maɖe

They engage in interesting conversation

//:Ɔbi ku se nɛ ikaɖe mre mre maɖe
conversation

A child and the father engage in interesting conversation

Ikaɖe mremre maɖe

//:Ɔran ku re nɛ ikaɖe mre mre maɖe://

A husband and a wife engage in interesting conversation

Dirges For Accidental Death Victims

Dirges 9A

Dirge twenty-one

Ɔfo to bo

A visitor is arriving

Ma tofo ran

Welcome him/her

Ɔfo to bo

A visitor is arriving

Ma tofo ran

Welcome him/her

Dirge 9B

Mi tan ndzo

Sympathize with him/her

Ndzo, ndzo

Our sympathy, our sympathy

Mi tan ndzo

Sympathize with him/her

Ndzo, ndzo

Our sympathy, our sympathy

Dirge 9C

Ipo nyenene idema

It is a cold dense forest for them

Oyu ɔdema x 2

It is cold for them x 2

Ipo nyenene idema

It is a cold dense forest for them

Oyu ɔdema

It is cold for them

Category B Dirges (Quick Rhythm Dirges That Women Dance To In Public)

Dirges that Convey Greetings, Messages, and Wishes to the Dead and Desire to See or Get Assistance from the Departed.

Dirge 10A

Solo

1. Sia se bo ya ma When you go, we greet them.
 Sia wo bo ya ma When you reach, we greet them.
 Kaɛ ɔɔɔɔɔɔ kapia mɔ go The entire community is there.
 Sia se bo ya ma When you reach, we greet them.
5. (Call) Oɔmɛ ɔɔɔɔɔɔ mapia mɔ go The entire community is there.
 (Response) Sia se bo ya ma When you go, we greet them
 (Call) Kale ɔɔɔɔɔɔ kapia mɔ go The entire clan is there.
 (Response) Sia se bo ya ma When you go, we greet them.
 (Call) Owa mre ɔɔɔɔɔɔ mapia mɔ go All the ancestors are there.
 (Response) Sia se bo ya ma When you go, we greet them.
 (Call) Makpakpa ɔɔɔɔɔɔ mapia mɔ go All departed elders are there.
 (Response) Sia se bo ya ma When you go, we greet them

NB: The naming of the different categories of the departed can continue with the same response.

Dirge 10B

Karun gagbe kana ɔboi so

It is because this earth has no key.

Tee labusi lanyā ma	I would have opened to see them.
Tee labusi lanyā ma ɔɔɔɔ kpankpan	I would have opened to see them all.
Tee labusi lanyā ma	I would have opened to see them.
//: Sia sɛ, bo ya ma	When you go, we greet them.
Siawo bo ya ma o://	When you reach, we greet them

10C

1. Mmae/Tete Mmae/Tete Mmae /Tete Mother/Father Mother/Father Mother/Father
Mmae/Tete imeyi aba o Mother/Father when will you come?

Chorus same as solo and it is repeated over and over again

Mabi so nɛ imeyi aba o	Because of children when will you come?
Mmae/Tete imeyi aba o	Mother/Father when will you come?
Mawa so nɛ imeyi aba o	Because of grandchildren when will you come?
Mmae/Tete imeyi aba o	Mother/Father when will you come

10D

- Sia sɛ kenken When you have journeyed a little
Atui aya Stop
Anyor kama Look back (Do not forget us)
Mabi so Because of children
5. Ase sɛ kenken Journeyed a little
Atui aya Stop
Anyor kama Look back (Do not forget us)
Mawa so Because of grandchildren
Sia sɛ kenken When you have journeyed a little
10. Atui aya Stop
Anyor kama Look back (Do not forget us)

Chorus same as solo and it is repeated over and over again

10E

Iyɔne lanyama nɛ	The day I will see them
So ko layɔ me éé	I will be (at peace) or will be comforted
Iyɔne lanyama nɛ	The day I will see them
So ko layɔ me buɛɛ	I will be (at peace) or will be comforted
Iyɔne lanyama nɛ	The day I will see them
So ko layɔ me buɛ buɛ buɛ	I will be at utmost peace

10F

Malama ɔɖɛ kanya	The cock has crowed
Bo ya ma	We greet them
Bo ya ma ɔɖɛɔɖɛ	We greet them all

(NB: A slow rhythm dirge performed on the day after burial, when the community gatherers for *ritual* greetings)

10G

Ma yɛ munumunu oo	They are there in their numbers
//:Kaya kaɖɛ aa	It is just greetings://
Ma yɛ munumunu	They are there in their numbers
Ma yɛ munumunu oo	They are there in their numbers
Si mafɔme kaya kre aa	That they should receive my greetings

Dirges that Chronicle the Irreplaceable Loss of Human Beings.

Dirge 11A

Tee boɔ ha ɔmama	(But for the impossibility) We would have bought another one
Boɔ ha ɔmama x 2	We would have bought another one
Ɔtrui awuni ɖɛ ɔkati ɖɛ	A human being is not like a cloth
Mee boɔ ɔmama	Otherwise we would have bought another one
Bo sɛ	And replace it
Chorus //: Ɔtrui awuni ɖɛ ɔkati ɖɛ	A human being is not like a cloth

Mee bɔa ɔmama://	Otherwise we would have bought another one
Ɔtrui awuni ɔɛ ɔkati ɔɛ	A human being is not like a cloth
Mee bɔa ɔmama	Otherwise we would have bought another one
Bo sɛ	And replace it

Dirge 11B

1. Katu isɔn ku ata o	A stream does not dry up with the stones in it
Katu isɔn ku ata o	A stream does not dry up with the stones in it
Katu isɔn ku ataa	A stream does not dry up with the stones in it
Katu isɔn ku ata	A stream does not dry up with the stones in it
5.Nɛ mme nkare sɔn ku ata lo	Mine has dried up with the stones in it
Katu isɔn ku ata	A stream does not dry up with the stones in it
Nɛ mme nkare sɔn ku ata kre	Mine has dried up with the stones in it
Katu isɔn ku ata o	A stream does not dry up with the stones in it
Katu isɔn ku ata o kade community	A stream does not dry up with the stones in it, my community

Chorus

//:Katu isɔn ku ata o	A stream does not dry up with the stones in it
Nɛ mme nkare losɔn ku ata kre://	Mine has dried up with the stones in it
Katu isɔn ku ata oo	A stream does not dry up with the stones in it

11 C

Nnai iyo boa sɔra ato	In whose house shall we carry down our luggage?
Ato sia iti	Our luggage is on our head
Ato se inyamo	Our luggage is left outside
Nnai iyo boa sɔra ato	In whose house shall we carry down our luggage?

Chorus same as solo and it is repeated over and over again

11D

Ileise ma bi abo	Where would the children be received?
Ileise mawa abo	Where would the grandchildren be received?
Ileise ma bi abo	Where would the children be received?
Ileise ma bi abo	Where would the children be received?

Masei karun maɖe	To relax and eat?
Ileise mawa bo	Where would the grandchildren be received?
Masei karun maɖe	To relax and eat?
Ileise ma bi abo	Where would the children be received?
Ileise ma bi abo kade	Where would the children be received, folks?

The chorus is same as the solo and it is repeated over and over again

11E

Nɔso lo piapa aɔ o	That is why I am taking a careful look
Nɔso lo piapa aɔ o	That is why I am taking a careful look
Nɔso lo piapa aɔ o	That is why I am taking a careful look
Nɔso lo piapa aɔ o	That is why I am taking a careful look
Wûmare dolo bie	It is mine I am looking for
Nɔso lo piapa aɔ o	That is why I am taking a careful look
Wûmare do lonyɔrnyɔr	It is mine I am searching for
Nɔso lo piapa aɔ o	That is why I am taking a careful look

11F

Nnaɖe la yere	Whom will I tell
Onyire na me	I have no maternal relations
Nnaɖe la yere	Whom will I tell
Osere na me	I have no paternal relations
Nnaɖe la yere	Whom will I tell
Ayoo nnaɖe la yere	Yoo whom will I tell

Chorus

Aooni nnaɖe la yere	Aoo whom will I tell
Onyire na me	I have no maternal relations
Nnaɖe la yere	Whom will I tell

Osere na me	I have no paternal relations
Nnaḍe la ʔere	Whom will I tell
Ayoo Nnaḍe la ʔere	Yoo whom will I tell

11G

Mɔ ʔe kamale	They have said it all
Mɔ sɛn ayo	They have closed the door

Dirges that Remind the Living of Death as the Ultimate Plight of the Human Race.

Dirge 12A

- | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| 1. Call: Lɔre ma bo nɛ keteke ma bo ma klɛ o | Whether they boarded a car or train |
| Response: Nyɔ ɔ losiɛ ma nɛ | See I am following them |
| Nyɔ ɔ losiɛ ma nɛ | See I am following them |
| Lɔre o, keteke o | Is it car, is it train? |
| Nyɔ ɔ losiɛ ma nɛ | See I am following them |
| Call Lɔre ma bo nɛ sitima ma bo maklɛ o | Whether they boarded a car or ship |
| Response: Nyɔ ɔ losiɛ ma nɛ | See I am following them |
| Nyɔ ɔ losiɛ ma nɛ | See I am following them |
| Lɔre o, sitima o | Is it car, is it ship? |
| Nyɔ ɔ losiɛ ma nɛ | See I am following them |

Dirge 12B

Call: Mi lɔ miosɔ ka boba	Be going, we are coming
Mi lɔ miosɔ ka boba	Be going, we are coming
Tete mre	Fathers
Response: Mi lɔ miosɔ ka boba	Be going, we are coming

Call: Mma mre

Mi lo mioŋo ka boba

Mothers

Be going, we are coming

12C

Miɖɔe so kereo Love one another

Miɖɔe so kere Love one another

Alaso ɔtri na akpikpen Because human beings are easily susceptible to death

Chorus same as solo and it is repeated over and over again

12D

Call: Manyie manyie kamakpi o

They fell sick and died

Response: Mmeɔklakpiii

Sickness that resulted in death

Oh manyie anyie kamakpi o

They fell sick and died

Mmeɔklakpiii de

Sickness that resulted in death

12E

Mi ledza so

Be in readiness

Kukpi ikala ɔtrui ku ba

Death does inform human being before it comes

12F

ɔtrui ita na kayi iso

There is no human stone on earth

Mida nigã né

Do not be afraid

ɔbiara tɔn kpi

Everybody will die

12G

Iyɔnémo ngbɔya lome né ?

That day is that how it will be quiet for me?

Iyɔnémo iyii o ngbɔya lome né ?
me? × 2

That very day, is that how it will be quiet for

Iyɔnémo ngbɔya lome né ɖin
for me?

That very day, is that how it will be dead quiet

(variedly repeated several times)

Dirges that pay tribute to the deceased

13A

Atɔme loyi me iti o	My mind is full of issues
Atɔme loyi me iti o	My mind is full of issues
Atɔme loyi mme iti	My mind is full of issues
Atɔme loyi mme iti	My mind is full of issues
5. Ɔla kasia kɔn na me so	Because I have no avenue to air the issues
Ayi me iti	My mind is full of issues
Amanie kasia kɔn na me so	Because I have nobody to tell my mission
Ayi me iti o	My mind is full of issues
Atɔme loyi mme iti pɔpɔ	My mind is so so full of issues

13B

Solo

Ikaɖe mremre maɖe	They engage in interesting conversation
Ɔbi ku nyi ne	A child and the mother
Ikaɖe mre mre maɖe x2	Engage in an interesting chat.

Chorus

//:Ikaɖeee ://	Conversation
//:Ikaɖeee ://	Conversation.
Ɔbi ku se ne ikaɖe mre mre maɖe	A child and the father engage in interesting conversation

NB: Child, mother and father are substituted in the chorus depending on the gender of the deceased.

Ikaɖe mremre maɖe	They engage in interesting conversation
Ɔran ku re ne ikaɖe mre mre maɖe	A husband and a wife engage in interesting conversation

Oran ku re ne ikaḍe mre mre maḍe A husband and a wife engage in interesting conversation

//:Ikaḍeee ://

Conversation

//:Ikaḍeee ://

Conversation

13C

Iyo sate na iyo

The landlord/landlady is not at home

Fie ɔnkare amanie

To ask of the mission

Iyo sate na iyo

The landlord is not at home

Repeated over and over again

13D

Nnaḍe layere

Who would I speak to

Osere na ne

There is no paternal relation

Nnaḍe layere

Who would I speak to

Onyire nane

There is no maternal relation

Nnaḍe layere

Who would I speak to

Ayoo nnaḍe layere

Ayoo who would I speak to

The chorus same as the solo and it is repeated over and over again

Dirges that Draw Communal Attention To The Plight of Orphans.

Dirge 14A

Kpise ɔbi kanya iyawe sikua

An orphan does not feed on weeds

Si ɔse katome ɔtan na ɔḍe

When he/she runs errand, he/she would eat

Kpise ɔbi kanya iya we sikua

An orphan does not feed on weeds

Si kiki ne ɔtan na ɔḍe

When he/she roams he/she would eat

Kpise ɔbi kanya iya we sikua

An orphan does not feed on weeds

Si se katu ne ɔtan na ɔḍe

When he/she runs fetches water, he/she would eat

Si ɔwete nɛ ɔtan na ɔɔɛ

When he/she pounds he/she would eat

Si ɔsɛ katu nɛ ɔtan na ɔɔɛ

When he/she runs an errand, he/she would eat

Dirges that Express Dilemma/Frustration of the Living over Death

Dirge 15A

Si lo yɛ be ke la nya

When I say it, what will I gain?

Si lei yɛ be ke la nya

When I do not say it, what will I gain?

Si lo yɛ be ke la nya

When I say it, what will I gain?

Si lei yɛ be ke la nya

When I do not say it, what will I gain?

Si lo yɛ be ke la nya

When I say it, what will I gain?

Be ke labrɔɛ me

What will come out of it for me?

Be ke la ɔɪ lo ɔɔɛ

What at all would be my benefit

15B

Bo ire bɔle

Ours is difficult

Bo iye ine bobra

We do not know what we have done

Bo ire bɔle

Ours is difficult

15C

Mme leibie kuwɛn ɔre

I do not want that which belongs to anybody

Mi bie ɲn re mitɔn me

Look for mine for me

Mme leibie kuwɛn ɔre o

I do not want that which belongs to anybody

Mi bie ɲn re mitɔn me

Look for mine for me

The chorus same as the solo and it is repeated over and over again

Mme leibie kuwɛn ɔsɛ/ɔnyi

I do not want anybody's father/mother

Mi bie ɲn re mitɔn me

Look for mine for me

The chorus same as the solo and it is repeated over and over again

15D

Lo ḍi an̄o arame	I have become numb to issues
Owre ame ita lo ḍe	I am a stone in the stream
Lo ḍi an̄o arame	I have become numb to issues
Katuame ita lo ḍe	I am a stone the stream
Lo ḍi an̄o arame	I have become numb to issues

The Chorus same as the solo and it is repeated over and over again

15F

Si l̄o bīe k̄e k̄e k̄e	When I have cried enough
Ololalo	I will be quiet x 2
Si l̄o bīe k̄e k̄e k̄e	When I have cried enough
Lokpa iyo aa la di daa	I will go home in my confusion.

Dirges That Express The Negative Effect of Death on the Living

16A

Kukpi so lo p̄e ndon	I am in ashes (dirty) because of death
Fie anya me ama me	That is why you laugh at me
Kukpi so lanyanyani	I am dirty because of death
Fie anya me ama me	That is why you laugh at me
Kukpi so lo p̄e ndon	I am in ashes (dirty) because of death
Fie anya me ama hia hia hia	That is why you laugh at me hia hia hia

The Chorus is the same as the solo



16B

- | | |
|----------------------|---|
| Lo tere ise | I have run |
| Lei na ma | I could not catch them up |
| Lofɛrɛrɛ | I have flown |
| Lei na ma | I could not catch them up |
| 5. Kade oro me koko | Night has fallen on me/ I am already late |
| Lo tere ise | I have run |
| Lei na ma | I could not catch them up |
| Lofɛrɛrɛ | I have flown |
| Lei na ma | I could not catch them up |
| 10. Kade oro me koko | Night has fallen on me/ I am already late |
| Lo tere ise | I have run |
| Lei na ma | I could not catch them up |
| Nyor go lofɛrɛrɛ | See I have flown |
| Lei na ma o | I could not catch them up |

The chorus same as the solo

16C

- | | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Siyu dɛ lotsue me nɛ | The thorn that I stepped on |
| <i>Repeated several times</i> | |
| Siyu dɛ lotsue me ɔnyagami | Got me at the tongue |

Dirges that abuse or cast insinuations (at the people perceived to have a hand in the death)

17A

- | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| //:Nɔme ɔtɔn mi karu nɛ | Today he/she has given you the land |
| Misu mi karun simise:// | Take your land and live |
| Nɔme ɔtɔn mi karu nɛ | Today he/she has given you the land |
| Misu mi karun simise oo, | Take your land and live |

5. Nɔmɛ ɔtɔn mi karu nɛ Today he/she has given you the land
 Misu mi karun si misɛ, misɛ, misɛ, Take your land and live, live, live, live

17B

Sioto sioto	Sioto sioto
Yɔɔyɔ ma	They are satisfied
Marenren yɔɔyɔ ma	The men are satisfied
Marongo yɔɔyɔ ma	The women are satisfied
Yɔɔyɔ ma	They are satisfied

17C

Segbe wɛ iyo	It turned out I have been beaten by
Ayɛ lotsue me://	A snake in my own room/house
Mme lo bu lo nyor	I thought it was
Sɔ inyamɔr ayɛ lotsue me	A snake from elsewhere that has beaten me
Segbe ɛu iyo	It turned out I have been beaten by
Ayɛ lotsue me	A snake in my own room/house

17D

Kpekpe go lo ye	The dog I know
Ɔɔme kukpa kama	Has bitten my ankle
Ayo ayo ayo ayo	yes, yes, yes, yes
Kpekpe go lo ye	The dog I know
Ɔɔme kukpa kama	Has bitten my ankle

INTEGRI PROCEDAMUS

Dirges that convey communal sympathy over death whether one is present at the funeral or not.

18A

- | | | |
|----|-----------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. | So disiboma | They are not in good health |
| | Mma leiwo ɔba | Those who could not come |
| | So disiboma | Are not in good health |
| | Mma leiwo ɔba | Those who could not come |
| | ɔnyie tama nyie | They are sick |

The chorus same as the solo repeated several times

18B

- | | |
|--------------|--------------------------------|
| Mano iye | Perhaps they heard |
| Maino iye | Perhaps they did not hear |
| Fie maiwo ba | But they were not able to come |
| Mano iye | Perhaps they heard |
| Maino iye | Perhaps they did not hear |
| Fie maiwo ba | But they were not able to come |

Chorus same as solo

Communal Appreciation Dirge

19

- | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Solo: (Bo pé mi siba | We thank you |
| Ibuéi né mitã bo) × 4 | For the assistance you gave us |
| Call: Kaɖe ɔɖuɖu | The entire community |
| Response: Bo pé mi siba | We thank you |
| Ibuéi né mitã bo | For the assistance you gave us |

Call:Matuduse

Bo pé mi siba

Ibuéi né mitã bo

Call:Ndróén matuse

Response: Bo pé mi siba

Ibuéi né mitã bo

Call:Marunkrunse

Response: Bo pé mi siba

Ibuéi né mitã bo

Call:Marókpai

Response: Bo pé mi siba

Ibuéi nétã bo

Those who fetched water

We thank you

For the assistance you gave us

Those who brought firewood

We thank you

For the assistance you gave us.

Those who dug the grave

We thank you

For the assistance you gave us

Palm wine tappers

We thank you

For the assistance you gave us

NB: The lead singer can mention as many different people who assisted, for the other women to respond with the same chorus.



Appendix B

Recitation One (To Crown Accidental Death Ceremony)

Call

Siwu

English

Boone kato

We have taken the top (the best)

Mionya mi okpiti

This is your debris

Recitation Two (To Crown Natural Death Ceremony)

Call

Response

Siwu

English

Mi seoa

Sit tall

Aaa

Lo wri lotã mi

I poured it way for you or I finished it for you

Yoe/Yes

Mme adui eme boisi ne

This one must we not drink again

Yoe/Yes

Iseoooo

It should remain so or It should come to pass

Ise kpri



Recitation Three (To Crown Joyous Ceremony)

Siwu	English
Call: Miɔnya bo nda karun	This is the debris of our drink (shows it to the audience)
Response: Bo lone mi ro	We drunk and finished it
Call: Lo wri lo!	I am crowning it!
Response: Bue	Peacefully

Call	English	Response
Siwu		
Mi se oa	Sit tall	Aa
Lo ye lo tã mi	I shared it for you	Yoe/Yes
Lo wri lo tã mi	I crown it for you	Yoe/Yes
Bo iyo bue	Peace to our house/extended family	Yoe/Yes
5. Bo kayi bue	Peace to our world	Yoe/Yes
Mme ɔɔui me bo ne	This one must we drink again	Yoe/Yes
Obi guame tatata	Our precious/respected child	Yoe/Yes
Lo sira bo kanya	Who assembled us	Yoe/Yes
Obɔ bo ifue	And offered us a drink	Yoe /Yes
10. So bo pia so isoyɔ	To excite/refresh ourselves	Yoe/Yes
On ngbã iso	To his life/health	Yoe/Yes
On awale iso	To his prosperity	Yoe/Yes
Bo ma me ɔnyi maturi	Those of us maternal relations	Yoe /Yes
Ku ɔse maturi	And paternal relations	Yoe /Yes

15.	Orɔ bo abi aru	That he respected	Yɔɛ/Yes
	Bo ngbã iso	To our life	Yɔɛ /Yes
	Bo awalɛ iso	To our prosperity	Yɔɛ/Yes
	Sɔ si ɔbo iputu ame	That when he/ she entered into the forest	Yɔɛ/Yes
	Miyu ku akroa	All manner of thorns	Yɔɛ/Yes
20.	Si atan ɔri	Should give him way	Yɔɛ/Yes
	Adzriku si atãn ɔri	Tree stumps should give him way	Yɔɛ/Yes
	Siwarãn igbã biara kɛkɛ	Every kind of spirit	Yɔɛ/Yes
	Nɛ la srɔgun	That would confront him	Yɔɛ/Yes
	Si sitan ɔri	Should give him way	Yɔɛ/Yes
25.	Sɔ si ɔbo ipotu ame	That when he entered into the farm/forest	Yɔɛ/Yes
	Ɔgbarin ayata	And pluck leaves	Yɔɛ/Yes
	Si akpese sikati	It should turn into cloths	Yɔɛ/Yes
	Si ɔmɛ atai	When he holds pebbles	Yɔɛ/Yes
	Si akpese atalebi	It should turn into money	Yɔɛ/Yes
30.	Ibiara nɛ iso ɔn trua	Everything on which he stumbles	Yɔɛ/Yes
	I iputu ame	In the forest/farm	Yɔɛ/Yes
	I iyo ame	In the house	Yɔɛ/Yes
	Futututu, kpogloo	Should be white and big	Yɔɛ/Yes
	Si ɔtrua	When he stumbles	Yɔɛ/Yes
35.	Sikan rɛta iso	It should be on gold	Yɔɛ/Yes
	Sikan fudzaa iso si ɔtrua	He/She should stumble on diamond	Yɔɛ/Yes
	Sɔ ɔn ira biara nɛ ɔn bra	That any venture he/she should engage in	Yɔɛ/Yes
	Si ire ɔri	Should be successful	Yɔɛ/Yes

40. Isɛ0000

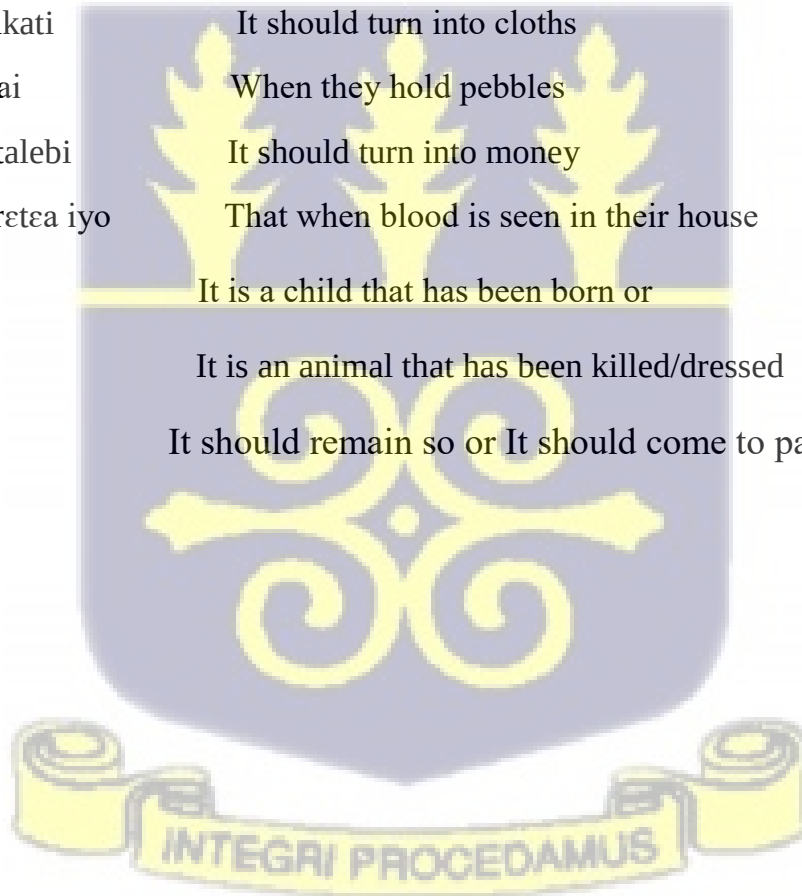
It should remain so or It should come to pass

Isɛ kpri

Recitation Four (For Crowning Marriage Ceremony)

(a)	Siwu	English
Performer/Call: Miɔnya bo ndã karun	This is the dross of our drink (shows it to the audience)	
Audience/Response:	Bo lone mi ro	We drunk and finished it
Performer/Call:	Lo wri lo!	I am crowning it!
Audience/Response:	Buɛ	Peacefully
(b)		
Call	Siwu	English
Response	Response	
Misɛ ooa	Sit tall	Aaa
Lo wiri lotã mi	I crown it for you	Yoɛ/Yes
Bo iyo buɛ	Peace to our (extended) family	Yoɛ/Yes
Bo kayi buɛ	Peace to our world	Yoɛ/Yes
5. Mmɛ ɔɖui bone	This one must we drink again	Yoɛ/Yes
Mabi maɛme tataata lonya so	The two young adults who have met	Yoɛ/Yes
Fie tama yiri so	And have decided to marry	Yoɛ/Yes
Mã ngbã iso	To their health	Yoɛ/Yes
Mã awalɛ iso	To their prosperity	Yoɛ/Yes
10. Mã mayese	Their parents	Yoɛ/Yes

Mã ngbã iso	To their health	Yoe/Yes
Mã awale iso	To their prosperity	Yoe/Yes
Bo ma ɔe madansie	Those of us who are witnesses	Ye/Yes
Bo ngbã iso	To our health	Yoe/Yes
15. Bo awale iso	To our prosperity	Yoe/Yes
Si mabo iyo inyɔ	When the two of them enter the room	Yoe/Yes
Si mabore ite	Three of them should come out	Yoe/Yes
Si mabo iyo inyɔ	When the two of them enter the room	Yoe/Yes
Si mabore ina	Four of them should come out	Yoe/Yes
20. Si magbari ayata	When they pluck leaves	Yoe/Yes
Si akpese sikati	It should turn into cloths	Yoe/Yes
Si mamu atai	When they hold pebbles	Yoe/Yes
Si akpese atalebi	It should turn into money	Yoe/Yes
Si manya ɔreteã iyo	That when blood is seen in their house	Yoe/Yes
25. Obi maye,	It is a child that has been born or	Yoe/Yes
Boi maque	It is an animal that has been killed/dressed	Yoe/Yes
Iseoooo	It should remain so or It should come to pass	Ise kpri



Recitation Five(For Crowning Special Parties/Joyous Ceremonies)

Call	Response
Siwu Siwu(English)	English
1. Kaɖe misii?	Community are you there?
Bo si (We are here)	
Misi gu ngbã?	Are you sitting lively
Bo si (We are)	
Misi gu awalɛ?	Are you sitting with prosperity?
Bo si (We are)	
Bo iidi kaɖe	We do not fail to heed the call of the community
Yoɛ/Yes	
5. Kaɖe ɔɖi bo	The community does not fail to heed our call
Yoɛ/Yes	
Boise alɛwu	We do not go empty-handed
Yoɛ/Yes	
Bo kpese alɛwu	And return empty handed
Yoɛ/Yes	
Boeɖe Makpre	We are not Bakpele (the people of Likpe)
Yoɛ/Yes	
Bose dunn	To sit quietly
Yoɛ/Yes	
10. Bota dunn	And get up quietly
Yoɛ/Yes	
Si mabo kamɔ̃	If they bring unmilled rice
Yoɛ/Yes	
Ma kpeseɔ sirɔ̃n	They would return with chaff
Yoɛ/Yes	
Mawu ku ati	The people of Akpafu (with heads/should be successful)
Yoɛ/Yes	
Malalei ku aku	Strangers with headless (bodies/should be unsuccessful)
Yoɛ/Yes	
15. Kabe krebeee bose	In hot afternoon, we are on a mission
Yoɛ/Yes	
Karo guduɔ bose	Deep in the night, we are on a mission
Yoɛ/Yes	
Bo karinya sasasa	Our efforts - a success
Yoɛ/Yes	
Igo kaɖe bo se/ɔnyi /ɔbi	Recently our father/mother/child
Yoɛ//Yes	

Ɔyu ɔsiawû iso	Became seriously sick	Yoe/Yes
20. Ma fê ayataiti	They plucked herbs	Yoe/Yes
Ma krui siɖu	They dug roots	Yoe/Yes
Ma pɛ adzriklo	They harvested the back of trees	Yoe/Yes
Ma klɛ gun mabrɔfɔkrɛ	He/She was taken to orthodox hospital	Yoe/Yes
Itikule, ɔna isosare	Luckily s/he regained his health	Yoe/Yes
25. Nɔmekadɛ	Today	Yoe/Yes
Ɔsate sɔ wûiyasɛgbɔ	The next of kin deems it expedient	Yoe/Yes
Boa kpeserawû	We would reinstate him or her	Yoe/Yes
Bo pia matrui ame	Among human beings	Yoe/Yes
Ɔbebreɛ ɔya ɔka	Food has been brought (and served)	Yoe/Yes
30. Ikanbe ɔyao ka	Palm wine has been brought (and served)	Yoe/Yes
Boɔɖɛ	We have eaten	Yoe/Yes
Bo froe sinyatu	To reunite	Yoe/Yes
Boɔne	We have drunk	Yoe/Yes
Boɔ froe sinyatu	To reunite	Yoe/Yes
35. Bo pɛ kpikpikpi	Our planting or farm size may be small	Yoe/Yes
Bo fêgboglo	Our harvest is in multiple fold	Yoe/Yes
Iseoooo	It should remain so or It should come to pass	Ise kpri

