

COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES

**PEDAGOGICAL APPROACHES TO TEACHING AFRICAN DANCES IN
TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN GHANA: THE CASE OF *AGBEKOR*
DANCE FORM.**

BY
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**THIS DISSERTATION IS SUBMITTED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF
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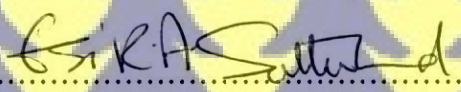
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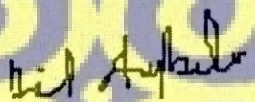
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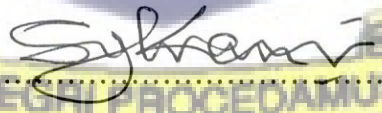
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ABSTRACT

The study interrogates the various pedagogical approaches used in teaching indigenous African dance and proposes standardised practice in teaching indigenous African dance at the Department of Dance Studies, University of Ghana. Through an action-based qualitative research approach, the study advances the argument that the current variety of pedagogical methodologies do not adequately address rich complexities of coded movement gestures. Over the years, teaching and learning indigenous African dance has mostly depended on the instructor's own approaches and methods of imparting indigenous African dances to students. Students have also created various means of memorising drum rhythmic patterns. These individual experimental approaches tend to breed disparate and non-uniformed pedagogies which undermine effective and meaningful transmission of knowledge and techniques associated with African dances in the educational environment. This research, which is an ethnographic practical approach, employs tools such as participant observation, along with interviews of past and current instructors and selected students to elicit their knowledge on practical teaching approaches of traditional dances in the classroom. With a focus on *Agbekor* music and dance of the Anlo-Ewes the study examines the close relationship between *Agbekor* music and dance with reference to the rhythmic structures (drum language). The approach demonstrates how effective the three standardised teaching methods are in tertiary institutions in Ghana by employing the three proposed standardised devices which include: 'mouth' drumming, interpretation of drum patterns and use of terminologies based on historical and contextual interpretations. The study adopts the cross sensory integration concept of the eye-and-ear as espoused by Meyer-Kalkus (2007) as a conceptual framework. The significance of the study adds to the existing pedagogical approaches and also develops a uniform approach to teaching indigenous African dance that can match with best practices of teaching dance across the world.

Key Words: Standardised, Effective, Transmission, Complexities, Language

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to Kuukua Quaye, David Essilfie Quaye (DJ) and Bertha Nyengwour Quaye.



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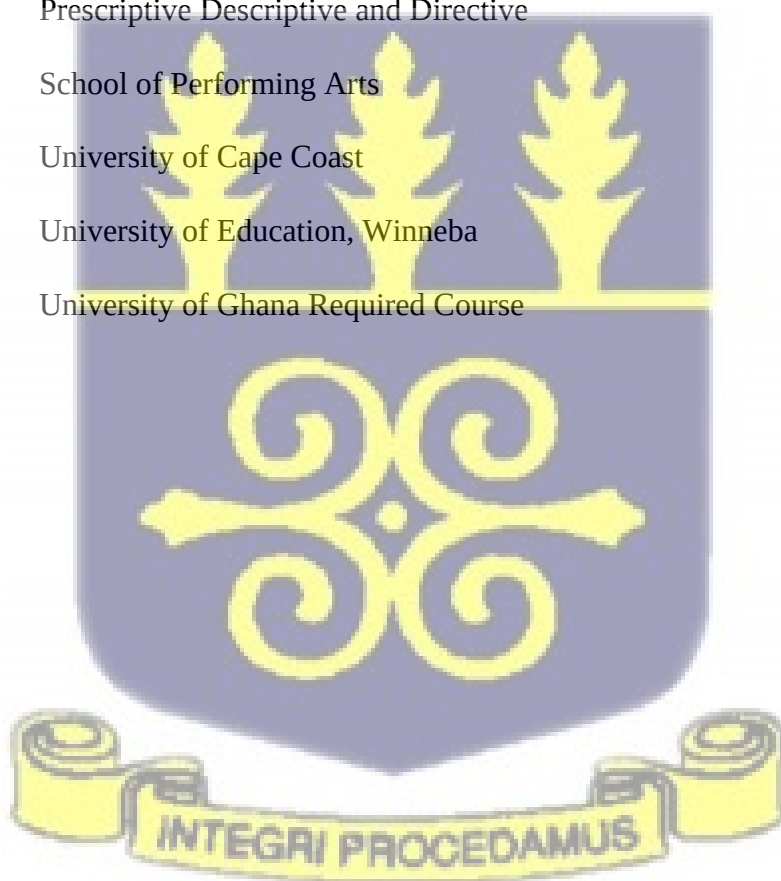
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BA	Bachelor of Arts
BETTER	Building Effective Teaching Through Educational Research
BFA	Bachelor of Fine Arts
CCT	Cultural Transmission Theory
GDC	Ghana Dance Company
GDE	Ghana Dance Ensemble
IAD	Indigenous African Dance
IAS	Institute of African Studies
NTM	National Theatre Movement
PDD	Prescriptive Descriptive and Directive
SPA	School of Performing Arts
UCC	University of Cape Coast
UEW	University of Education, Winneba
UGRC	University of Ghana Required Course



GLOSSARY

Adowa	Originally a funeral dance of the Asante but currently performed also as a social dance on various events.
Adzogbo	A ritual dance originally from Dahomey, (present day Benin) but adopted by the Anlo of the Volta Region of Ghana.
Agbekor	A war dance and music type from the South-eastern part of the Volta Region of Ghana.
Agbadza	The name of a social music and dance from the Volta region of Ghana.
Asipim	A choreographed piece by F. Nii Yartey.
Atsia	Various stylistics of movement gestures in the <i>Agbekor</i> dance.
Atsimevu	A long cylindrical drum which serves as the lead (master) drum in the <i>Agbekor</i> music and dance performance.
Akom	A possession dance among the Akan an ethnic group of Ghana.
Bam bambam bi	Vocalisation of Damba drum rhythmic patterns.
Bawa	A music and dance type of the Dagara people of Upper West Region of Ghana.
Bukom	A town along the coast of Greater Accra Region of Ghana.
Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀	A recreational music and dance type from Kpando in the Volta Region of Ghana
Bɔ̀rɛbɔ̀rɛ	The Supreme Being.
Damba	A festival as well as a music and dance performance from the Dangbamgba of Northern Ghana.
Damba-Takai	A fusion of Damba and Takai music and dance forms among the Dangbamgba of Ghana.
Damduul	Damba rhythmic pattern which asks the question, “who is shaking the room”?
Dea	A hunter’s dance among the Frafra, an ethnic group from Upper East Region of Ghana.
Dipsi-ata	Music and dance style within the Damba rhythms.
Dondology	A derogatory term used to identify the academic study of Music and Dance in Ghana.
Dzodze	A town in the Volta Region of Ghana.
Egwu	Ibo word for both music and dance.
Fontonfrom	A long cylindrical drum as well as a royal music and dance performance of the Akan of Ghana.

Glocal	A process which has a global outlook both with an indigenous (local) approach.
Gonje	This is a musical instrument of the Dagbamgba of Northern Ghana.
Hadzidzi	Ewe word for singing.
Jera	This is both a musical and dance type among the Kparibas in Dagbon of Northern region of Ghana.
Kpatsa	A music and dance type that imitates the walking gait of dwarfs originating from Ada among the Ga-Adangbe.
Kpanlogo	A social music and dance style of Ga of Greater Accra Region of Ghana
Kroboto	A drum which is part of the Agbekor musical ensemble mostly used as the lead/master drum in the Bawa dance form.
Kundum	Originally called Kuntum, the name of a hunter. The music and dance are performed as a harvest dance among the people of Nzema of Western Region.
Kple	A ritual music and dance form among the Ga specifically Teshie and Nungua.
Mi Ntama yi	This my cloth? (A Choreograph piece by Seth A. Newman)
Musu	Taboo, (A choreographed piece by F. Nii Yartey).
Nsrabo	Drill, 'Boy meets Girl', (A choreographed piece depicting how young adults meet. by Emmanuel Apofodoudou.
Odwira	A festival celebrated by the Akropong and Akwapim of the Eastern Region of Ghana.
Pam pam pam	Vocalisation of Bawa drum rhythmic pattern.
Sese	A kind of hearing or feeling in the Ewe language.
Sorsornnet	An indigenous music and dance form among the Baga ethnic group in Gambia.
Uu/Uedudu	Ewe word for both music and dance of the Anlo of the Volta region
Uugbe/Hugbe	Rhythmic patterns of drums.
Zanyile	This is a choreographed dance piece by Ben Obido Ayettey, former Artistic Director of the GDE.

1.0 Introduction

This study explores, holistically, the use of pedagogical approaches to instruct students on the effective performance of indigenous African dance and its relationship to movement gestures and cues from coded rhythmic drum patterns. Using the *Agbekor* dance from the Volta Region of Ghana, the study interrogates pedagogical methods in tertiary Institutions in Ghana, focusing on the Department of Dance Studies in the University of Ghana.

Scholars have long argued that the practice and study of dance can be structured and formalised (Welsh-Asante, 1994; Thomas, 2013; Green, 2013; Royce, 1977; Stones, 1989; Barbour, 2009; Audi, 2003; Rui Yang, 2003; Laban, 1956; Jordan, Harper, 1967; 2008; Moris, 2009; Dabrowska, 1983; Sklar, 1991; Adinku, 1994; Kwofie, 1994 and Anku, 1996). Most of the writing of these aforementioned scholars focus on general dance concepts and universal theories (based on traditional philosophical epistemologies) and sometimes analysis of various indigenous dance and their music. Scholarly literature on indigenous African dances and ethnic dances from other continents, are written from ethnological, anthropological and ethno-choreological perspectives. These scholars' texts are usually descriptions, analysis and interpretations of ethnic dances. This work seeks to bridge the gap of teaching process or the pedagogical approaches by focusing on Ghanaian traditional dance at the tertiary level. This thesis therefore highlights the different teaching processes of African dance in the academy. Furthermore, the study also interrogates the pedagogical approaches in its practice within the classroom. One reason why teaching dance must be given recognition within the academy at the tertiary level in Ghana must be based on scholarship and the knowledge systems the indigenous African dance produces. Grisham (1994) highlights why the indigenous African dance must receive recognition in its study. He opines that;

to a significant degree, it may be said that, it (dance) is a discipline still in search of its legitimate place. Up to the present time this vital art form has largely been left undefined in its role as transmitted and transforming agents of culture (Grisham, 1994, p. 38).

This assertion confirms the argument that “dance as a formal degree-granting discipline is a relatively young field in higher education” (Green 2013, p. 2) in Africa, especially Ghana, even though studies in indigenous Ghanaian dance forms began over fifty years ago. It is necessary to devise appropriate and uniform teaching approaches germane to the Ghanaian, or better still the African, that can serve as a template for developing other indigenous dance forms. This idea can be achieved through a form of a standardised African system of teaching. It is in the light of this that Overby (2003) suggests that the project format be known as BETTER. This is an acronym for Building Effective Teaching Through Educational Research developed by Lynette Y. Overby as a standardised educational material for dance, music, theatre and visual arts. This acronym was adopted in the new format for codifying traditional dance. Thus, her work together with other comments from renowned dance scholars and practitioners such as F. Nii Yartey and others provide the premise for the search of an effective pedagogical method in teaching indigenous African dance in the Department of Dance Studies, School of Performing Arts, University of Ghana.

Alfdaniels Mabingo, in his study of Ugandan traditional dance in formal education, shares similar views on African dances through Western epistemological orientations. Mabingo's (2014) work is concentrated on pedagogical approaches and standardised teaching methods that favour students more of the Western world especially and not the African epistemological issues. The study focused on the approach of teaching in American Institutions and was not centred in African Institutions. In view of this, the literature for the pedagogical and standardisations are usually generalised for the Western world and not the African. How can we therefore Africanise the teaching methods? Or is it possible to produce

a pedagogical approach in teaching indigenous African dance forms in a post-independent Ghana?

Within the past few years teaching practical indigenous African dance forms in the Department of Dance Studies at the University of Ghana has seen lots of transformation in the pedagogical approaches used in the training of dance students. Preliminary observations seem to suggest that this could be due to the increase in student population against the limited space for practical teaching and learning. The purpose of this research is to interrogate and outline the various pedagogical approaches of teachers of indigenous African dances in the Department of Dance Studies at the University of Ghana. The research also investigates the techniques that students devise in learning indigenous African dance, which can be adapted into the teaching methods and packaged for effective pedagogical enhancement. The approach aims at ascertaining the efficacy of the teaching mechanics, in order to propose additional teaching methods to ensure an improved contemporary way of teaching. In addition, the research explores how infrastructural developments in the Department of Dance Studies and technological advancement (as well as social and economic factors) could have contributed to these changes in the teaching methods (Adinku, 1994).

1.1 Background to the Study

With the establishment of the School of Music, Dance and Drama in 1962, the pioneering research activities of J. H. Kwabena Nketia and Albert Mawere Opoku who were the founding fathers of the School of Music, Dance and Drama have become so important and have deeply influenced further growth in dance education in Ghana, (Adinku, 1994). The Ghana Dance Ensemble, an epitome of Ghanaian identity as espoused by Kwame Nkrumah, the first President of the Republic of Ghana, (Friedler, 1997), was a practical research unit of the Institute of African Studies. This became a co-opted affiliate of the Dance Section of the school where according to Adinku (1994) some members of the Ghana Dance Ensemble became the pioneering students of the Dance school; practical lessons were held with the

ensemble as part of their training. The establishment of the Institute of African Studies in 1961 to project the “African Personality Consciousness”¹ was envisaged in the later works of the Ghana Dance Ensemble and the School of Music, Dance and Drama where students were supposed to learn about African heritage in addition to European forms, (Adinku, 2004). From the speech delivered by the first President of Ghana, Dr. Kwame Nkrumah at the opening of the Institute on the 25th October, 1963, on the concept of the African personality, sprang the idea to begin a study in the Ghanaian traditional art forms through music and dance practices. This idea was again echoed at the 30th Anniversary Celebration of Institute of African Studies and the School of Performing Arts in 1992. It was clear from President Nkrumah’s vision that the progress of the School of Music and Drama and the Ghana Dance Ensemble should be in line with an African centred teaching and learning. President Nkrumah posed two important questions that drew attention to the kind of teaching and learning he envisaged for the school:

1. “What kind of service are we preparing students of this Institute and our universities?” and
2. “Are we sure we have established here the best possible relationship between teachers and students?”, (University of Ghana, 1992). By this line of questioning, Nkrumah was cautioning performing Arts lectures to employ African teaching methods in pursuing their activities. According to Adinku (one of the pioneering members of the Ghana Dance Ensemble and one of the initial students of the dance programme)

our training, which initially was supposed to be African-centred, later included studies of ballet, modern dance and oriental dance forms from Indonesia. Although we took these courses, they were intended only to give us exposure to the movement forms of foreign dance cultures, not to make us experts (Adinku, 2004, p. 3).

The thrust of Adinku’s assertion here is that the pioneering students focused mostly on learning practical indigenous dance lessons, which were undertaken by

¹ African Personality Consciousness was an ideology promulgated by Dr. Kwame Nkrumah to instil positive values in African societies.

bringing Resource Personnel from several communities and shrines to teach various dances. This was also against the background that most of the members of the Ghana Dance Ensemble (GDE) had been recruited from the various regions in the country who brought diverse knowledge on dances from their various localities. Therefore, teaching indigenous dance forms in the University of Ghana in the early 1960s according to Schramm (2000, p. 343) “was more of engaging community people and using experts and people who knew the traditional dances in their society and had a good understanding of the people better”. The approach was obviously in line with the concept of Kwame Nkrumah’s (1963) African Personality Consciousness which I believe was beyond just entertainment and education. In the achievement of this consciousness there was the need to integrate the holistic activities of these non-elite Ghanaian citizens with the academia by interrogating their cultural norms through their dance forms. Some of these issues are addressed in this thesis, especially those concerning context, historical accounts, creativity, indigenous language, African aesthetics, entertainment, etc. This makes my model of codifying drum rhythms and standardising “mouth drumming” or “lip singing” very effective in the classroom. It is also to be in relation to movement execution as standard format for making teaching and learning an important contribution to scholarship.

Finally, observing the nature of dance pedagogy at the pre-tertiary (Adu 2019) schools and its impact on dance training at the university level. It is essential to understand, that at the pre-tertiary level indigenous dance pedagogy encompasses both practice and theory. These are all inclusive in either social or cultural studies, music, dance, drama and quite recently termed as creative arts (Hagan 2005 & Aguri 2005, pp. 20-21). It is interesting to note that where the practice of Ghanaian traditional dance is documented at the basic level, it is somehow missing at the second cycle schools.

1.2 Motivation for the study

Personally, my experience and encounter with dance education basically commenced in the mid-1990s when I entered the School of Performing Arts, University of Ghana to study dance as a profession. Prior to this period, I had had practical insight in the performance of traditional Ghanaian dance forms during my formative years in primary and secondary education. My earlier encounters at the primary and secondary levels were all purely non-academic purposes; they were mostly for extracurricular activities, which were performances during speech and prize-giving days in schools to entertain parents and guests. It was at the tertiary level, especially during my graduate studies that the interest in the teaching methodologies of indigenous African dance (IAD) began. I have also engaged in the teaching of indigenous African dance forms since 2007 to the present and during this period. I have developed an urge to design and package a comprehensive standardised teaching model of traditional/indigenous dances. Teaching these classes made me recognise the close relationship that the drum rhythm has with the different movements executed by the dancers/students, which some students struggle to comprehend. The teaching of these indigenous dances resulted in experiencing a deeper encounter and my profound interest in dances such as the *Agbekor* dance of the Anlo-Ewe from the south-eastern part of Volta Region, more because of its complicated dance and rhythmic patterns. Even though I am not a native speaker of the Ewe language, my long association with the dance has enabled me to understand the drum language, and I am able to effectively execute the requisite movements to the various drum patterns. It is this relationship with the dance that made me embark on this research on *Agbekor* dance. The study contains lots of Ewe text most of which are transcribed interpretations from drum rhythms. These drum texts are not standard Anlo written texts but rather they are translations and interpretations of the tonal drum language as they sound. Part of the research is to employ key words in the indigenous Ewe language for easy understanding and transmission.

From 1996 through the 2000s to the present, I have observed and witnessed several reviews of the dance curriculum in the Department of Dance Studies at the University of Ghana over the period.² The experience of these several reviews during the period, and many hours of engagement in teaching and learning indigenous African dance have contributed to my extensive knowledge and my quest for an improved teaching approach. The process of teaching can be enhanced if the educator can build an effective teaching model through educational research, especially in these times of technological changes in the academic society where student numbers keep increasing.

1. 3 Problem Statement

The Department of Dance Studies, School of performing Arts, for all these years teaching indigenous African dances has not been able to create a comprehensible and more effective standard format (rubric), in the approach to teaching indigenous African dance accompanied with its music. Every teacher has devised their own system of teaching most of which are not comprehensive enough to help students to have a full grasp of the knowledge systems embedded in these dances. Most students therefore have to struggle to find their own means of supplementing these deficiencies, yet these needs are not fully met, leaving students half-informed or sometimes uninformed.

Kwakwa (1998) contends that the dance programme at the University of Ghana developed in later years allowing final year students to conduct research in indigenous dances from their respective areas. This position is supported by current dance degree requirements especially field work engagements. Kwakwa's point here, is that in the dance section several students always visited villages to conduct research on dances, establishing connections with

² In 2000, the introduction of the BFA (Bachelor of Fine Arts) program brought a new curriculum in the School of Performing Arts which made the dance department review its program. The new program SPAD became the dance course code which was to run alongside the BA program DANC and the two years Diploma program TADA (Theatre Arts Dance). In 2009, another review was done in synchronising both the BA and BFA course codes. The BFA SPAD course became DANC similar to the BA. Then in 2015 there was another review and introduction new courses so the new course code running alongside the old ones is DANS. (University of Ghana Handbook for The Bachelor's Degree, 1996, 2000, 2009-11, 2013 and 2016)

the roots of these dances. In the Ghana Dance Ensemble (GDE) similar instances occurred in the 1970s and the early 1980s where members of the GDE visited villages³ to learn dances from traditional experts, thereby establishing a relationship with the community. This assertion is reiterated by Schramm (2000) when she describes the situation as “strong ties were claimed to the villages and the people living there” (p. 345). This according to Adinku (2000, p. 133) contributed to teaching approaches in the early days of the School of Dance. Katharina Schramm opines that members of the Ghana Dance Ensemble as well as the students of the school had to learn and perform all the dances regardless of ethnic or regional origin. The following statement gives a vivid picture of how indigenous African dances were taught in the mid-1960s at the school;

Dancers and musicians were to gain a deeper knowledge of the nature and social context of dances in their local environment, so as they would be able to understand the original meaning of gestures and movements. Apart from this.....they were to be committed to research into the rich dance cultures of the country, (Schramm, 2000, p. 345).

From the late 1970s, the School of Music, Dance and Drama became autonomous and broke ties with its mother institution, Institute of African Studies. The school became known as the School of Performing Arts (Adinku, 1994 and 2004), and the dance section also lost its close affiliation with Ghana Dance Ensemble even though there were instances that got them working and learning together. So, the dance section had to teach its indigenous dances by themselves without the original arrangements they had at its inception. This was so because some of the initial students had completed their studies and had been employed to teach hence the school did not rely on the services of Ghana Dance Ensemble any longer (Adinku, 1994). These teaching methods vary from lecturer to lecturer and it is not the same as the original indigenous approach where experts in the villages were employed as Resource Persons.

³ Interview with Willie Diku, a retired senior member of the GDE

Drawing parallels between Western dance and traditional African epistemology, the traditional dance as Green (2013) argues that the indigenous dance form of ballet has traversed from being traditional, folk or ethnic to that of classical which resulted in other breakaways and creation of other dance forms such as modern dance and contemporary dance. Tennis (2008) observes that, these possibilities were achieved due to the way the academia created a standard format for the study of ballet which he refers to as 'rubric format'. Tennis further argued that "knowledge organisation is a field of scholarship concerned with design, study and critique of the process of organising and representing documents that societies see as worthy of preserving" (p. 103). This observation can be extended to indigenous African music and dance. From Tennis assertion documentation as well as teaching and learning of indigenous African music and dance will be easier for teachers and students alike if a rubric format is created. According to Audi:

the philosophy of the mind is crucial for epistemology, that is, the phenomenology of perception, the nature of belief, the role of imagery in memory and introspection, the variety of mental properties figuring in self-knowledge, the nature of inference and structure of a person's system of belief (Audi, 1999, p. 30).

These are all what people have learnt in the past and the information is stored on the memory. This, I believe, can be achieved through synaesthesia to allow the music and dance to be designed, studied and provide criticism of the teaching methods. In a related issue, Nicholas Rescher sums up the argument that:

The first essential step is to recognize that "to know" has both a propositional and a procedural sense: there is the intellectual matter of "knowing that something or other is the case" (that-knowledge) and the practical matter of knowing how to perform some action and to go about realizing some end (how-to-knowledge). This distinction is crucial because only the former, intellectual and propositional mode of knowledge has generally been the focus of attention in traditional philosophical epistemology, rather than the latter, practical and performatory mode (Rescher, 2003, p.7).

The practical and performatory mode based on the 'knowing that' procedural sense are directly linked to the way the indigenous music and dance knowledge is acquired. When

the learner often belongs to the particular society and learns through oral transmission (tales, songs, proverbs, etc.) and also through observation, imitation and local interaction; acquire knowledge of the music and dance.

Therefore, students learning indigenous African dance in the Department of Dance Studies or in any other dance Institution must go through a standardised system of pedagogical approach to teaching. This study demonstrates the process to codify indigenous dance movements to its musical structure as standardised practices to augment the existing systems of approach.

1.4 Purpose of Study

The main aim of this research is to explore how students learn indigenous African dance amidst the various pedagogical approaches used in teaching. Using the *Agbekor* dance form, the study was intended to codify aspects of the dance and has therefore suggested ways of codifying traditional Ghanaian dances based on the combination of indigenous Ghanaian teaching methods and current teaching methodologies in tertiary institutions.

1.5 Research Questions

1. How can a model for teaching *Agbekor* dance at the tertiary level be created as a standard format or rubric for teaching indigenous African dance?
2. How can the current teaching practices be interrogated as well as the impact of indigenous African dance on students?

1.6 Objectives

The research study was guided by these objectives

- To identify the various dance phrases and their corresponding cues in the *Agbekor* dance.
- To explore the process of decoding dance text in *Agbekor* dance.
- To identify various musical phrases in the teaching of *Agbekor* dance.

- To explore the process of decoding musical text in *Agbekor* dance pedagogy.
- To develop a model for teaching indigenous African dance through the study of *Agbekor*.

1.7 Research Methods

Methodology provides a scientific approach in the way the research is designed. In this section the study describes the methodology employed in how the research data was obtained and procedure used to analyse the data from the field. It highlights the research design, the nature of the data, justification of sources of data sampling methods used and the analysis procedure applied. This study adopted an explorative approach that focused on the existing pedagogical approach in teaching indigenous African dance within the Department of Dance Studies, University of Ghana. Therefore, I find it necessary to begin the discussion on methodology before discussing in detail the methods and approach of teaching in the Department of Dance Studies.

1.8 Research Design

The research design outlined for this study is a qualitative approach. According to Bell (2010) qualitative research dwells on interaction of events and provides vivid descriptions of such events. It shows the processes a researcher used in the field in collecting data and its analysis. Furthermore, qualitative approach is an aspect of ethnography research, which is a holistic approach to the study of cultural systems that relies heavily on up-close personal experiences and possible participation of individuals (Bell, 2010). It is not only by observation of the researcher but also heavily by participation on the part of the researcher especially during an action-based or practice based ethnographic research. An action research is also defined by Andrew Johnson as the “process of studying a real school or classroom situation to understand and improve the quality of actions or instruction” (Johnson, 2012, p.1). Johnson further pronounces that action research is a systematic and orderly way for teachers to observe their practice or to explore a problem and if possible, find course of action to resolve

the problem or practice. This research approach will also try to unravel knowledge not only in the phenomenon but also in language, lifestyle and belief systems.

The research is an interactive practical approach, since the focus of the members in the study group have diverse backgrounds in the Department of Dance Studies. Thus, the adopted style for the research is a qualitative approach which is based on an ethnographic practice or an action-based research espoused by Bell (2010, p. 8) and Johnson (2012, pp. 3-5). Ethnographic research, according to Judith Bell, ‘attempts to develop an understanding of how culture works’ which is certainly not different from the practice of early anthropologists like Jack Goody and Radcliff Brown, who studied various phenomenon in different societies in Africa. Brewer (2000) defines ethnography as the study of:

people in naturally occurring setting or ‘fields’ by methods of data collection which capture their social meanings and ordinary activities, involving the researcher participating directly in the setting if not also the activities, in order to collect data in a systematic manner but without meaning being imposed on them externally (p. 6).

Brewer’s notion helped me to navigate the research field to participate in the traditional dance classes. Since Andrew Johnson’s approach of action is within the classroom situation it provides a good fit for this study. Therefore, adding Brewer’s ethnography to the class activities. Action/practice-based research “is an approach which is appropriate in any context when specific knowledge is required for specific situation, or when a new approach is to be grafted into an existing system”. This simple statement is quoted by Bell and (cited in Cohen and Maniona, 1994, p. 194), which confirms the arguments by Adrienne Kaeppler (2000, pp. 116-125), Joan Kaeliinohomoku, (1970) and Kariamuwelsh-Asante (1994) about the practice of an ethnographic research as a scientific approach to a qualitative research. The study is interrogating the existing pedagogical approaches to teaching indigenous African dances in the Department of Dance Studies, School of Performing Arts, University of Ghana. This is what necessitated the adoption of the action-based or the practice-based research to elicit co-generation of knowledge. The goal is to transform the teaching process by reviewing

the existing pedagogical approaches and proposing a model to add to the existing systems for better and effective teaching approaches. With Brewer's claim of ethnographic study, the setting for this research is the Mawere Opoku dance hall (classroom), situation in the university system of the School of Performing Arts, University of Ghana.

1.9 Key Informants

In ethnographic study key informants are people who are well positioned in the field of study as well as have knowledge and interest in the area of study. These key informants also serve as guides and links to other important people who may assist in investigating the phenomenon (Mckenna & Main, 2013, p. 5).

During this study I engaged with three persons who served the purpose described by Mckenna and Main (2013), in the gathering information from the field. The first key informant is Seth Asare Newman, a retired senior faculty in the Department of Dance Studies teaching on part time basis. Mr. Newman is a product of the Dance school in the early 1970s and who later became faculty member from 1979/1980 academic year. He has been teaching various dance courses including the *Agbekor* dance till date. He has also experienced various pedagogical approaches to teaching and been part of various dance reforms curriculum development. Due to the aforementioned experiences, he was able to create and set up the traditional dance technique as a form of learning traditional dances in the Dance Department. These attributes of Mr. Newman meet the criteria of a key informant as observed by Trembley (1957). According to Trembley (as cited in Mckenna et al, p.5) a key informant must "hold formal positions in the community, have knowledge relevant to the study, be willing to share this knowledge, communicate well, and be unbiased or able to reflect upon their own biases". Mr. Newman was able to show these qualities in the field.

The second informant is a senior master drummer with the Department of Dance Studies since December 1983. Seth Kofi Gati has worked most with former and current dance lecturers in the department and very much informed about each one's teaching style. He plays

almost all the traditional rhythms for all the traditional dance classes in the Dance Department. Seth Kofi Gati unlike Mr. Newman is a native of Anlo and speaks the Ewe language which makes him more qualified to be an informant. His mastery on the Anlo language and his assistance in the *Agbekor* drum language was very instrumental. He is very key in the teaching process of traditional dances in the Department of Dance Studies.

The third informant is Emmanuel Avonyo who is also a master drummer with the GDE for close to 20 years now. Prior to being a member of the GDE Emmanuel Avonyo has played with various amateur groups here in Accra and in Anlo state in the Volta region where he hails from. He has rich experience in Ewe drumming and more especially the *Agbekor* drumming. Emmanuel Avonyo played a very significant role in codifying the proposed terminologies of the *Agbekor* drum rhythms with its corresponding movement gestures. Since he is a native Ewe speaker, he understands the drum language and also provides the interpretation as well as the idea and the narrative around the dance movements. The information from Emmanuel Avonyo is later corroborated and confirmed, then the words or the phrases in the Ewe language are used for the rhythms, movement gestures, and the codification. Emmanuel Avonyo provided indigenous knowledge through drum rhythmic patterns.

1.10 Research Instruments

In every research there are various instruments that are used in collecting data or generating information from the field. The other techniques that was adopted in this kind of research in reference to Bell (2010), are participant observation, interviews, mapping, charting, interaction analysis, study of historical records, current documents, the use of demographic data etc., which have all been identified to be the best approach to any ethnographic study. The instruments used in this study includes participant observation, the use of an interview guide and interaction with both lectures, students and retired former lecturers.

As the researcher, I was part of the class setting to observe lecturers teaching methods and approaches as well as the progress of students' learning in the environment of the classroom situation. I observed the teaching of dance practice in the classroom where the use of video recordings of both drum and movement text, photos, sound and music recording of drum texts and interviews of lecturers, musicians (drum instructors) and students were employed. There was an informal approach to discussions with key informants and picking up their views on issues pertaining to the study. These were achieved with the aid of an interview guide.

The interview guide⁴ used was self-designed depending on the participants that were involved in the study. This was a structured approach to the key informants which were lecturers, students, and drum instructors. Each component or section had a unique interview guide to help elicit the information needed for the research. According to Anum (2019, p. 3) interviews could be structured and unstructured where necessary. For this study I employed both the structured and the semi-structured approach in collecting the data. This was because for some of the students and the retired faculty members the interview was more of a conversation, which meet the requirements stipulated by Bell (2010, pp. 8-9) as an open-ended discussion.

Other archival materials were paper documents, photos and video documents from Kwabena Nketia archives which provided secondary information on the establishment of dance school especially at the University of Ghana.

During the study, minimal observation and some interviews of indigenous African dance classes were done in the Department of Theatre Arts and Film, University of Cape Coast and Department of Theatre Arts, University of Education Winneba. Though these

⁴ See appendix for the interview guide

Institutions were not part of the focus of study, observing their approach was to provide a fair idea of how teaching of indigenous African dance was approached.

The approach of using an interview guide to elicit information from students, drum instructors and teaching instructors in one way or the other did not help in the facilitation of the interviews conducted. Even though an interview guide was supposed to function as a structure to follow during interviews most of the interviewees were not comfortable answering certain questions because in their view, those questions were not necessary. For instance, when I asked dance teachers if they had any teaching philosophy which they used in teaching especially the practical dance forms, most of them thought it was not an issue since their duty was to teach.

The number of questions on the interview guide could be the problem why the interviewees may have felt the questions being asked were too many. Originally, I felt I needed to ask all the questions on the interview guide since I put them there, but I later realized that the response of one question could touch on some of the other questions I had intended to ask. So, in effect, I was repeating questions. During the interview both the interviewee and I would realize that I had already dealt with the issue in a previous question, therefore we moved on.

1.11 Research and Study Area

The study area is the University of Ghana specifically the Department of Dance Studies, School of Performing Arts. This is due to the fact that the department is one of the first academic dance programme in Ghana that commenced teaching in traditional African dance.

1.12 The Question of the Insider Outsider.

The debate concerning the 'insider outsider' dates back to Kenneth Pike when he used the term 'emic' and 'etic'. The study of Pike (1967) highlights the observational culture practices of two different views of experiences which, on the contrary, aids in the approach of data collection during an anthropological research. These terms describe the situation a researcher

in the way he/she perceives certain phenomena of study. According to Morris (1999, p. 781) emic follows perception from an insider standpoint whiles etic from an outsider's view. For example, I am studying a dance form I have practiced and taught for so many years but, on the contrary the dance form is from a culture I do belong. So, in one breadth I am an outsider to the culture and in another I am conversant with the dance. This is because my study is centred not the cultural area the dance form but in the classroom of a tertiary institution. During the research I realized that being familiar with the people and the locus was quite an interesting experience. Reflecting on the process of data collection in the field especially in the main research site, Department of Dance Studies, I had so many assumptions. As a researcher, I assumed that because I was familiar with the research site, getting informants to be part of the research in terms of interviews and discussions was going to be easy. One of the challenges I faced however in gathering the data for the research was the issue of familiarity. Since the emic and the etic situation are very necessary in research such as an action-based or practice led research since it positions the researcher in observing the people within the culture. In my case, it took me a while to understand the behaviour of the students in the class (as a researcher and not one of them as a teacher or a student). Since the field was a very familiar one, it was like an everyday interaction as alluded to by Morris (1999, p. 782) but the moment I asked for their consent to record the interview, then their attitude and aura changed. The main reason for this may be the idea of wanting to speak well and not making mistakes. This hesitation of making mistakes was very prominent among the students, service personnel, teaching assistants as well as younger faculty members, which I believe was the bigger problem than just familiarity.

My own biases in the approach to the research locus mitigated against me in the collection of data due to my familiarity with the subject of study and the research participants. Even though I found myself as an insider within the Department of Dance Studies, I realised that the subject content of my study was not a familiar one in-terms of language, historical narratives and understanding the drum rhythms linguistically, even though as I recount in my

personal experience, I have been teaching the *Agbekor* dance for over ten years before beginning this study into the dance form. Kaeppler (2000, p. 117) opines, “the notion that dance as a ‘universal language’ is still too common and is often associated with the idea that outsiders can understand body movements of others without knowing the cultural movement language”. I was familiar with the practical embodiment of the *Agbekor* dance and its interpretation in movement gestures but not the philosophical underpinnings of the dance form. Hence, is it a question of being in an emic situation or an etic position?

Being part of the research community also changed certain dynamics for me in how participants responded to the interviews. In respect to Geurts (2002, p. 38), “etic is more of Western perspective in research”. Especially where I find myself in the field of the research as well as being a part of the research phenomenon. Furthermore, having taught some of the students before and asking them to be part of the research was as if I was coercing the students to join in the discussions.

I went into the study with considerable foreknowledge, because my study area is in the same place I am a faculty member. However, my years of teaching did not create any significant biases regarding the information gathered for my investigation as will be demonstrated in the findings of the study which brought out considerable information.

1.13 Data collection

I have observed and participated in a number of traditional dance classes from the beginning of the first semester of the 2017/18 academic year and a number of Dance technique classes. This was to enable me to understand the phenomenon that I was investigating (Bell, 2010, pp.8-9 & Anum, 2019, p.5). The study focus was on the 2017/18 academic year of the level 300 students in the Department of Dance Studies. The idea was to adopt an experimental qualitative approach where a select number of students were to serve as a control group for monitoring. The selection criteria were based on dance major students until 2018/19 academic year when their cohort were completing level 400. At least within the control group,

there were 2-3 students who had had exposure to indigenous dance practice before gaining entrance to the University. Issues relating to number of males and females major and minor students in the class, was also be given consideration to the dances being studied. This was due to the influence of the lecturer teaching and how movement gestures are transmitted to students. All these are to enable effective measurement of the group's performance output from when they entered level 300 in August 2017/18 and when they completed level 400 in 2018/19.

During the field study I observed several traditional dance classes from level 200 to level 400 classes, which confirmed most of the assertions by former and current lecturers of the Department of Dance Studies. The table below shows an observation carried out during the field work within the Department of Dances Studies of the School of Performing Arts.

Table 1. Field work observations

Date of Observation	Level	Type of Dance	Teaching Methodology	Lecturer(s) in Charge
02/03/2016	200	Damba/Takai	Vocalisation (lip-singing or mouth drumming)	Godson A. Sorkpor/Benedictus Mattinson/Oh! Nii Sowah
16/02/2016	200	Damba/Takai	Demonstration and vocalisation	“
28/08/2017	300	Bawa	Demonstration and Follow-the-Leader	S.A. Newman and Kofi Anthonio
30/08/2017	300	Bawa	Follow-The-Leader	S. A. Newman and Kofi Anthonio
04/09/2017	400	Jera	Resource Person/Follow-The-Leader	Seth A. Newman/Kofi Anthonio
18/09/2017	300	Bawa	Demonstrational and Follow-The-Leader	Seth A. Newman
02/10/2017	300	Sikyi	Follow-the-Leader	Seth A. Newman
04/10/2017	300	Sikyi	Demonstration	Seth Asare Newman
01/11/2017	300	Sohu	Allowing students to perform without supervision	Seth Asare wman
26/02/2018	200	Damba/Takai	Teacher centred Approach and Vocalisation	Godson Sorkpor/Benedictus Mattinson/Sena Atsugah
30/04/2018	300	Agbekor	Visiting instructor	Sena Atsugah/Benedictus Mattinson

The table above shows the number of practical dance classes observed during the research period. It also shows the different methods and approaches lecturers used in teaching traditional dances. In one of the instances during a class session, there was a confusion among the students as to which movements that has been taught them was correct. Due to the assertion by a visiting dance instructor who felt that the movement gestures that the students had been taught prior to his visit were wrong and needed correction. In other cases, most of the problems identified was the issue of students not being able to identify drum cues and drum language.

Another observation was the use of ‘mouth drumming’ or lip singing, where students are sometimes made to sing the drum rhythms based on the tonalities of the drum. This is also to aid students assimilate the rhythms and to enable them to identify the cues in the rhythm relating to the dance. My observation proved that sometime this practice is done unconsciously and not given the necessary impetus it requires for students to take it seriously. Therefore, I believe this good approach needs to be harnessed properly and codified them if need be for its application to be more purposeful.

1.14 Sampling Methods

In this study two sampling methods were used at various levels of the research. The first was the snowballing technique and the second was the purposive approach. Dudovsky (2018) refers to snowballing technique as an approach where accessing some of the participants were based on referrals from an initial participant. With the assistance of the key informants, the snowballing technique was used to obtain information from lecturers and some drum instructors who are either in service with the Department of Dance Studies or have retired or left and working somewhere else. In this case getting access to former senior dance lecturers such as Patience Kwakwa and Emmanuel Apofu-Duoduo were recommended by Seth Asare Newman. Patience Kwakwa was a good fit since she taught me as an undergraduate student. I had to call her and make the necessary arrangements to visit her in the house for an interview

session. In the case of Emmanuel Ampofo-Duoduo I could not visit him, but the interview was done via a telephone call.

The second technique was the purposive sampling approach which allows the researcher to select members of population the researcher thinks can participate in the study. This sampling technique does not allow everyone within the study area to participate in the research (Dudovsky, 2018). This method enabled me to select students within the study group as an experimental group to use them to experiment on the codification for the new teaching approach.

1.15 Limitations of the Study

The study did not focus on the practice of dance at the basic and second cycle school system due to the broad nature of pedagogical approaches to teaching especially in dance education. Even though the pre-tertiary dance curriculum is supposed to feed into the tertiary, my study could not extend focus on the activities within the sector.

The intention and aim of the study were to be able to codify the *Agbekor* drum rhythms and movement gestures for teaching purposes at the tertiary level. Due to time constraints with student's academic work and logistics, the study was not able to codify and standardise all the movement gestures and the drum rhythms within the *Agbekor* repertoire. These could probably be a future study where I would gather funds into the study.

1.16 Significance of the Study

The study provides a better insight and understanding in decoding indigenous drum text (language) for students to perform (interpret in dance movement). This will serve as rubric for uniformity in teaching indigenous African dance. It will also help to provide a guide or a manuscript that both teachers and students can use in embodying dance rhythm. To further reiterate Anku (1996, p. 15), he says, "we must also unravel the 'mystery' of the master drummer's rhythmic organisation in theory rather than by instinct". Also, with reference to

Crosby (1997), she advocates the bridge in merging practice to theory. These practices must then be systematised and incorporated in our modern learning process, which for William Anku, will help in the educational reform in Africa as a whole and in Ghana to be specific (Anku, 1996, p. 14).

One other justification is provided by Nii-Yartey in an argument in Younge (2011, p. 6), and corroborated by Welsh-Asante (1994, p. 204), that, the indigenous dance is formalised and codified so that it serves as some criteria and a process for preserving the traditional dance heritage of Ghana. This study has demonstrated through a well-researched and the researched findings that must be accepted by most dance artists and scholars in the world.

A further justification is to have uniformity in the realisation of students' performance. The codification will enable both lecturers and students to have a guide to experience the way to approach teaching and learning of indigenous African dance. It is also to explore the use of indigenous language in the traditional dance forms in the University system. Finally, it will add to the discourse of prevailing literature and help to assist instructors/teachers in how to measure students' performance and what to expect during assessment.

Agbekor music and dance is chosen because.

1. It is one classic dance form that has been re-arranged in terms of structure for academic and aesthetic purpose.
2. It is one of the Ghanaian dance forms that has been studied and written on extensively hence the availability of literature on both the music and the dance form.

1.17 Organization of Chapters.

Chapter one of the thesis includes a brief introduction, the background to the study as well as what motivated my interest in embarking on such a study. The chapter also discusses the problem, the purpose, research questions the objectives the limitations, the significance and

ethical considerations of the study. The section also outlined how the research was conducted. Identifying the research area and how preliminary investigations were done before the whole process of research was undertaken.

Chapter two is focused on the theoretical perspective that underpin the research study. It also defines some relevant concepts that closely relate to the understanding of the study. The section further reviews literature that interrogate and identifies the gaps relating to issues of pedagogy, drum cues/language and indigenous African dance practice at the University.

Chapter three is focused on historical and establishment of the School of Music, Dance and Drama, with a brief introduction on the Institute of African Studies and the Ghana Dance Ensemble. The chapter looks at the appropriation of indigenous African dance in other tertiary Institutions and their pedagogical approaches. The chapter finally discusses the mission and purpose of the dance program at the University of Ghana.

Chapter four deals with current teaching methods and curriculum development in the Department of Dance Studies. This deals with philosophy in teaching Indigenous African Dance (IAD) as well as the current pedagogical approaches. The chapter also explores the use of 'Newmantics' dance technique as one of the teaching approaches to IAD. The section further discusses the relationship between IAD and its music. The chapter is not complete without addressing modes of transcriptions in teaching and the new proposed teaching approach.

Chapter five focuses on transmitting indigenous dance knowledge through *Agbekor* dance form. In this chapter the study centres on formal and informal education through dance, with brief historical background on the *Agbekor* dance. The chapter further interrogates the *Agbekor* through cultural identity, art and academic discipline, *Agbekor* drum ensemble, *Agbekor* as a performance identity deconstruction of the pedagogical method of approach.

The sixth chapter provides a proposal for standardising and codifying indigenous drum cues and its relationship of movement kinaesthetic to rhythmic patterns. The discussion concludes with the new possible methods of approach to teaching indigenous practical African dance.

Chapter seven discusses analysis of the data gathered from the field. This provides the opportunity for the strong grounds in proposing some terminologies with the use of the Ewe language. The discussion centres on analysing the coded drum rhythms with their corresponding movement gesture. The section provides how the codification and the standardisation was done to give credence to the research findings. These were supported by the interviews and views from the indigenous gate keepers and the practitioners of the *Agbekor* music and dance form.

The concluding chapter focuses on learning outcomes and summary of the study. It also reiterated the proposed terminologies that the study had developed. Finally, the study provides recommendation for curriculum development and the new proposed pedagogical approach.

1.18 Ethical Issues

Any research dealing with human Institutions has ethical consideration, and this study is no exception. In view of this, the study was subjected to the ethical board of the University of Ghana for clearance, I was very mindful of any possible ethical issues that might occur during the course of the field work since the study also involved lecturers, students and other personalities who may not be comfortable when recording them on video and on tape as well. Therefore, I had to make provision and sought for the necessary permit and consent before any such recordings took place. Information received was cross checked to ascertain its viability and credibility before usage. This was to avoid any lying informants who may pose as the gate keepers and the all-knowing informants, (Bleek, 1987). It was my hope that any information that was classified was treated as such. Students interviewed for this research as

well as lecturers and instructor were appreciated and adequately compensated for their time spent for the period of engagement. The same was done for such other informants that were engaged in the research. A budget was made to cater for activities such as transportation, printing, transcription, video editing and research assistance that helped during data collection and accessibility.

1.19 Work Plan

In August 2017, when the 2017/18 academic year begun, I was in the research site to start collecting data. This was because the study was focusing on the level 300 cohorts of the Department of Dance Studies, University of Ghana. The first part of data collection was done from August to December 2017 and the second part was in the second semester from February to May 2018. Within these periods I had to observe third year traditional dance classes and conduct interviews with students and examine their capabilities when they started the year and also interview them when the year ended in May 2018 to ascertain their progress from first semester to the second semester. It was also my hope to have advanced in the literature review within the period as well.

1.20 Conclusion

Having explored all these experiences, this research, with ethnographic, archival and secondary approaches, I seek to fill any gaps that there must have been in the pedagogical approaches in dance scholarship in Africa and beyond. Within the Department of Dance Studies, it is the wish that this study contributes to knowledge production in academia and to push the academic discourse about indigenous drum codification and movement gestures within its non-verbal activities.

THEORETICAL AND LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

In this chapter, the focus of discussion will centre on some theoretical and conceptual frameworks that justify and advocate the study of pedagogical approaches to effective teaching of African indigenous dances by borrowing theories from other disciplines such as linguistics, development and performance studies. The study interrogates how pedagogical approaches in the teaching of indigenous African dance interrelates with semiotics of drum language and performance.

“Life is not determined by consciousness but consciousness by life”, this statement by Karl Marx (cited in Cook, 2014) begins the discussion on the preliminary philosophy embedded in pedagogical approaches to teaching indigenous African dance and how it relates to the broader spectrum of language semiotics in dance performance. Performance as everyday life activities has been discussed extensively in different genres such as anthropology, ethnomusicology, ethnography, ethno-choreology, linguistics, sociology, gender, and even in security studies. (Bauman, 2012, Goffman, 1959, Kaeppeler 1967 and 1971, Kalihiomnoku, 1976 and 1980; Drewal 1991; Green, 1994, Kinni-Olusanyin, 1994, Carlson, 1996; Saito, 1997; Ziai, 2011). Human life is full of activities and every activity is seen as performance hence every performance happens within (a) specific space(s). Therefore, the practice of dance in relation to Schechner (2006), Bauman (1977), as well as Okpewho (1992) constitutes to what they all define as performance. Schechner (2006, p. 1) identifies that “performance can take place anywhere under different circumstances”. Likewise, Isidora Okpewho identifies the practice of non-verbal activities (movement gestures) as well as expression in African music as oral narratives. These oral narratives are what Bauman (1977, p. 99) considers as performance in verbal arts. The teaching of indigenous African dance at the University embodies lots of non-verbal articulation of the human body, which suffices as performance activities within confined proxemics. Once there

is human activity it will certainly happen within a space and the traditional indigenous African dances are no exception, (Green, 1994).

The discourse on performance from the time of Goffman (1959) to others like Drewal (1991), Okpewho, (1983; 1992), Yankah, (1995), Saito (1997), Worthen, (1998), Tejumola & Quayson (2007) have all gone through trajectories that in one way or the other has defined performance as everyday life experiences. These experiences contain their own aesthetic appeal and must also take place at a location. Thus Drewal (1991) maintains that ‘performance is seen as a fundamental dimension of culture as well as the production of knowledge’, which includes the concept of “social drama”, by Victor Turner (1957); Clifford Geertz’ concept of “Thick Description” and “Deep Play” respectively, (1973 and 1980); John Austin’s (1962), “Speech Acts” which was later developed by Dell Hymes, (1962), into “The Ethnography of Speaking” through to Richard Bauman’s (1975) “Verbal Arts as Performance”, which was a move away from the text based performance, (Barber, 2005). Since the research study is centred on what the drum rhythms communicate and how the performer responds to his language in movement gestures. This is where the concept of semantic also becomes key in the study because of drum tonation (Burk, 1966). The tonation of drum emits symbolic language that is understood by the performer. According to Burk (1966, p. 343) “language is not merely a way of describing but a form of symbolic action”. This symbolic action gives meaning to what the drum language describes to the performer to interpret. This also includes Carlson’s (1996) “Performance: A Critical Introduction”, as well as Mackenzie’s (2006) market theory where he linked performance to the activities at the centre of market of economics. This notion of everyday life experiences being performance, has been argued further by scholars in different fields of study as music, dance drama, painting, performance art, language, storytelling, sex etc. The study of language has become an important aspect of performance discourse which Yankah (2004, p. 603) demonstrates through his work in speaking for the chief. Language is also used to push the paradigm in different disciplines including the practice of dance where drum language is key to how dancers move and exhibit gestures. Ziai (2011) postulates that ‘in everyday life, the question

of how language represents our reality becomes apparent when different people comprehend different things although they observe the same event'. For Aram Ziai like Richard Bauman, Dell Hymes, Ruth Finnegan and Isidora Okpewho, I perceive the teaching of dance and for that matter specifically *Agbekor* within the classroom relies heavily on language (drum text). Communication for language scholars is a two-way approach thus, the pedagogical approach in transmitting dance knowledge and movement is both verbal and non-verbal. The traditional dance is therefore heavily dependent on the drum rhythms to complete the whole performance and the teaching process. It is in that respect that language forms a key component in this study through the drum text as language and the movement gestures as non-verbal. The drum text in all instances serves as signs in terms of drum cues that the human body must respond using movement gestures.

This notwithstanding, Austin's "Speech Acts" theory of performative acts is a key function in the methodological approach to teaching indigenous African dance. For instance, in the discussion of securitization theory (Balzacq, 2011; Charrett, 2009 and Šulović, 2010) the arguments made by these scholars is the pronouncements of war as a 'speech act' which must not be taken lightly, hence one must immediately make provisions to protect the action (speech). The quotation below is an indication of how serious the word has been problematized in security studies.

In sum, the key idea underlying securitization is that an issue is given sufficient saliency to win the assent of the audience, which enables those who are authorized to handle the issue to use whatever means they deem most appropriate. In other words, securitization combines the politics of threat design with that of threat management. Consequently, the core concepts of the theory are arguably the securitizing actor (i.e. the agent who presents an issue as a threat through a securitizing move), the referent subject (i.e. the entity that is threatening), the referent object (i.e. the entity that is threatened), the audience (the agreement of which is necessary to confer an intersubjective status to the threat), the context and the adoption of distinctive policies that is, it does not only describe the world, but can also transform social reality. (Balzacq, 2011, p. 121).

With the above quotation, it explains how a speech act should not be taken likely in security discourse. The drum text and movement gestures in any indigenous dance performance. In the *Agbekor* war dance the drum rhythm provides some speech acts which the body articulates through movement gestures. This gives a vivid picture of how drum rhythms can be related to verbal or speech act. The lead *Agbekor* drum ('Atsimevu') serves as the commander providing instructions on the drum for students or performers to respond. Within the performance of *Agbekor* music and dance, most of the rhythms played by the lead drums are supposed to be responded by the dancer. This gives direct communication though through a third-party as identified by Yankah (2005). A typical example of this concept is synaesthesia as translated through the ear and eye (oculesics) during the teaching and learning approach of traditional indigenous dances.

Similarly, the practice of effective pedagogical method of teaching uses the down to up approach to elicit communication as an effective mode of communication amongst the students rather than top to bottom approach. This is a Foucauldian theory reiterated by Abrahamsen (2000) concerning power relations as to who has the authority to transmit in terms of indigenous dance knowledge. Drawing parallels from this analysis, I argue that it is the voice of the marginalized, who in this case are the students in the majority in the dance class, or the voice of authority as in the case of the dance teacher who has the power to transmit knowledge. So that in the transmission process the dance gestures and performances according to the discourses are expressed through language and behaviour. It can therefore be perceived from Austin's performative utterance as to how speech acts have been employed into coded language through drum text by Okpewho, Finnegan, Bauman and Foucault who may see these as an utterance rather than a security threat.

Inasmuch as I want to agree with all these ideas and concepts about performance, they do not really situate them in context of where the performances (activity) take place as it is

with pedagogical approaches. Dell Hyme's acronym of S-P-E-A-K-I-N-G⁵, in the pedagogical model, gives an idea of proxemics (performance space/classroom) and time for the speech act, i.e., the mode of instruction to occur. The acronym also provides participants (lecturers and students) space for the activities (acts and sequence of teaching). These include a story for the purposes of the occasion and finally various forms of speech competence from the actors (instructors, drum rhythms and students) involved (Hyme, 1962). With all these theories and concepts about performance, Schechner (2006, p. 28) reiterates performance as 'doing something up to a standard to excel'. Richard Schechner's definition of performance comes close to the discussions in this study. His argument is more towards a concert in the arts which will enable one to 'show off to the extreme' towards an audience to appreciate, especially in the case of this study, standardisation, which is key to the methodological approach to music and movement execution. Since any pedagogical model goes through preparation before it is measured, this study focuses on the kind of performance that goes through a pedagogical process (preparation/rehearsal) before it is presented as examination performance.

In this case, one must be aware of him or herself in almost every learning performance process, where especially the pedagogical process is to affect change, (Freire, 1972). This is where the student/performer must be alert, being in a state of consciousness so that, perseverance certainly pays off in the long run! In the 'Indigenous African Dance' class, where one is not conscious, the impulse of the communication between the drummer and the student will be lost.

Through the lens of drama, we watch plays, we see ideas being performed, and using words, (Hymes, 1974) and symbols⁶ to convey messages and how audience sympathize or

⁵ Dell Hymes acronym S P E A K I N G refers to Situation, Participants, Ends, Act (sequence), Key, Instrumentalities, Norms and Genres.

⁶ J. H. K Nketia observes that, it will be evident that the arts in the traditional society that drama pervades many activities of social life. Dramatic expressions form an essential part of the process of living together, the traditional 'theatre' does not exist as something separate from social life as a necessary construction of it fulfilment.

empathize with the actors in the performance. This is what Turner (1982) refers to as “metaphors of life” and “liminal time” where drama reflects what pertains in the society and everything becomes public. Finnegan (1992), affirms this assertion by Turner when in Finnegan, refers to Bauman’s (1977) description of performance, she opines that

Performing can range from full-scale orchestrated programmes before an audience at some scheduled place and time, right through to the more or less impromptu telling of an anecdote during informal conversation or ‘a fleeting breakthrough into performance, as when a child employs a new and esoteric word with peers as a gesture of linguistic virtuosity’ (Bauman, 1989, p. 264).

In these assertions both Finnegan and Bauman agree that in every performance the medium of conveying messages to the audience is through language whether it is through words, signs and symbols. Likewise, in the indigenous dance, communication is done mostly through drum language and movement gestures understood within specific spaces such as the community. But in the case of the classroom where students are not familiar with the drum language and the movement gestures, then the use of terminology must be created for teaching purposes.

In Turner’s submission, he makes reference to Goffman’s “Frame Analysis” (Goffman, 1974) where he indicates that certain rituals and rites would have to go through liminality since, in his opinion, things would have to be specific and framed for the purpose it is intended for. Therefore, in the class situation developing terminologies for the drum text and their corresponding movement gestures become specific for both the lecturer and the students in the understanding of drum rhythms. These sums up Turner’s argument when he situates certain festivals such the “Hot festival in an Indian village” and the “Apo ceremony of northern Ashanti of Ghana” as the expressions and views in the form of judgments that come from people in the society and this is done through the interactions of people.

Context is very important in what performance is and what is determined as performance to place in context where the performance takes place. According to Richard Schechner;

Certain events are performances and other events are less so. There are limits to what “is” performance. But just about anything can be studied “as” performance. Something “is” a performance when historical and social context, convention, usage, and tradition say it is. Rituals, play and games, and the roles of everyday life are performances because convention, context, usage, and tradition say so. One cannot determine what “is” a performance without referring to specific cultural circumstances. There is nothing inherent in an action in itself that makes it a performance or disqualifies it from being a performance (Schechner, 2006, p. 30).

The performance space is of very great importance in this study since it helps to situate the pedagogical approaches to be used in knowledge transmission. Likewise, the space also helps the context of the dance in the knowledge acquisition. From the quotation above Richard Schechner’s performance within the dance context situates how the transmission can be achieved through language (speech acts). Drawing from Geertz’s (1973) argument about social drama where activities like wrestling, Balinese cock fights, political rallies, and doctors performing operations all, happen within a social context and are framed as performance. All these take place within their social environment like the hospital for the doctor, the cultural setting for the cock fight, and the wrestling. This for me may constitute setting or performance space for the activities in which the dance classroom in the Department of Dance Studies (Dance Hall) is no exception.

The indigenous language is one aspect of these mediums that is used in the classroom space where the coded drum rhythms serve as speech acts for dancers to interpret in bodily language. Within the context of African music and dance, speech acts and drum language may resonate with the coded drum text and the kinaesthetic presentation. All these are concepts of semiotics that Ferdinand Saussure (as cited in Berger, 2004, pp. 6-7) has advanced as signals in various forms. In terms of the indigenous African dance this semiotics

is communicated through the drum text as rhythms for dance gestures. With the aid of this semiotics concept or theory, the dance teacher at the tertiary level engages the student within the space of the classroom (Dance Hall) to explore various methods of approach to teaching and learning indigenous African dance or simply traditional dance.

2.1 Defining African Dance

Indigenous African dance is as old as its music (Onwuekwe, 2007) and therefore enjoys a close relationship with its music, (Nketia, 1974; Euba, 1990; Giurchescu and Torp, 199; Welsh-Asante, 1994; Yatey, 2000; Green 2013, 2014; Dor, 2014). Quite often ethnomusicologists have discussed traditional (African) music structures in detail and have missed the analysis of the complex interrelation between dance and the music (Cashman, 2012), which is very central for African dance pedagogy. This is one of the motivations that prompted the writing of this thesis. The indigenous African dance and its music provide enormous indigenous knowledge of the society during the performance, (Nketia, 2016; Geertz, 1983; Agordoh, 1994; Gyekye, 1997; Sowah, 2011; Kaeppler, 2000; Dor, 2014 and 2015), which builds the cognitive, kinaesthetic and the psychomotor (Shore, 1996 and Kaastra, 2008) senses of the individual. According to Badu-Young (2011, p. 9) “the dance comes to life only when the dancer gains that physical, spiritual and emotional connection with the music during performance”. John Blacking echoes similar ideas as cited by Akrong (2010, p. 3): “music is a synthesis of cognitive process which are present in culture and in the human body”. What both scholars are referring to is that performers of traditional dance must embody the dance with all dexterity and passion. In other words, traditional dance performers must have full knowledge of the content, music, language, movement, signs, norms, cues and in a nutshell, the cultural practice of the traditional people. It is in relation to culture and cognition that Bruner (1960; 1996) coined the term cognitive revolution. According to him cognitive revolution “has probably made us more conscious and newly aware of what anthropology has to offer in relation to human science” (1996, p. 56). That is

to say, anthropology, especially the area of human behaviour has contributed immensely to the development of cognitive science.

In fact, in the discussion of cognition and human behaviour Audi (1998, p. 79) postulates that “the theory of knowledge is concerned with how we know what we do, what justifies us in believing what we do, and what standards of evidence we should use in seeking truths about the world and human experience”. Audi’s assertion is that one must go through some processes to know what we know. For example, visiting the places of origin of the art form, and knowing the norms and sanctions which, implies that: one must know that, one lives in a society governed by rules, norms, sanctions and traditions that must be adhered to and that there must be standards or benchmarks for seeking knowledge about our world and experiences. For me this assertion by Audi prompted my investigation into African dance pedagogy. Paying close attention to Adrienne Kaeppler, a dance anthropologist, she opines that the ‘ultimate aim of an ethnographic description of dance is to give the reader the information necessary to operate as a member of the society with regards to any activity that includes or could include dance’, (Kaeppler, 1978, p. 32). Kaeppler corroborates what other scholars have said earlier, but her approach in her research explains the way dance has taken centre stage in getting to know the people. Therefore, my framework essentialises the knowledge systems associated with indigenous African dance. I argue that the knowledge systems are important elements necessary for more comprehensible, effective teaching and learning approaches for practical dance in the University of Ghana. My belief is that the model I have proposed in this research, which is based on the considerations of the context, history, language and creativity by way of lip-singing of drum patterns, can be replicated anywhere in the world where the traditional dance takes its cues solely from the drum patterns.

Guirchescu and Torp (1991) and Green (2013) affirm that Western dance forms such as ballet, rely more on counts. Green, further indicates that indigenous African dance is inseparable from its music that is largely percussive in nature. Also, indigenous African dance does not have fixed duration for performance; it is solely depending on the drummers;

however, the dancers are expected to execute culturally and communally agreed-upon movements specific to each rhythm. In other words, without the cues of traditional African music, the dance cannot be completely performed; the same cannot be said for the Western dances where the dance does not necessarily depend on the cues in the music but rather on the general rhythm and counts. The above argument explains why the indigenous African dance makes its music very much visible in its performance. This explains why African music and its corresponding dance bear the same name, yet Western forms of dance such as ballet, modern, clog and square dances do not have corresponding music that bear the same names. Going forward amongst many African people there is no separate word for types of music and their corresponding dance. Among the Igbo of Nigeria, *egwu* is the word for both music and dance, likewise *rawa* in Hausa. Among the Ewe in Ghana it is *hadzidzi*, *kple*, *vu* or *yedudu*. (Onwuekwe, 2007; Burns, 2009).

Green (2013, p.1) argues that “percussive music is not the utmost boundary of the lexicon of Western comprehension, as the lexicon of Western music is predominantly melodic”. Green’s assertion here is that the use of drum patterns is not a Western practice, an assertion that is buttressed by scholars such as Nketia (1975), Agordoh (1994) and Agawu (2008) who have made similar assertions. Younge (2011) in a similar argument in his studies emphasises the close relationship indigenous dance has with its music making them inseparable.

Giucherscu and Torp (1991) explain that Western dance forms are more explicit in the use of language by using terminologies or words that represent particular movements or phrases, which I believe is a good practice for teaching and needs further development in the symbiotic relationship between African music and dance;

A major task of the analytical process is the disclosure of an implicit existent grammar in each dance idiom. Therefore, the efforts of revealing regularities in the structural make-up of dance and the attempts to create a terminology to cover the theoretical concepts have been necessary and very important preoccupation of the European dance scholars, especially in Eastern Europe, (p. 3).

What Guucherscu and Torp are suggesting is that any serious dance Institution must have an existing grammar or create terminologies to represent theoretical concepts, dance and music idioms, movement patterns, and many more. This same argument suffices for the Ghanaian and African context. The argument here is that African scholars must find ways of developing terminologies or codifying concepts, movements and their corresponding rhythms, cues and other important features to facilitate teaching and learning of indigenous African dance. This I believe will highlight the integrative perspective of teaching and learning of indigenous African dance which has been neglected over time. The process gives the exercise a ‘glocal’ approach; meaning, the process has a global outlook but with a local (indigenous) approach in its implementation. The *Agbekor* from the Volta Region of Ghana is the case studies for the research.

Even though many ethnomusicologists do not discuss the dance per se, Agordoh (1996) discusses the drum music in east and southern Africa. Likewise, Avorgbedor (1994, p.92) does in the discussion of *halò* performance. Both Nketia and Euba also do similar discussion on drum music as cited by Avorgbedor (2003) and Thompson (2003). These views cannot be ignored in the discussion of indigenous African music and performance. According to Green (2013) and citing Keita Fodeba (1959) indigenous African dance is not just movement to music but rather a spontaneous emanation of the lives of the people; meaning their dances are integrated in their everyday activity and are not mechanical or ‘robot-like’. This buttresses the assertion that indigenous African dance within the community is acquired through assimilation, which is achieved through observation, imitation, dancing on the periphery, listening and following rhythms precisely. Furthermore, as observed by Harper (1967); Kwakwa (1972; 1998); and Sowah (2011) the embodiment of the dance makes one disciplined. The acquisition of the how-to-knowledge (practice) must be done through a meticulous regime over a considerable period. For instance, children learn through slow assimilation by watching performances of their parents. In Akan communities, the child who

will grow to become a player of the talking drum is helped by the master drummer who taps the rhythm on his shoulders so the child gets to feel or imbibe the “motor feeling” (Tracy, 1948). This obviously is another way rhythmic pattern in the dance is taught in the traditional setting. The indigenous dancer/performer is perceived beyond a dancer or performer. The dancer is seen as a teacher, historian, social commentator, a celebrant, a spiritual medium, a healer and a storyteller beyond just the performer, (Green, 2013). The understanding of these process in the traditional society enables the performer to express himself/herself originally, which manifest in the roles expected of the dancer. The indigenous African dance, therefore, is often an expression of the beliefs, norms and values of a culture, (Sowah, 2011, and Onwuekwe, 2007). Most indigenous societies are homogenous where the indigenous practices and certain traits are common (Chilisa, 2012 & Royce, 1980). Traits like ethnicity, language, religion and cultural practices identify people within a culture.

Cultural transmission theory is a concept that deals with cultural learning, enculturation and socialization which states that “all behaviour is learned from society or culture that surrounds a person” (Eckers & Lipo, 2007, p. 318). It is this concept of cultural transmission that allows dancers to assume certain roles such as historian, healers, storytellers, etcetera, because these roles are very much part of the traditional practices. Therefore, I agree with Nketia (1975), Royce (1980), Agordoh (1996), Green (1997) and Agawu, (1991; 2008) when they reiterate the fact music and dance are practices that identify people of a homogenous culture who have learnt through the socialization and behaviours that have affected them. The people, therefore, share and identify with the musical and dance traditions of that particular culture. The functional nature of the indigenous dance and music makes it homogenous for the people within the cultural tradition to relate these practices as forms of language, kinetic and somatic phenomenon. Both Grau (2011) and Tierou (1992) identify the expressive movements of the body particular rhythms as culturally and socially rooted. Thus, when the dance is removed from such a society to a heterogeneous context such

as the academic setting, the dance loses spontaneity and some aspects of its functionality. As the indigenous African dance is always accompanied with its music and is understood by the people who share common knowledge as postulated by the cultural transmission theory, I question aspects of the teaching and learning of African dances at the University of Ghana where some of these socialisation and behaviours are rooted in the teaching process. I discovered some pertinent problems when African dances are learnt within the academic setting with its rules and regulations, an issue that is also raised by Mudimbe (as cited in Castaldi, 2006) in view of its new environment. Gay Moris also identifies how the new environment “brings out a problem in cultural studies and the possible discussions of how dance studies are embodied in practice”, (Moris, 2009, p. 83). The main issue is that the dance will assume new characteristics hence will have challenges in the performance practice. This will also affect teaching practices as well as student learning process. Consequently, this study sought to suggest ways to solve the problem indigenous African dances encounter within the tertiary Institutions by creating a model for codifying dance movements to address these challenges in teaching indigenous African dance in the Department of Dance Studies, University of Ghana.

2.2 Defining Concepts

“Many educational theories are drawn from other disciplines, and a philosophy of education can provide a pedagogical history of ideas, theories and vocabulary”, (Jordan, 2008, 6). This quote situates how crucial epistemology is to pedagogical approaches in indigenous African dance practice. This pedagogical practice must be scientific in its implementation, with reference to Barbie (2013, p. 11) “a scientific theory is a mathematical model that describes and codifies the observations we make”. As has also been identified by scholars such as Audi (2003), Tennis (2008), Barbour (2004), Kwofie (1994), Kropp Dakubu (2010), Locke (2011), Green (2013 and 2014), Welsh-Asante (1994) and Kaeppler (2000) in various arguments in

their work that, in the standardising dance movement gesture codes should be used to represent both the rhythm and the movements.

In this regard every pedagogical approach may have some philosophical knowledge that may provide a justification for teaching methodologies (Jordan, 2008, p. 6). Scholars such as Kaeppler (2000), Dabrowska (1983), Moris (2009), Thomas (2013), Green (2014), have commented on the need to organise the practice of dance within the academy in structured formats. These methodologies must be developed as a system of classification which can apply to structural, functional and historical criteria for analysing the pedagogical phenomenon.

The general accepted notion of pedagogy is the science of teaching, a theory of education which is more pragmatic for the learner, (Garrison, Neubert & Reich, 2012). Education predates schooling, as identified by Pai Obanya, education is a lot broader and deeper than schooling. According to Pai Obanya, the primary purpose of intergenerational transmission of cultural heritage is in the practice of education, where the academy tries to control the emotional effect of that cultural transmission, (Obanya, 2011).

Child Australia (2017) defines pedagogy as an “encompassing term concerned with what a teacher does to influence learning in others”. Other definitions include that of Bell (2002, p. 10) who has identified that, pedagogy is simply an instructional technique that allows learning to take place. This technique makes up the various methodological approaches to what Crosby (1997) and Barbour (2004) refers to as; ‘these embodied ways of knowing may potentially support students to affirm their identity through dance’ (P. 234). This definition by Karen Barbour is what I ascribe to as students’ creative way of learning dance in devising their method of coding dance movement gestures. Inasmuch as teaching of Indigenous African dance is done in the Department of Dance Studies, it does not necessarily presuppose that effective teaching is adhered to.

Teachers must have a philosophy in teaching indigenous African dance as well as a well-designed curriculum that can fit and address the African issue better. For example, allowing students to participate in the dance performance as many times as possible. This enables students to identify their mistakes. It also equips the student to be able to listen to the drum patterns to identify drum cues. This approach gives the dance and the practitioners a form of identity other than the colonial representation in the way knowledge is given through the teacher-centred-approach or the formal top to down approach of knowledge dissemination.

In the approach to teaching the indigenous African dance, the drum rhythms may sound chaotic especially to students who may not be familiar with the music and the coded rhythmic patterns. Locke (2013) an ethnomusicologist, opines that “listeners unfamiliar with the Ewe music may have trouble ‘making sense’ of the sound of *Agbadza* which is not different with other indigenous African dance forms like *Agbekor*, *Sorsornet*, *Adowa*, *Damba-Takai* and *Adzogbo* just to mention a few. But, as reiterated by Nketia (1965), Sowah (2011), Younge (2011) and other African music and dance scholars that, the indigenous African dance rhythms are polyrhythmic. The music has lots of contrasting layers of rhythms happening at the same time, each different part competes for the listener’s including the dancer/performer’s attention.

‘Making sense’ of the rhythm as expressed by David Locke is connected to Dell Hymes’ concept of competence through the ‘ethnography of speaking’. The same idea buttresses the argument of Kropp Dakubu in ‘making sense’ of rhythms when she argues that;

“artistic expressions of feelings and ideas are considered to be among the supreme creations of human spirit. What hope is there for understanding each other, if we hide our real feelings and our best creations from each other in languages we do not text or understand? (Kropp Dakubu, 2010, p. 79).

From this statement it is clear what Kropp Dakubu is advocating for in reference to drum codification and movement articulation. Meaning the rhythms and movement gestures must be understood even though the music and dance are coded. This is to develop a language for the rhythms such that teachers can communicate well to students. This must be done through other mediums such as written language or notation to enable listeners/students and dancers/performers to make meaning out of them. This I believe, will enhance the language competence of dance students and make them more appreciative of the dance and the drum rhythms. This will also bridge the gap between theory and practices as articulated by Crosby (1997) in her study. Furthermore, in interpreting drum text, it will be prudent to equip students on the technique of how to visualise dance movements. This could be achieved through musical patterns in order to connect the practice of indigenous dance to everyday action and behaviour, (Crosby 1997, p. 73). In other words, the rhythmic patterns provide specific movement gestures that have to be articulated. So, in hearing the rhythm patterns, the student must be able to relate and imagine the movement gestures being required on the drums before executing the movements. This will enable the listener make sense of the rhythms and respond to them through movement articulation. This relates to synaesthesia (Geurts, 2002) where the mind plays a very key role in processing information and delivery. Traditional African musical rhythms are very much heard but when the music is not articulated in movement, the music is not seen. The concept of music for dance, for me, is simply music making the dance visible. Dor (2015) argues that drumming, drum music, singing and movement gestures are about one unitary form and function as one entity without any separation. In my view indigenous African dance will necessarily need music to thrive unlike music that does not need dance to function. Music can be appreciated on its own merit without dance performance. Examples of such performances as *Bɔbɔɔbɔ*, *Agbadza*, *Agbekor*, *Kpatsa*, *Kpanlogo*, *Kundum*, *Adowa* and many more can be appreciated on their own without the embodiment of movement gestures on the musical types.

2.3 Conceptual Framework

In providing a pedagogical and epistemological approach to teaching traditional dance to students, a series of theoretical ideas came up, these are: embodiment, cultural value as moulded by social and symbolic interaction, and cognitive activity (Tindall, 1976). The approach must be a shared knowledge on the interplay between the acoustics (rhythms, sound texts and meanings) and their corresponding movement texts (visual images). In teaching, indigenous African dance to students therefore, knowing how the music and dance components are framed and how they correlate is significant. Knowledge on aspects such as 'key' (context) and 'cues' of the dance form that are very vital will be incorporated into the new model. Understanding the musical texts, the movement phrases and their contexts and functions are important for performance and further creative works. The study will become more scientific in the approach to teaching which in future I believe will enhance the development and the practice of the indigenous African dance.

In the training process for the indigenous African dance, the senses contribute a great deal in the acquisition of understanding and interpreting the basic underlining component of rhythmic musical patterns in bodily gestures. Through the use of the cognitive mind: the ear and the eye pick up the sound and movements gestures respectively, process the information through the brain, the information is passed on to the body to respond to what the rhythm has to be articulated in gestures. This is what Kathryn Linn Geurts refers to as the 'is there a sixth sense'? (Geurts, 2002, p. 3). She presents how the sensory mind has another sixth sense which she refers to as 'se' or 'sese' in the Ewe language meaning, hearing or some kind of feeling within the body of the performer. Bradd Shore also argues that;

Though the human sensorium seems to be genetically prepared for such visual acrobatics, actual feats of perception must be brought to life through an individual's concrete interactions with the world. People blind from birth who eventually gain vision through medical procedures can immediately "see" by means of their eyes but have to learn by practical experience to "perceive" actual forms and to coordinate perceptual relations between sight and other senses like touch. (Shore, 1996, p. 4).

It is this senses of hearing (feeling), of the drum rhythm that enables the body articulate movement corresponding to the drum rhythm. The bodily actions are sets of gestural models that have a structure much like conversation between drum musical rhythm and body movements.

It further explains Geurts' basic five senses in which the action of one of the senses affects the others. For me, the sixth sense is that kind of connection that enables the student to be able to listen to the drum rhythm, see the dance movements and translate these into his or her own embodiment and articulate it when it is required (examination). Crosby (1997, p. 70) affirms this when she recounts her own experiences with *Agbadza*, another Anlo-Ewe dance form. Jill Crosby reiterates that "when I danced, I did not only focus inward, immersed in my own moving body. I remained attentive to what was going on around me" (p. 70) which is the feeling that Geurts refers to as part of the sixth sense. Furthermore, Crosby concludes her assertion that "my dancing was a negotiation among verbal, aural and visual corrections and feedback" (p. 70). This is the synaesthetic feeling, where Jill Crosby affirms the use of audio and vision in the non-verbal articulation of bodily gestures.

2.4 Synaesthesia

The answer to the question of synaesthesia, the concept of Kathryn Linn Guerts as the existence of a sixth sense, is captured in the diagram below which I have developed to explain how synaesthesia concept operates in the learning of indigenous African dance.

Diagram 1.

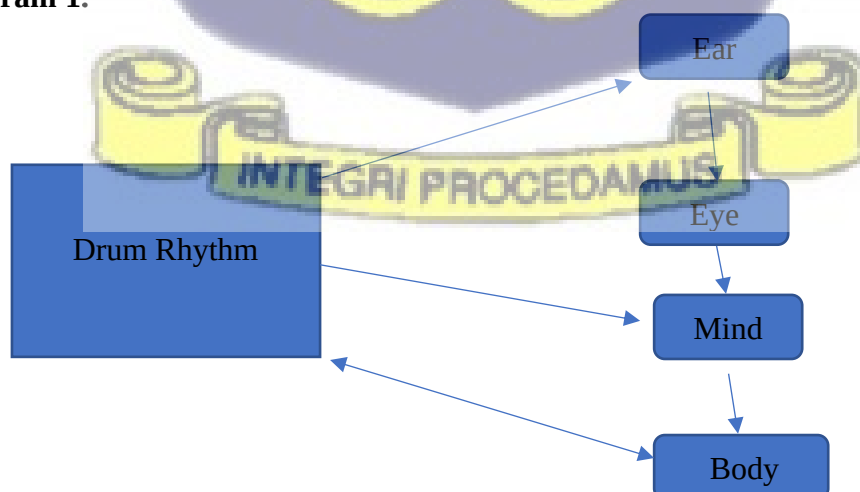


Figure 1. Concept of Synaesthesia

Many scholars like Kwabena Nketia, Patience Kwakwa, Paschal Younge, David Cashman, Drid Williams, Joann Kaeliinohomoku, Ruth Stone, Nii Sowah and quite recently scholars such as Kwashie Kuwor, Elikem Nyamuame, Habib Iddrisu have contributed in various debates on African music and its relationship with the dance. Kariamu Welsh-Asante (1994, p. 208) have buttressed the concept that African rhythm acts as the pervasive and identifying agent in African dance and music. Where the rhythm identifies the text (kinetics) as well as the content (dance performance) as in the case of the *Agbekor* dance. Likewise, Jill Crosby; whose extensive study in dance among the people of Dzodze in the Volta region of Ghana, have also established that “African music and dance are one”. On the contrary, Jill Crosby questions what it really means for the music and dance to be one. Through the concept of synaesthesia and acoustics, the rhythm patterns in the *Agbekor* dance has been analysed as very specific in the interpretations of the bodily gestures.

The conceptual framework of the study evokes the cross-sensory integration of the eye and ear a relationship between rhythm and dance as postulated by Reinhart Meyer-Kalkus. I employ Meyer-Kalkus’ concept as a way of unpacking historical performance of traditional dance patterns, established through audio-visual kinaesthetic, which is dependent on the synaesthetic perceptions built over time, and codifying them as practical dance pedagogical materials. These pedagogical materials will be passed on to students through various channels using the transmission theory espoused by Kimbal (2016) and Tindal (1976).

2.5 Deconstruction of Synaesthesia

Synaesthesia is the feeling of sensation that affects the human senses (Geurts, 2002). This was a common phenomenon in the 19th century when there was a major shift in the approach to the study of sensation. Empiricist philosophers such as Hobbes, Locke, Berkeley, Hume, and Descartes had in previous arguments made several contributions on the issue of sensation and perceptions. One of the key founders of psychophysics, which is a science concerned

with quantitative relations between sensation and stimuli, was Gustav T. Fechner a German scientist and philosopher.

Gustav Theodor Fechner, (1860), further developed the discussion of the established field of psychophysics into an extra theory which according to him relates with the body and the soul (Geurts, 2002). The argument Fechner advanced was to have a formalised approach to study this sensation and also to measure the stimuli that evokes in human beings. Since the belief was that there were precise ways in which the mind, body and the world interrelated. For this purpose, the study of psychophysics was separated from physics into sensory psychology which focused on how the sensory is equipped with instruments that transformed human physical energy into useful art forms, while the other aspect was centred on the responses of human subject to events relating to physics. Among the body of sensory scientists, Geurts (2002), posits that, probably towards the end of the 20th century, they agreed on a classification of approximately nine sensory systems to further push the discussion on sensation. These classifications are 1. Visual, 2. Auditory, 3. Olfactory, 4. Gustatory, 5. Mechanical, 6. Thermal, 7. Kinaesthetic, 8. Labyrinthine, 9. Affective.

In support of this framework, Turner (1981, p. 158), opines that, ‘cultural performances are composed of sensory codes’ that enlist all the senses. Victor Turner further argues that all the senses of participants (ears, eyes, mouth, nose and feeling) and performers may be engaged, in the sense that, the ears hear music, the eyes see visual symbols (dance), the mouth tastes consecrated food, and the nose smells incense and the touch of sacred persons and objects. For Turner, cultural performers (likewise the students in the classroom) are capable of carrying many messages at once, in relation to observing through visualisation and hearing through listening. The result will be for the body to respond to the stimuli that Fechner refers to as psychophysics.

Out of the nine classifications my focus is limited to the first two, which are;

1. Visual – responds to luminous and chromatic impressions.
2. Auditory – responds to tonal impressions.

Even though pedagogy in its entirety goes beyond these two as observed earlier, my focus and concentration are limited to these two which are very critical in this discussion. Since they form the theoretical foundation of which Geurts' synaesthesia is developed further into the sixth sense of 'feeling'. This synaesthesia affects the sensation of other body parts when affected. Therefore, in the instance where the sensory psychology is focused on the mind, body and how they function and interrelate to other objects around them, the eyes and the ears are the most affected in the teaching and learning of indigenous African dance. Through observing body kinesthesia and listening to tonal impressions of sound rhythms, the mind sends signals to the memory and quickly the body reacts to the tonal impressions heard and what the eyes see as indicated in the synaesthesia diagram above.

The understanding of this theory is in sharp contrast to the Cartesian theory of René Descartes which separates the mind from the body as two separate entities. This further explains that the mental exists outside the body and the body cannot think which is more of a Western approach to teaching and learning African dance. For traditional African dance both the mind and the body are engaged in the pedagogical process. Both Fechner and Geurts' concept underpins the African interrelatedness where learning is a holistic approach. In that the mind is a central pivot of sensation and perception especially through its signs and coded symbols from the drum rhythms and the movement gestures in the learning of indigenous African dance. The 'sixth sense' provides a relationship between the mind and the body in one component (sensation) so that, the body does not react without the mind (cognitive), sending information from what the eyes see and what the ears hear which results in the feeling that one enjoys when exhibiting the body articulations.

The diagram below demonstrates how the ears (auditory) and the eyes (oculesics) correlate in the information flow process during the teaching and learning of indigenous African dance.

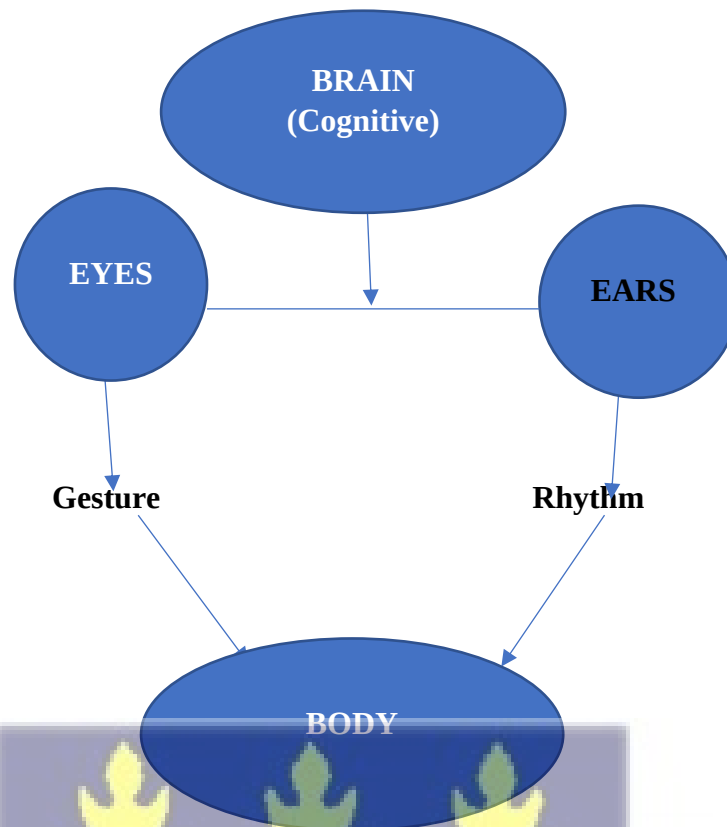


Figure 2. Concept of Synaesthesia Credit; David E. Quaye

The above diagram explains how stimulus in the human brain functions. Thus, according to Sigmund Freud, through his psychodynamic approach, people are born with instincts. For that matter the mind is related to the cognitive, which further means that mind and the body are not separated. In the learning of the indigenous African dance, rhythms provide the stimulus and the reaction comes from the performer/dancer which emphasizes the synaesthesia concept.

The psychodynamic is a psychological approach that emphasize systematic study of some psychological forces that underline human behaviour in feeling and emotion. It has been noted by Skinner (1957), that some aspects of culture are acquired through behaviourism, so it makes it easy to simply lay emphasis on the cliché that ‘all behaviour is learnt from the environment’, in other words a person’s behaviour is determined by the environment. Hence the classroom environment provides students with a state of

consciousness to learn and acquire behaviours (attitude and the dance characteristics) that aid in learning the indigenous dance.

2.6 Literature Review

Kwofie (1994) in his music study, provides a systematic musicology approach in solving some African problems. Kwofie's concern is that some African music scholars continue to rely on non-African methods and understanding to articulate the African reality. Therefore, his argument in the work is to provide some way to be more African oriented than a Western approach. Though he agrees that 'African music is rediscovering itself after interacting with Western music' (p. 2). The study does provide an African approach to teaching African music and he further discusses some close relationship between African music and its dance. In this discussion Nicholas Kwofie expresses the need that naming various elements of a thing makes up the knowledge in describing how such elements are related to one another. An example is the relationship between the indigenous music and dance where the name of the music is the same with the dance, (Kwofie, 1994, p. 9). Another significant aspect of the study is the concern that most of the terms if not all used in describing African music are Western terminologies, which is equally similar to the current approach in teaching indigenous African dance in tertiary Institutions.

Seth Cudjoe, one of the early scholars to have researched into Ewe drumming technique, offers an insight into the Ewe musical tradition and their instrumentation. The study highlights the traditional method of teaching drumming even though it provides a Western influence in the methodological approach. In his discussion on the approaches for Ewe musical culture, Cudjoe (1953) suggests a process of maintaining a balance between old and new technologies in the way that these traditions are maintained and passed on in the face of new technological changes.

Charles Seeger an American music composer and ethnomusicologist with speciality in music writing reiterates that melody may be conceived verbally and separated from sound.

This limitation to using sound can only be approximated since the focus of the study is on Seeger's (1958) study with melograph. This is not the same with indigenous African music and its dance. Seeger's (1958, pp. 185-186) argument is that "visual representation of melody as a chain is comparatively easily done by a chain of symbols", which is obviously represented by the coded cues and the created terms in the Ewe language. The study of Seeger (1958) further discusses the structures in music where prescriptive and descriptive music writing is related to notation, pitch, tone and meter. The argument is that the notation is expected to be read by people who understand the traditions of the music of the people. In my understanding of Seeger's prescriptive notations is underlined by written musical notes and symbols. On the contrary in analysing Charles Seeger's argument in how prescriptive and descriptive music writing applies to dance is in the form of body gestures rather than musical notes (p. 186). Even though Charles Seeger's study does not focus on music or dance pedagogy, it is still relevant in this discussion due to the prescriptive and descriptive components of music and its relationship with movement gestures. Again, throughout the study I did not encounter *Agbekor* 'original' music and dance performance footage since the dances are not performed in the traditional settings these days alone.

Hewitt Pantleoni (1972) discussed the rhythmic patterns in the Ewe drum ensemble especially on the master drum the *Atsimevu*. In his article titled; *Toward Understanding the Play of Atsimevu in Atsia*, the author provides a vivid description of the drum orchestration of the lead/master drum of (*Atsia Dance Ensemble*) a traditional dance troupe. These descriptions include drum notation and the technique of playing especially in the way both the hand and sticks are coordinated to provide the appropriate sound for the dance. What interests me most is the style of notation. The discussion was done from a music biased background, but the notation has been done from a dancers' point of view using the dance notation staff developed by Rudolf Von Laban,⁷ instead of the music staff.

⁷ Rudolf Von Laban (born Dec. 15, 1879, Bratislava, Austria-Hungary [now in Slovakia]—died July 1, 1958, Weybridge, Surrey, Eng.), dance theorist and teacher whose studies of human motion provided the intellectual foundations for the development of central European modern dance. Laban also developed Labanotation, a widely used movement-notation system. (Encyclopaedia Britannica 29/10/2017).

Blum (1973) provides an interesting understanding of Ghanaian dance forms and their social organization in relation to music and dance. The work discusses the formation of dance groups, an analysis of Ghanaian dance movements and modes of presentation. She reiterates the interrelation between movements or steps and musical structure and phrases in the *Damba* and *Gonje* dances. A similar argument can be made for the study of *Agbadza* and *Agbekor* dances. The focus is centred on the notation of some Ghanaian dance movements, which is also a teaching methodology. Blum's work, unlike many of the ethnomusicologists, discusses the relationship between dance and music with a focus on the dance. Though the study provides a pedagogical approach to teaching indigenous African dance, it still makes use of the western approaches.

Anku (1996) generally makes assertions similar to that of Seth Cudjoe in the way traditional rhythmic patterns relate to dance performance. Anku offers a close interpretation of gestalt which limits the rhythmic structures in African drum music to visual and kaleidoscope structures. The study discusses perceptions of African rhythmic structures of various instrumentalists [drummers] and what is perceived to be achieved by the listener or better still the dancer (within the context of this study). Anku poses some critical questions as to what happens to the listener if he is merely externalizing dance movements and medium to what he hears or "adding other rhythmic dimensions along the timing" of the drum pattern (p. 15). Unlike Cudjoe, Anku's work does not provide a pedagogical approach to teaching either indigenous African drum rhythm or the indigenous African dance. Anku's work is essential in the context of synaesthesia since the analysis provided revolves around evidence of how drum rhythmic patterns prescribe movement gesture while they interpret drum rhythms using the body. In the context of teaching, the student must learn through listening (audio), and observation (visual), which, just like Anku's work, can also be explained by synaesthesia. Anku's study further argues for a holistic analysis on his traditional drum

rhythms composition models. His assertion on holistic analysis of traditional drum patterns is also applicable to my research, since one of my objectives is to unpack drum patterns and cues, their texts and contexts of performances, as part of the teaching approaches. It is imperative to know that Cudjoe and Anku did not discuss aspects of movements and the gestures in the dance that is performed to the music, a gap this study identifies and provides alternate approaches to address them.

As for Manford (1996) his main thesis in an article published in the *Journal of Performing Arts*, is that, music and gymnastics should be taught at very early ages. This is because Manford believes that music is for the soul as gymnastics is for the body. It is interesting to note that gymnastics is a kinaesthetic activity which is music driven and very much dependent on the cognitive. So, it is important to relate the practice of gymnastics to the activity of dance practice. Therefore, in agreeing with Robert Manford I would also advocate for the study of dance education at the basic and secondary school before the tertiary level. In his argument, Robert Manford agrees with Plato (Hanley, 1990) who was interested in music because it included some aspects of poetry and physical education. The work further discusses general music education in basic schools.

Fadlu-Deen (1988) examines the music pedagogical approaches to Ghanaian elementary school children and argues that some of the teaching materials are irrelevant to modern music education. Likewise, Sutherland-Addy's (2005, p. 15) concern is that the Western modes of teaching negates the possibility of imparting traditional knowledge systems to students. Her argument is that Ghanaian pedagogical process should be driven by local content. I however recognize the diversity in the terms 'local content' but the essence of Sutherland-Addy's use of the term is to ensure a much more context-specific approach to teaching in Ghana. I have argued earlier that many of the examples used in teaching are drawn from Euro-American experience which does not help in the teaching processes of African music and dance which, are key components of traditional culture. Both Sutherland-Addy

and Fadlu-Deen suggest the need for Ghanaian music practitioners or cultural educators to draw from local sources for teaching such subjects by using the indigenous language in which the dance form is originating from. Among these local sources are indigenous languages, drum texts, percussion, songs, movements, and games, and further adopt integrated and interactive approaches to teaching as suggested by Barbour (2009).

In his account on the relevance of codification of dance, Tierou (1992) provides an account on how performances of peasant dancers became a source of inspiration for other dancers such as aristocratic dancers who codified their dances over time. The codification of aristocratic dances was therefore a prelude to the codification of ballets movements that dates dance to pre-historic times when dance was associated with paintings and rock. Tierou, further provides a guide to African dance pedagogy, including the mainstream participatory method, the structural analytical approach, and the contextual learning approach, Tierou's method primarily advocates for a fusion of both indigenous and western pedagogical approaches to teaching indigenous African dance. Finally, the breakdown of teaching dance into various levels can help students understand dance better. The teaching of dance is a very good premise to start improving the pedagogical approach to indigenous African dance in tertiary Institutions. The gap this study intends to bridge, is to basically highlight key elements in the teaching and learning process of indigenous African dance and its close interpretation of the rhythmic structures that music has with the traditional dance during learning and performance.

There are many works by J. H. Kwabena Nketia that discuss the close relationship between music and dance. In this study, Nketia (1965, p. 18) emphasises the close relationship between dance movements, rhythms and the song texts in the various indigenous dance forms in Ghana. Examples of such dances examined are the *Dea* dance among the Frafra, *Adowa* and *Kete* of the Ashantis, *Nyindogo* of the Dagbani, the *Agbekor* of the Ewes, etc. These practices, according to Kwabena Nketia, are the resources of the dance; where

traditional drum music serves as the core component of the resource that provides structure of the dance form.

Burns (2009) discusses Ghanaian identity through female voices from an Ewe dance-drumming community. The study interrogates how the Ewe music study has been dominated by only the “sons of the drum” (men) to the neglect of the women. The study therefore makes a case for gender equity and argues for female musicians in the community to be an active part of the dance. This notwithstanding, the study also reiterates the contributions of many scholars both local and foreign who have studied the Ewe music at large but ignore this significant aspect of the literature. Inasmuch as Burns’ work makes significant contributions to the discourse of Ewe musical and drum culture, the study discusses into detail the musical structures of the drum ensemble with the kind of sound pitch they provide. This sound pitch for me corresponds with the drum language and how movement gesture is to be articulated. As for the dance movements and gestures, Burns (2009) opines that “dancers are a bit more difficult to generalize about, because of the variety of musical contexts and performances models” (p. 57). Possibly the performance models refer to what he maintains as ‘choreographed steps’ that require specialised rehearsals to coordinate, which may also imply teaching process.

One other study that contests similar arguments in this research is that of Amegago (2011) whose research centred on *African Music and Dance Curriculum Model: Performing Arts in Education*. The study builds upon the work conducted by Ofotsu Adinku (1994), where Adinku focuses on the Dance Education in Ghana, and provides some curriculum for the establishment of a Bachelor of Arts (BA) program in the Department of Dance Studies, University of Ghana. The two works interrogate the Eurocentric approach very much embedded in the African approach to learning, which Amegago states that “focus on dance education in academia has been on Western dance forms such as ballet, modern dance, and contemporary dance” (2000, p. 3). His main argument and concern are with the non-western

dance forms in the educational curriculum, where the mission statements of these higher education Institutions in the US has been demonstrated. The question is how this pedagogy will be applied to illustrate the diversity in teaching and learning process in the African system is what is yet to be explored? Teaching ballet seems simple unlike indigenous African dance (Amegago, 2010; Green, 2013). Nevertheless, almost all the movements in the ballet have coded names which make it simple to mention for students to identify and perform. This can also be achieved with the music accompaniment using counts in teaching these Western dances. Unlike the indigenous African dance, which is always accompanied with its music, it cannot be taught with the music or counts as in the ballet. Therefore, my argument is that, we need to codify or create terminologies for the movements and the rhythms. That way the music and dance will make easy identification when teaching indigenous African dance. In this development, the indigenous language of the dance form will be developed to be used in teaching that will be understood by all students in the classroom as has been acknowledged by Malinowski, John Austin, Dell Hymes, Doris Green and Mary Kropp-Dakubu. The basic ballet positions for instance are numbered from first (1st) position normal to seven (7th) position turn out (Chase Dance Company, 2017).

An article by Dor (2015) advocates for the use of conceptual metaphors of indigenous knowledge as interpretive frameworks in mainstream academia. This idea shows how indigenous African dance is mediated into the classroom to give the dance an identity that relates to the indigenous setting. Like the *Agbekor* dance, the understanding of the history, events and accounts, goes through a mediation in the dance form that enables standardization and codification for lecturers and students to easily identify specific rhythms to specific movement gestures as an added value in indigenous knowledge.

The study of Iddrissu (2011) interrogates the authenticity of indigenous African dance forms in the face of hybridization that is when there is constantly changing environments and societies. This is especially true within the Department of Dance Studies where the practice

of traditional dance is engaged formally at the tertiary level, and secondly, where the dance is taught in a heterogeneous environment. His arguments pose the question of what could be done to bridge the gap and not lose indigenous art forms to hybridization. It is such gaps within the educational practices that this study intends to address.

Paschal Yao Younge (2011) provides a comprehensive perspective on history, performance and teaching of music and dance traditions in Ghana. In the forward written by Daniel Avorgbedor, Komla Amoaku, and Francis Nii-Yartey, they provide insights into the study and pedagogical approaches to music and dance education.

Avorgbedor (as cited in Younge, 2011, p.4) in his account articulates the challenges facing “curriculum revisions and inventions in the academy which concerns teaching and learning of music and dance traditions outside of mainstream Western music and ballet”. Avorgbedor outlines six various components that possess serious challenges for music and dance episteme, which needs critical reviews for education curriculum.

Amoaku (as cited in Younge, 2011, p. 4) recounts how the lead or master drummer does not play in isolation but invariably prompted by the supporting drums on one hand and performers on the other hand. Amoaku also identifies the close relationship between the dancer(s) and drummers as the dancer(s) take cues from the drummer(s) to perform.

F. Nii-Yartey’s submission identifies the challenge of Ghanaian dance today and the practitioners, both within the traditional setting as well as those trained in the school system. He opines that there should be an “efficient way of preserving the classical dance heritage as well as help to push the spatial, stylistic, and creative and the technical boundaries beyond their present limitations” (Younge, 2011, p. 6). The results and outcome of these dance forms can be formalized and codified for publications.

All these scholars; Avorgbedor, Amoaku and Nii-Yartey commend Younge for the publication in the sense that, the book contributes to the process of theorising African

traditional practice in music and dance education. However, the book does not interrogate further the pedagogical process to the effective teaching of indigenous Ghanaian dances. This is not to overlook the detail pedagogical approach to teaching drum music for the indigenous dance that Paschal Younge discusses in his publication.

Younge (2011) tries to present a pedagogical module in the presentation of music and dance traditions of Ghana. He provides pictorial examples from selected musical drum traditions as well as descriptions on a pedagogical approach to music education in Ghana. This Younge (p. 19) has identified to be ‘vugbe’, meaning rhythmic patterns of drum music. In addition, Younge provides musical notations for the selected musical dance types in the *Agbekor* dance form, for instance; Younge (p. 18) identifies how ‘hadzidzi’, the art of singing, is very much eminent in most indigenous African dance, which gives context and historical meaning to the presentation. Finally, the book provides a systematic curriculum to teaching African music and dance-drumming. From Younge’s study I get the sense that he also advocates for using terminologies from the song texts to aid in the teaching of specific movements alongside the drum text cues though some of these examples were not provided for the dance as was proposed for the dance-drumming. This study intends to advance these arguments to an appreciable conclusion and further intends to provide a bridge in the pedagogical approach to learning indigenous African dance alongside the ‘hadzidzi’ and the ‘vugbe’.

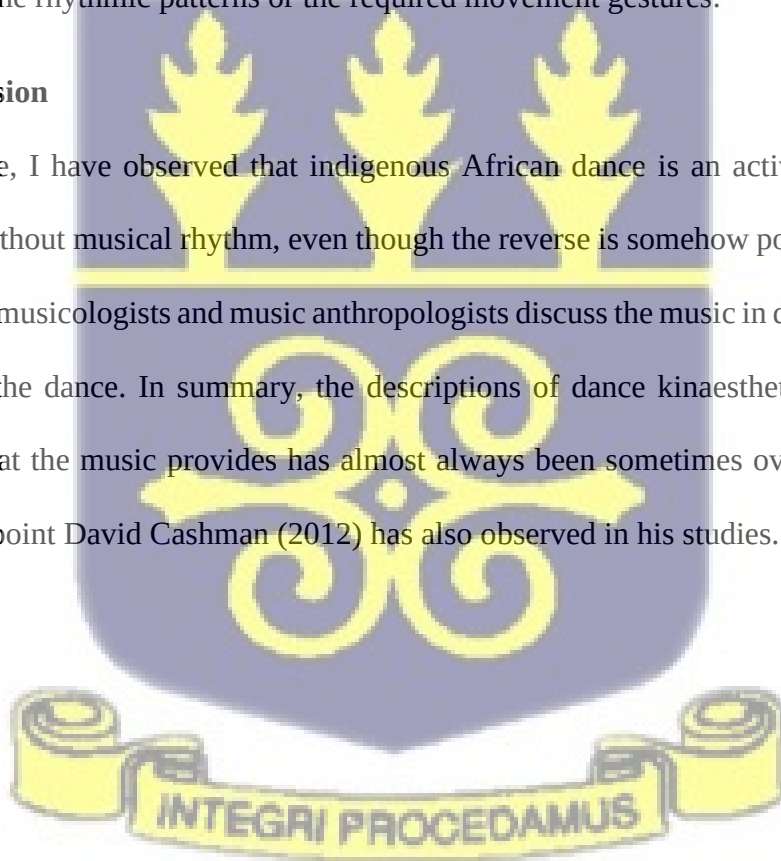
Mabingo (2014) addresses similar concerns this study seeks to focus on. His article affords an insight into pedagogical methods in teaching East African dances in higher education in the United States. The author discusses curriculum development, history, dance theory, philosophy, cultural education and traditional dance within the context of the community. In addition, the thesis explores how to reconcile dance content and pedagogy to facilitate effective teaching and learning process of East African dances. The phenomenon was experimented with students in the Dance Education Program in New York University.

In addition to these ideas from Mabingo, this study intends to add to dance scholarship through the created terminologies developed from the indigenous language of the dance form to the curriculum development in teaching traditional dance in the classroom.

What the study of Mabingo (2014) doctoral dissertation in East Africa did not address, unlike Amegago is the kind of model that will centre on African pedagogical practice. Though the study identified the Eurocentric methodology in the African practice. The study did not provide any alternative for the African situation. Mabingo as well as Amegago's research does not fully digest the intricacies of the musical rhythms to the movement gestures and its interpretations through bodily gestures. So that the student can identify the cues through the listening of the drum rhythm and respond to the rhythm through the body in describing the rhythmic patterns or the required movement gestures.

2.7 Conclusion

To conclude, I have observed that indigenous African dance is an activity that cannot be achieved without musical rhythm, even though the reverse is somehow possible. That is why many ethnomusicologists and music anthropologists discuss the music in detail without doing same with the dance. In summary, the descriptions of dance kinaesthetic (movement and gestures) that the music provides has almost always been sometimes overlooked by music scholars, a point David Cashman (2012) has also observed in his studies.



HISTORY AND ESTABLISHMENT OF SCHOOL OF PERFORMING ARTS, UNIVERSITY OF GHANA

3.0 Introduction

The focus of this chapter is to trace the history of the Department of Dance Studies of the School of Performing Arts through the accounts of the Institute of African Studies, (IAS). IAS served as the big umbrella where the School of Music Dance and Drama were housed and operated as a unit of the Institute. The historical accounts discuss the initial beginnings of the Institute of African Studies within the University of Ghana. Through these accounts, the study will discuss how indigenous African dance was introduced into the academy on the recommendations of the national theatre movement and the request of the Osagyefo Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, the first President of the Republic of Ghana.

Furthermore, the discussions will be centred on how dance education has moved beyond the frontiers of University of Ghana and its being practiced in other tertiary Institutions. This shows the success of what was started over fifty years ago when the dream to set up an Africa studies centre that would accommodate where indigenous knowledge philosophies would be born.

The aim, in this section, will be to determine if the principles of Kwame Nkrumah has been realized in promoting research, teaching and learning in an African centred pragmatism approach. Through looking at student numbers in this era of technology and digitization, the question is, how effectively is the dance school operating its curriculum?

With the establishment of the School of Music, Dance and Drama in 1962, the pioneering research activities of J. H. Kwabena Nketia and Albert Mawere Opoku, who were among the founders of the School of Music, Dance and Drama, the school has become so important and it has deeply influenced further growth in dance education in Ghana (Adinku, 1994). The Ghana Dance Ensemble, an epitome of Ghanaian identity (Friedler, 1997) was a

practical research unit of the Institute of African Studies. This became a co-opted affiliate of the Dance Section of the school Adinku (1994). Practical lessons were held with the ensemble as part of their training. The establishment of the Institute of African Studies in 1961 to project the “African Personality Consciousness”⁸ was envisaged in the later activities of the Ghana Dance Ensemble and the School of Music, Dance and Drama where students were supposed to learn about African heritage in addition to European forms, (Adinku, 2004). From the speech delivered by Dr. Kwame Nkrumah at the opening of the Institute on the 25th October 1963, on the concept of the African personality. This idea was again echoed at the 30th Anniversary Celebration of Institute of African Studies and the School of Performing Arts in 1992. It was clear from Nkrumah’s vision that the progress of the School of Music and Drama and the Ghana Dance Ensemble should be in line with an African centred teaching and learning approach. Nkrumah posed two important questions that drew attention to the kind of teaching and learning he envisaged for the school. These were:

1. “for what kind of service are we preparing students of this Institute and our universities?” and
2. “are we sure we have established here the best possible relationship between teachers and students?”

By this line of questioning, Nkrumah was cautioning performing Arts lecturers to employ African teaching methods in their practice;

our training, which initially was supposed to be African centred, later included studies of ballet, modern dance and oriental dance forms from Indonesia. Although we took these courses, they were intended only to give us exposure to the movement forms of foreign dance cultures, not to make us experts, (Adinku, 2004, p. 50).

The thrust of Adinku’s assertion here is that the pioneering students focused mostly on learning practical indigenous dance lessons, which were undertaken by bringing

⁸ African Personality Consciousness was an ideology promulgated by Dr. Kwame Nkrumah to instil positive values in African societies.

Resource Personnel from several communities and shrines to teach various dances. This was also against the background that most of the members of the Ghana Dance Ensemble had been recruited from the various regions in the country who brought diverse knowledge on dances from their various localities. Therefore, teaching indigenous dance forms in the University of Ghana in the early 1960s, “was more of engaging community people and using experts and people who knew the traditional dances in their society and had a good understanding of the people better” (Schramm, 2000, p. 343). The approach was obviously in line with the concept of Kwame Nkrumah’s (1963), ‘African Personality Consciousness’, whose focus is beyond that of just entertainment and education, but a more holistic approach integrated with the indigenous people. These issues will be addressed in this thesis which will become a very important model at the Institutional level where focus will be on context, language, African aesthetics, entertainment etc. These ideas will be codified into a proposed standard format for teaching and learning purposes.

The School of Performing Arts started in 1962 as the School of Music, Dance and Drama, under the Institute of African Studies (IAS). The various sections had coordinators who managed the daily activities and reported to the administrative director of the Institute of African Studies. According to reports cited in the Kwabena Nketia archives, there was lack of vision, team spirit and co-operation among staff within the school. Therefore, the idea was that the school should be given a head (director) and the coordinators abolished. The sections were to become departments and be more autonomous and self-dependent. The School of Music, Dance and Drama had a cordial relationship with the IAS until the late 1970s when the school decided to break away from the IAS to become autonomous and independent so they could control their own affairs.

A few years after Ghana’s independence, there were various attempts to institutionalise formal training in the arts in Ghana. According to Adinku (1994) J. H.

Kwabena Nketia was well grounded in the world of ethnomusicology while Mawere Opoku was well versed in the fine arts. The duo was mandated to see to the establishment and development of these institutions for the training of African intellectuals and performers in the Ghanaian (African) creative art forms. It is interesting to note that development has been identified as a double-edged sword (Cowen and Shenton, 1995, 27), in the sense that, where the idea to decouple from IAS to become self-reliant (self-government now) was to help develop the school. Instead it was creating a division in the institute, which was contrary with Nkrumah's ideology of unity. This is to Africanise the Institutions especially African studies and the individuals who worked there.

Some of the early dance instructors included both Ghanaians and foreigners like Drid Williams, Odette Blum and Rex Nettleford who were brought in to assist in the training and the development of the curriculum of the dance program, (Adinku, 1994, 2003; Kwakwa, 2015; Nketia, 2016). Doris Green (2012), also acknowledges that dance scholars were invited from the United States of America especially, to come and teach in the dance school at the university to help in the development of a strong dance curriculum as practiced throughout the world. One such person was Odette Blum who was brought in to teach the subject Labanotation, a system of recording dance movements on a score, using symbols. Mawere Opoku thought it would be good to document the indigenous dances that were being taught and that there would come a time when the dance will be adulterated because of the attempts people would make to duplicate the dances in various forms.⁹

Since then, the attempts to document indigenous African dances using the Labanotation system have not been successful because the indigenous African dances are more expressive in movement. In addition, the African dances have various emotions and complex movement gestures which the notation cannot capture on the Laban score. The

⁹ Interview with Ms Patience Kwakwa, a retired senior lecture of the Department of Dance Studies and a pioneering member of the GDE and Dance Section of the School of Music and Dance on the 30th of July, 2018.

Laban score is specifically designed for ballet dance choreographies with its use of language and terminologies. Till date there have not been any successful notation of any Ghanaian traditional dances. Doris Green has designed a system of notation called Greennotation also based on the Rudolf Laban's symbols of dance description. This is an attempt she has developed to notate some select Ghanaian traditional dances. However, I have not seen it being used in teaching, nor have I seen it applied to the rehearsal and performance of Ghanaian traditional dance. It is therefore necessary to adopt a new mechanism using indigenous or African centred approach to develop ways of teaching and as well as preserving the indigenous dance form and its performance style or characteristics.

3.1 Department of Dance Studies

The activities of the Ghana Dance Ensemble from 1962 and beyond became the genesis of the dance section of the School of Music, Dance, and Drama. The Department of Dance Studies started in 1962 as a demonstrational model in the Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana, Legon, known as the School of Music and Dance. The development of the dance education program in Ghana was to fulfil the concept of the National Theatre Movement, (NTM), to serve as repository dance group experimenting with traditional dances as models for new development (Schramm, 2000). This was linked with the establishment of the National Dance Company which also became known from 1965 as Ghana Dance Ensemble (GDE), under the directorship of J H. Kwabena Nketia (Asiedu, 2014, p. 4) and Albert Mawere Opoku who had a double role, as the coordinator of the Dance Section as well as the first Artistic Director of the GDE. Adinku (1994 & 2004) in his accounts, recounts one of the objectives of the Dance Section of the school as being able to “supply the training that students need to become disciplined dancers and teachers of dance” (Adinku, 2000. p. 53).

The Department of Dance Studies provides a solid University education especially, with regards to dance pedagogy. Additionally, a dense University education must also encompass the reality of today's world, not so much in terms of training, but rather, in terms

of the readiness that students need to participate in the economic and social environments of their world after studies at the tertiary level. In considering how the concept of the NTM was very instrumental in the way dance education was propagated, it is therefore not out of place for the Department of Creative Arts at University of Education Winneba, (UEW) and Department of Film and Theatre Studies at the University of Cape Coast (UCC), to join in the expansion of dance pedagogy at the tertiary level. (Adinku, 2004, pp. 53-54 and Asiedu 2014, p. 3).

The Department of Dance Studies has evolved from its certificate and diploma programs ever since the initial selected candidates of the dance school formed the nucleus of the dance company (Adinku, 1994). While at the same time these selected candidates were undergoing formal training for the dance curriculum. In 1977, the then School of Music and Dance changed its name to School of Performing Arts and has continued to showcase all that is best in African dance performance and scholarship.



Figure 3. Picture showing the Mawere Opoku Dance Hall and the initial members of the NDC/GDE and the pioneering students of the School of Music and Dance. Picture source, courtesy J. H. Kwabena Nketia Archives on 23rd March, 2019.

3.2 Department of Dance Studies from 1994 to Date

From 1994 when the Dance Section started its new Bachelor of Arts dance program alongside the diploma program, it expanded in student population and also in new dance curriculum at level 100. The new courses were

1. DANC 101: Introduction to Dance Forms
2. DANC 102: Introduction to African Dance Performance.

These two courses were to be offered at level 100 for students. DANC: 101 is theory and DANC: 102 is a practical course. The later comprised of a dance technique component and an indigenous African dance component. I believe this was done to get students to go through dance technique movements which is a breakdown of various traditional dances taught in the dance department so as to make the learning of indigenous African dance easier. Below is the 2018-2019 academic year timetable for the Department of Dance Studies. This shows both theory class and practical dance classes. It also shows the number of periods dance technique classes are done as well as traditional/African dance performance. I have specifically highlighted African Dance Performance at the level 300 stage and the period for ‘Newmantics Dance Technique’ a critical African-based dance technique course that eventually was developed by Seth Asare Newman from level 200 to 400 stages¹⁰.



¹⁰ Please note, the yellow colours show the periods for ‘Newmantics’ class and the blue colour shows the period for African dance performance classes

TIME TABLE

Table 2. Academic year timetable

LEVEL	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
B.A. LEVEL 100	7.30 a.m.-9.00 a.m. 9.30-11.00 a.m. (DANS 102) Introduction to Traditional Dance (Drum Village)	6.30-8.00a.m. 8.30.10.00a.m. (DANS 102) Introduction to Traditional Dance (Drum Village)	6.30-8.00a.m. 8.30.10.00a.m. (DANS 102) Introduction to Traditional Dance (Drum Village)	12.30 – 2.00 p.m. (DANS 102) Introduction to Traditional Dance	6.30-8.00a.m. 8.30-10.00a.m. (DANS 102) Introduction to Traditional Dance
B.A. LEVEL 200	6.30a.m.-7:30a.m. (DANS 204) Dance Technique (Drum Village)	6.30-7.30 a.m. (DANS 204) Dance Technique (Dance Hall) 11.30a.m. – 1.30 p.m. (DANS 202) Introduction to Movement Analysis and Notation	6.30 -7.30a.m. (DANS 204) Dance Technique (Dance Hall)	7.00 – 9.00 a.m. (DANS 204) Traditional Dance	5.00-7.20p.m. (DANS 202) Introduction to Movement Analysis and Notation (N3)
B.A. LEVEL 300	11.30a.m.- 12.30p.m. (DANS 306) African Dance Performance (Dance Hall) 1:30 p.m. – 3:30p.m. (DANS 302) Historical and Comparative Studies (E10)	1:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m. DANS 304 Intermediate Composition (Drum Village/Mirror room)	5.30 – 7.30 p.m. (DANS 306) African Dance Performance (Dance Hall)	9.30 a.m. – 9.30 a.m. DANS 303 Intermediate Composition (Dance Hall)	6.00 – 7.30 p.m. Performance Laboratory
B.A. LEVEL 400	12.30 a.m. – 1.30 p.m. (DANC 446) Dance Performance Laboratory II		1.30p.m. –3.30 p.m. (DANC 442) Dance in Education		3.30p.m. – 5.30 p.m. DANC 446 Dance Performance Laboratory (Drum Village) 6:00 p.m. – 7:30 p.m. Performance Laboratory (Dance Hall)

LEVEL	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
B.F.A. LEVEL 100	6:30 a.m. – 7:30 a.m. (DANS 104)	7.30 – 8.30a.m. (DANS 104) Dance Technique	12.30 – 1.30 p.m. (DANS 104) Dance Technique	9.30 – 11.30 a.m. (DANS 104)	

	Dance Technique (Drum Village) 5.30 p.m. – 7.20 p.m. (DANS 106) Dance forms of African (JQB 23)	(Dance Hall)	(Drum Village)	Traditional Dance (Drum Village)	
B.F.A. LEVEL 200	5.00 – 6.00 p.m. (DANS 206) Dance Technique (Dance Hall)	9.30a.m – 10.30 a.m. (DANS 206) Dance Technique (Dance Hall) 11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p Introduction to movement Analysis (JQB) 6.00p.m. – 7.30 p.m. (DANS 208) Traditional Dance (Dance Hall)	8.30 a.m. – 9.30 a.m. (DANS 206) Dance Technique (Drum Village)	9.30 – 10.30 a.m. (DANS 206) Dance Technique (Dance Hall) 6.00 - 7.30 p.m. (DANS 208) Traditional Dance (Dance Hall)	7.30 – 8.30a.m. (DANS 206) Dance Technique (Dance Hall) 5.00p.m. – 7.20 p.m. (DANS 202) Introduction to Movement Analysis and Notation

LEVEL	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
B.F.A. LEVEL 300	9.30 a.m. – 10.30 a.m. (DANS 308) Dance Technique (Dance Hall) 11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. (DANS 306) African Dance Performance (Dance Hall) 1.30p.m. – 3.30 p.m. (DANS 302) Historical and Comparative Dance Studies	12.30p.m. – 1.30 p.m. (DANS 308) Dance Technique (Dance Hall) 1:30 p.m. – 3:30 pm DANS 303 Intermediate composition (Drum Village)	7.30 - 8.30 a.m. (DANS 308) Dance Technique (Dance Hall) 5.00 – 6.30 p.m. (DANS 306) African Dance Performance (Dance Hall)	7.30 - 8.30 a.m. (DANS 308) Dance Technique (Dance Hall)	8.30 – 9.30 a.m. (DANS 308) Dance Technique (Dance Hall) 6.00 – 7.00 p.m. Performance Laboratory
B.F.A. LEVEL 400	8.30 – 9.30 a.m. (DANC 448) Advanced Dance Technique II 12.30 a.m. – 1.30 p.m. (DANC 446) African Dance Performance Laboratory II (Dance Hall)	8.30 – 9.30 p.m. (DANC 448) Advance Dance Technique II (Drum Village)	9a.m.30 – 10.30 a.m. (DANC 448) Dance Technique II (Dance Hall) 1:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m. DANC 442 Dance in Education	8.30a.m. – 9.30 a.m. (DANC 448) Dance Technique (Dance Hall)	8.30 – 9.30 a.m. (DANC 448) Dance Technique (Dance Hall) 3.30 p.m. – 5.30 p.m. DANC 446 Dance Performance Laboratory II (Drum Village) 6:00 p.m. – 7:30 p.m. Performance Laboratory (Dance Hall)

This table was sourced from the office of the Department of Dance Studies

The University of Ghana celebrated its 50th (fiftieth) anniversary recently and part of the requirements for visibility of each department was to come out with its vision and mission statements which should conform with the University's vision and mission statements. For this reason, the dance department reviewed its academic programs in 2012 and came up with its vision and mission in the training of students in line with world class vision of the University. The mission statement of the Department of Dance Studies since 2012 reads,

The Department of Dance Studies provides a solid University of Ghana education that equips the individual with a life-long capacity for creative and critical thinking to participate in the development of the economic and socio-cultural environment of their communities.

The vision of the Department is to become the music and dance Institution of choice in the West African sub-region, showcasing all that is best in the African world of performance and scholarship. This notwithstanding situates the way forward in the current curriculum that the department is engaged in training delivery.

3.3 Institute of African Studies and the Ghana Dance Ensemble

The beginnings of the Institute of African Studies (IAS) started in 1961 as a semi-autonomous unit. This was 'conceived as a vanguard of intellectual crusade of reminiscent Africa' where its focus was to be African centred and its methods based on enquires into African's own knowledge base. Schauert (2015, p. 57) confirms the fact that Nketia shared in the desire of Nkrumah to institute practices that would influence a large group of individuals, which would bridge the gap between intellectuals and the community on one side, the past and the present as well as the traditional and the contemporary on another side.

According to an address delivered by the then director of the Institute of African Studies, Kwame Arhin on 13th of March 1992 that, the founding process of IAS took a revolutionary step to achieving its establishment. Furthermore, Arhin mentioned that the whole development coincided with the achievements of autonomous status by what used to be the University College of the Gold Coast which was an affiliate of the University of London. This later became the University of Ghana with the aim of providing knowledge in

various disciplines including indigenous episteme in anthropology. The aim of the IAS is to study the whole of Africa in sociology, history, African literature, musicology, drama and dance. The modus operandi was through comparative methods and then use the relevant findings of all disciplines in the quest for understanding the African. It is in line of this that IAS has adopted for its motto;

The African¹¹,
Know then thyself,
The proper study of mankind
Is the African.



Figure 4. Picture of Kwame Nkrumah Delivering his speech at the formal opening of IAS, 1963 Picture credit; J. H. Kwabena Nketia Archives accessed 23rd March, 2019.

During the formal opening of the IAS on 23rd October 1963, the first President of Ghana, Osagyefo Dr. Kwame Nkrumah charged fellows, researchers and students to strive hard to erase the negative grotesque perception of people on how the Western world has labelled the 'African art as primitive' through African music, dance and sculpture. In 'The African Genius' speech, Kwame Nkrumah opined that;

¹¹ The source of this motto is from 'The African Genius'

Africa must pay particular attention to the arts of Africa, for the study of these can enhance our understanding of African Institutions and values and the cultural bonds that unite us. A comparative study of musical systems, for example, or the study of musical instruments, drum language, or the oral traditions that link music with social events, may illuminate historical problems or provide data for the study of our ethical and philosophical ideas. (Nkrumah, 1963, p. 17).

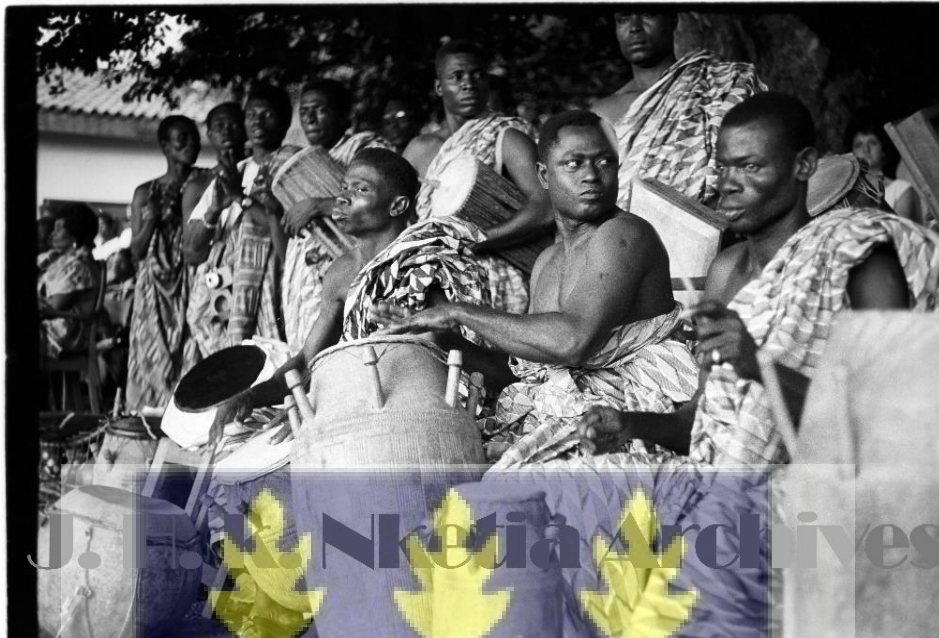


Figure 5. A picture showing a cross section of musicians and drummers of the NDC/GDE performing at the official opening of IAS. Picture Credit; Nketia Archives.



Figure 6. Members of the GDE performing the Agbekor dance form at the official opening of IAS. Picture credit J. H. Kwabena Nketiah accessed, 23rd March, 2019.

This and many more statements from Kwame Nkrumah set the tone and agenda for especially dance pedagogy to be fully introduced into the academy. As noted by Kofi Anyidoho¹², it was seen by the University authorities as entertainment and not as an area of study equally like the sciences and the humanities. Nketia (2016, p. 60) in a statement confirms Anyidoho's claims that 'the object of the training programme through the GDE, was actually tailored more of an artistic and professional group rather than academic. But at the same time, it enabled the Institute of African Studies to stimulate a general awareness of traditional arts on the University campus which had until then been a Western orientation in the arts.

It is due to the responsibilities of Institute of African Studies to establish a dance program in line with the mandate to organise courses in dance studies which were given to J.H. Kwabena Nketia and Albert Mawere Opoku to find new ways of using traditional dances for artistic developments that consequently led to the establishment and the beginnings of the National Dance Company/Ghana Dance Ensemble. In post-colonial Ghana both the GDE and the Department of Dance Studies of the School of Performing Arts (SPA) were engaged in the use of performance as an agent in the development of societies as it is today (Botwey-Asamoah, 2005). This in later years was confirmed by the studies of Ofotsu Adinku (2004, p. 52) that the then director of the IAS granted an interview to some journalists and confirmed that, 'the GDE was conceived as a way of transmitting the ideas which have been discovered about the society in artistic form and the same also goes for the SPA'. This quotation corroborates most of the assertions of why the GDE and the dance school were set up to bring out research findings in works of art as charged by the first president. Some example of artistic works of some artistic directors of the GDE which addressed social issues are entitled:

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¹² Kofi Anyidoho in 1993 at the open day of the IAS and SPA, was then the Acting Director of the School of Performing Arts.

Mawere Opoku: - Lamentation for Freedom Fighters (1965), Akan Ceremonial and Dagbani Dance Suite

Nii Yartey; - 'The Lost Warrior' (1978), 'The Legend of Okoryoo' (1991), 'Musu' (1996), 'Bukom' (1986), 'The Kings Dilemma' (1979), 'Asipim' (2002), 'Images of Conflict' (1999),

Emmanuel Ampofo Doudou; - Nsrabo/Drill (1993) and 'Boy meets Girl' (1993), 'The Power of Drums'.

Benjamin O. Ayerley: - 'Zanyile' (1999).

The Dance Section through their lecturers and instructors, also produced artistic works some of which are:

William Ofostu Adinku; - 'The Eternal Idol' (1984), 'The Orphan' (1991), 'Jacob's Dream' (1997), 'The Palm Wine Drinkard' (2002), 'The Prodigal Son' (2006).

Patience Abena Kwakwa; - 'The Maidens' (1992).

Seth Asare Newman; - 'Meet the Saviour' (1983), 'Fun on the Sea' (1983), 'Adam and Eve' (1983) 'Mi Ntama Yi' (1982), 'Hail the King' (1991), 'Odwira' (2000).

Oh! Nii Kei Sowah; - 'Mama Nature Waves and Echoes', (1991), 'Bore Bore' (2000), 'Fontonfrom in Three Suite' (1999), 'In touch with Nature' (2000), 'Tribute to Mosquito' and 'One Step Enough' (2007).

F. Nii Yartey and Oh! Nii Sowah; 'The Future of Dance' (2009).

From its inception, the GDE was to be Ghana's flagship for the professional, world-wide promotion of the music and dance heritage of Ghana girded by solid field work and experimental research. As noted by Ofostu Adinku and reiterated by Katerina Schramm;

the founders of the Ghana Dance Ensemble decided that a two-year Certificate Course in Dance should be established at the Institute of African Studies where practical training and theoretical education would be combined. Those who succeeded would later on be engaged as professional members of the Ghana Dance Ensemble. (Schramm, 2000, p. 343).

The activities of the Ghana Dance Ensemble and its location at the University of Ghana was to guarantee that research could be conducted and transferred directly to the GDE ensuring that the cultural traditions represented onstage would closely resemble those practices found in the indigenous communities. This in effect, achieved one of the main objectives of J. H. K. Nketia.

The initial batch of dance students and NDC/GDE were taken through theoretical training during the morning sessions and the afternoon was dedicated to practical training. Some of the initial theoretical training according to Adinku (1994) were 'Introduction to Movement Analysis and Notation', 'Studies in African Dance Forms' and 'Theory of Music'. In later years according to Adinku (pp. 8-9) other theory courses were introduced to the curriculum and more teachers were engaged to come teach some of these new programmes. These were 'Movement Aspects of Customary Behaviour', 'Principles of Choreography', 'Dance History and Criticism'. These were to give the initial members some theoretical knowledge to the world of dance and to make their activities have some academic foundation and this was possible because it was the beginning of formal dance education. In line with this some structure had to be initiated because student numbers were few, the organizers could afford to structure teaching and learning in that form.

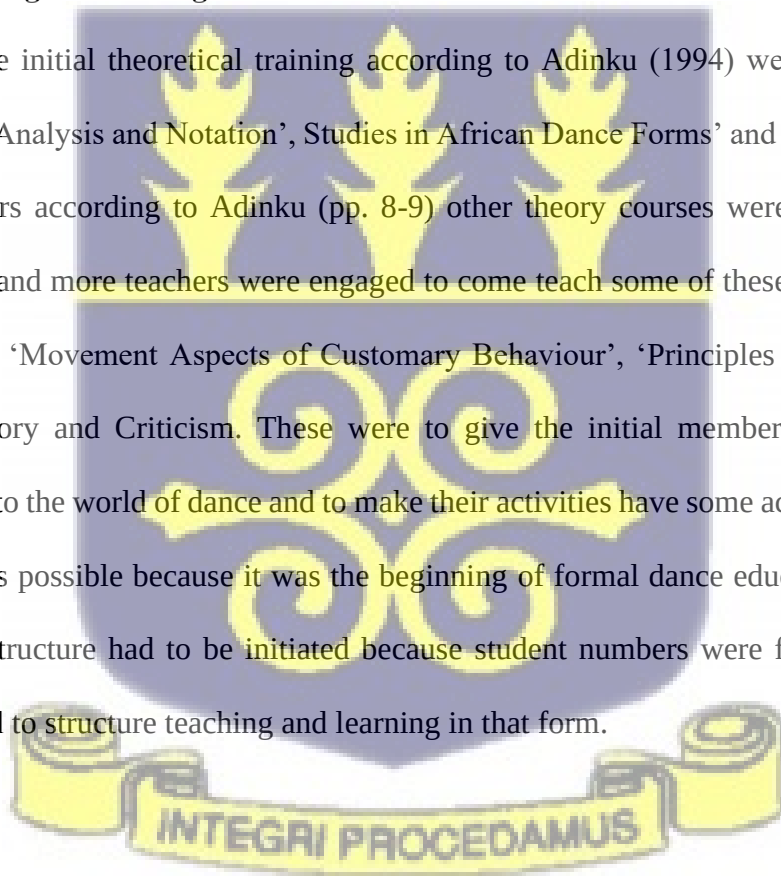




Figure 7. Picture shows GDE and some dance students in a practical dance class rehearsal. Picture credit, J. H. Kwabena Nketia accessed, 23rd March 2019.

The Ghana Dance Ensemble has a tradition of identifying young, talented artistes with mastery of particular dance forms from different parts of the country and training them to express a dazzling variety of dances.

Going through the J. H. Kwabena Nketia archives located at the IAS old site on the University of Ghana campus, I gathered information on how many of these young specialists were recruited to form the nucleus of the ensemble. According to Ofotsu Adinku (1994) and confirmed by Patience Kwakwa¹³ in an interview, and as well as by Schauert (2015), dance and drum experts were recruited from Ga, Ashanti, Ewe, and Dagbani ethnic groups who did not only perform with the ensemble but also their respective traditional dances as well.

¹³ Interview with Patience Kwakwa was on 26th May, 2017 at her residence, by David Quaye, the researcher.

Many of these dancers later set up their own dance companies or worked with dance companies all over the world, to propagate the artistry styles of the ensemble and school to other Institutions (Shauert, 2015). Examples of such dance groups and companies are ‘Hayor dance group’, ‘Adzido dance company’, ‘Amamramma dance group’ and “Mawuworgeh dance ensemble”.

3.4 The Bachelor of Fine Arts Programme in the School of Performing Arts

The mid-1990s saw the Department of Dance Studies, School of Performing Arts, (SPA), University of Ghana, implement the report of the committee of the Professor Senanau’s recommendation in developing a new dance program to track alongside the only diploma program that had been in operation since the late 1970s (Adinku, 1994, pp. 43-44). Since the establishment of the School of Music, Dance and Drama, the Dance Section of the school operated certificate courses until 1967 when the program changed to the award of diplomas based on the recommendation proposed by the committee headed by ‘the Professor Busia committee’. The committee was charged by the then Vice Chancellor of the University of Ghana and upon investigations, the Busia¹⁴ (1967) committee recommended that, the School of Music, Dance and Drama was to review their core mandate within the framework of the university and was also to operate as a separate entity of the Institute of African Studies, (IAS), University of Ghana, Legon (Adinku, 1994).

Against this background, Asiedu (2014, pp. 2-3), also confirms the historical accounts that in 1976, the name of the School of Music Dance and Drama, changed to become the School of Performing Arts (SPA). The three units became sections, (Dance Section), with coordinators to head each section unlike the previous arrangements where the Director of the Institute was the administrative head of the units. This arrangement also brought into being the new diploma dance program, mentioned earlier, which was to reflect the University’s framework as well as give a new focus and direction on the training of dance students in the

¹⁴ I give credit to the J.H. Kwabena Nketia archives for accessing most of the information gathered in this chapter from that unit of the IAS.

university system. Awo Asiedu, a former Director and senior lecturer of the School of Performing Arts, saw the arrangements as moves to provide autonomy from the Institute of African Studies, (IAS). The autonomy thus created the ‘School of Performing Arts’ or better still gave more authority to the school to develop. This also marked the urge for growth within the School of Music Dance and Drama and the recognition of the broader dimensions of the performing arts in Ghana (Asiedu, 2014, p. 3).

Prior to the introduction of the proposed new Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA) programme, there were discussions in the School of Performing Arts to introduce a new training programme. This was supposed to develop the total student into a professional rather than just training students for the Ghana Education Service (GES) who made up most of the beneficiaries of the performing arts diploma graduates. This new programme, Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA) was to provide both practical and theoretical training to the student unlike the diploma programme that concentrated more on practical orientations of dance training than theoretical and the Bachelor of Arts programme that did not give the dance student the needed focus in their training programme. The argument for the BFA programme was that “a dance specialist (student), for instance, should be able to act, to direct a production, to choreograph and to handle his/her own lighting, costuming and designing problems and still be able to meaningfully provide advice for technical assistance”.¹⁵ What is of interest to note is that, at the time the BFA discussions were underway, the Dance Section did not have a Bachelor of Arts (BA) programme like the other two sister sections (Music and Drama), who were fully engaged in the training of BA and Diploma students. So, there was the need for the Dance Section to develop a BA programme before the consideration of the BFA programme could be achieved.

By 1994 the proposal for the Dance Section to start a Bachelor of Arts programme had been approved by the University administration and in September 1994 the first batch of BA dance students were admitted to pursue a three-year degree in dance education (Adinku,

¹⁵ J. H. Kwabena Nketia archives, N0. 221, Appendix II A. Reference to questionnaire on the work of the SPA.

1994). The proposal to begin a Bachelor of Fine Arts which started in 2000 had many hiccups before it finally took off. According to Mr. Newman there were series of meetings and discussions to convince the university authorities on the benefits and focus of the new program on students. This was to clear any misconceptions of the performing arts and for the University community to realize the academic potential of the performing arts as not just entertainment as some people perceived it to be (Adinku, 2004; Awo, 2014; Schauerts, 2015).

The Music Section and the Drama Section of the School of Performing Arts has had both the BA program and the Diploma programmes. In addition, the Music Department had a BMus (Bachelor of Music). Unlike its two sister departments, the Dance Section had only the Diploma programme until 1994 when the University granted permission to the department to start with its BA (Bachelor Arts) programme. So, for nearly three decades the dance section had produced certificate holders and diploma students who were engaged mostly by the Ghana Education Service. Only few people were able to go for further studies abroad and return to help towards the development and growth of the dance education. According to Seth Asare Newman, lecturers such as William Ofotsu Adinku, Patience Kwakwa, Nii Yartey, Nii Kwei Sowah, and Beatrice Ayi were all sponsored by the university to pursue further studies outside Ghana. Newman cited examples of how two of them were given scholarships to pursue master's degrees in United States of America after their diploma programme at the Department of Dance Studies in the mid-1970s.

In an interview with Seth Asare Newman and Patience A. Kwakwa, they both confirmed the report by the Senanu commission that established processes which led the establishment of a Bachelor of Fine Arts programme in the School of Performing Arts. According to the Senanu report, the proposal and discussions to pursue a new Bachelors program in the University started as far back as 1987/88 academic year, but due to the inability of the dance section to have a Bachelor of Arts program within their curriculum, the school could not commence until the dance section met certain requirements of the

University. This requirement was to start a BA dance programme before permission could be given to the school to start the BFA program.

By 1994, the first batch of BA dance students had been admitted to pursue a four-year degree program with the first year being non-scoring. Invariably the program was actually designed for a three-year period.

3.5 Pre-tertiary Dance Education

Inasmuch as the traditional dance is practiced in some basic and second cycle schools in Ghana, the dance is not studied as an academic discipline that serves as foundation for students who enter the tertiary Institutions to pursue degrees in dance education. There have been various workshops and studies on the curriculum of the GES curriculum on the teaching of music and dance at the basic level. The curriculum is designed for both music and dance but a careful interrogation of the curriculum reveals that the subject is more music theory than traditional African dance (Adu, 2019). Furthermore, at the second cycle level dance as a subject is not even a subject of discussion as an academic discipline compared to music where music is examinable. Reviewing some of these curricula I observed that in some of the programme there are supposed to be the teaching of Labanotation and drum instrumentation where dance is supposed to be taught as part of the curriculum. The current practice of engaging in Ghanaian dances at the pre-tertiary is at the GES cultural festivals annually or every two years where schools can choose to participate or not depending on affordability and personnel. In the study of Ablordey (2013) the use of dance is designed to teach other subjects at the basic school but not the study of dance itself. This in itself is one way to add to the curriculum to engage learners in the practice of dance education. Dalton (2016, pp. 39-41) identifies various African dance curricular in some American high schools where these teachers try to embody African dance practice. These African dance practices are also taught at some tertiary Institutions that teach dance program. This from Dalton's study serves as a continuum in dance epistemology in pre-tertiary to the tertiary level.

3.6 Teaching of Indigenous African Dance in other Tertiary Institutions:

In an interview¹⁶ with some students from the Theatre Film and Dance programme from the University of Cape Coast (UCC). It was realised that the styles of teaching indigenous African dance are not so different from the general norm practiced in some Institutions such as the University of Cape Coast and the University of Education, Winneba (UEW). These two identified styles are what I term for the purpose of this study as ‘the teacher-centred-approach’ and the ‘follow-the-leader’ approach. I have observed that these pedagogical approaches used in the teaching of indigenous African dance in the University of Cape Coast are not much different from what pertains at the University of Ghana and at the University of Education, Winneba. This could be since many of the dance teachers who handle some of these dance classes were mostly trained at the Dance Department of the School of Performing Arts, University of Ghana. Invariably the method of instruction is not too different from what they experienced as students in SPA. Newman, who happens to have taught both traditional dance and dance technique at the university for more than thirty years, reiterates this assertion and further indicates that, those teaching now are also products of the University of Ghana’ dance department. From my observation some of the approaches were slightly different from what I will call the normal trends. In this different particular approach, the student waits for the lecturer to explain every movement in the dance for students understanding before executing movement.

In the same interview with the students from UCC, they confirmed that almost all the dance instructors and teachers have their own style in teaching traditional dance. Some of the students expressed that they feel the instructors are in some kind of competition as who wants to be seen and identified or as the dominant teacher who actually “knows everything”.

3.7 Previous Pedagogical Approaches

From my own observation as a student and a faculty member, and also from interviews I gathered from some retired senior dance lecturers such as Mr Asare Newman, on 13th June

¹⁶ Interview conducted by David Quaye, the researcher in August 2017

2017, Ms. Patience Kwakwa on 18th September, 2017 and Mr. Emmanuel Ampofo-Douduo¹⁷ and current young lecturers in the dance department, such as Mr. Benedictus Mattison, Abigail Sena Atsugah and Godson Atsu Sokpor all on the 5th March 2018. It is obvious according to these respondents that there is no systematic approach in teaching traditional dances in the department. Patience Kwakwa, opines that, “everyone has a style and that is what they used” in teaching. So far what I have identified in the pedagogical approach is more of an individuality of teachers employing their own styles and methodology to teach. For Patience Kwakwa, the generation that once learnt the traditional dance will be different from other generations as they are farther removed from the initial source of the original faculty members that learned the dance. There are other senior faculty members who share divergent opinions about the embodiment of the generations such as Mr. Benjamin Obido Ayettey¹⁸, who used to teach on part time basis in the Department of Dance Studies and Mr. Philip¹⁹ Agyepong one of the young lectures in the Dance Department on 5th March 2018. They are of the view that there are still faculty members who learnt these dances from some of the older ones (faculty members) and thus, they can teach almost the “authentic” traditional dance moves, so that movement quality is not compromised and therefore will be difficult to have systematic form to teach traditional dance. Kwakwa further added that the repertoire of the GDE should be able to serve as the standard that should guide the teaching of traditional dances in the Department of Dance Studies. Views and opinions from many other dance faculty members such as Mr. Mattison, Ms. Atsugah and Mr. Sokpor also agree and share the same concerns with Patience Kwakwa. She argued that Mawere Opoku developed the dances based on the traditional models with mostly the traditional players as part of it or he created collaboratively contributing ideas to the artistic works rather than authoritatively created artistic works by himself. It is in line of this that Patience Kwakwa thinks the standardization should be based on the GDE’s repertoire.

¹⁷ David Quaye interviewed Mr. Ampofo-Douduo on the 4th September 2017 via telephone call.

¹⁸ David Quaye interviewed Benjamin Obido Ayettey on the 7th July, 2016.

¹⁹Mr. Philip Agyapong was interview on the 5th March 2018 by the researcher David Quaye

Some studies have been done in the use of video in teaching traditional dancing, Antonio, (2011)²⁰, for his thesis resorted to the advocacy of ‘exploring the potential of video as a tool for teaching’ especially the *Damba* dance form of Northern Ghana. But since the study, the effective use of the video is the problem because so far, per my observation of the various traditional dance classes, I have not seen any video being used as a teaching aid in the classroom.

3.8 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have tried to trace the history of the Department of Dance Studies through the establishment of the Ghana Dance Ensemble (GDE) under the Institute of African Studies (IAS), of the University of Ghana. The section also discussed how the dance section metamorphosed from being a unit section under the IAS with an administrative co-ordinator to becoming a full-fledged department having an autonomous body within SPA with a Head of Department as its administrative head.

The historical narratives also chronicled the various approaches that the Dance section of the School of Music and Dance employed in transmitting dance epistemology in both theory and practice at the early stages of the dance school. Most significant among these approaches were the reliance on Resource Personnel and the frequent travels to festivals, shrines, villages and communities to learn the indigenous dances from the source and re-arrange, that is, the traditional dances exist already and Mawere Opoku had to re-organize the dances for artistic and aesthetic purposes which were meant for teaching and learning.

Finally, the chapter reviewed some dance productions choreographed by some faculty members in the Department of Dance Studies as well as the GDE. Again, the study discussed some of the curricula that have been used at various stages.

²⁰ Antonio, (2011), unpublished thesis.

TEACHING METHODS AND CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

4.0 Introduction

This chapter builds upon the historical narrative in the previous chapter by focusing on previous and current pedagogical approaches to teaching traditional dance in the Department of Dance Studies, as the program developed into the degree granting programme it is today. It discusses various curriculums that have been developed over the years and will finally propose a new pedagogical approach through the action-based research methodology. Judith Bell (2010, p. 6) identifies action-based research as “solving specific problems in specific locations in order to develop new approaches to augment existing ones”. Furthermore, action-based research is a methodological approach where the researcher identifies issues in one’s teaching practice over a period of time leading them to “explore ways to address the issues through a self-reflexive process involving a series of iterative cycles” (Rimmer, 2017, p. 225).

As has been identified by Adinku (1994), Kwakwa (2015) and corroborated in interviews cited above with some senior lecturers in the Department of Dance Studies on various teaching methods. One of the approaches to teaching traditional dance is the use of Resource Persons from the various localities to share their knowledge and skills with both students and members of the Ghana Dance Ensemble, (GDE). Trevor Wiggins and Akrofi, assert that;

Nketia brought in traditional dancers and musicians as teachers, resource persons, and vitally, as founding members of the Ghana Dance Ensemble. With constant rehearsals and playing of instruments that could be heard beyond the confines of the institute, students ascribed dondology to the school. This ascription eased the discomfort felt by students due to the presence of “traditional arts on a campus where the curriculum and organization were dominated by a colonial heritage” (Wiggins & Akrofi as cited in Nketia Festschrift, 2015, p. 31.).

This approach by Nketia in the above statements has been corroborated by many of the informants who studied dance in the 1970s and the 1980s. Both Akua Abloso and Nii Kwei Sowah who were students during 1980 to 1984 and currently teaching in the Department of Dance Studies acknowledges the heavy dependence on the GDE as resource teachers in teaching traditional dances. In an interview Mr. Seth Asare Newman on 20th June 2018 at the Department of Dance Studies, University of Ghana, Mr, Seth Asare Newman gave vivid account of how practical dance was taught when he was a student in the 1970s. According to him, in the first year of their study program in 1972, the instructor was an assistant probably selected from the GDE who was engaged in order to teach them. In their second year, Newman recollects Ofotsu Adinku and Ampofo Doudu from the Ghana Dance Ensemble (GDE) came to teach them basic steps in *Agbadza*, *Adowa* and *Kundum*. According to Newman the mode of transmission was more of demonstration by the two instructors, with the students following by observation while drummers played alongside.

Much of this information has also been confirmed by current students in the Department of Dance Studies through focus group discussions. For example, indigenous dances such as *Jera*, *Akom*, *Asante* and *Akwapim Fontomfrom* attracted Resource Personnel from either the indigenous society or from the GDE. For example, the Dance Department requested the services of William Diku, who is now a retired and formally a senior member of the GDE and engaged him to teach *Akom* and *Ashanti Fontomfrom* respectively to students in the dance school when he was an active member of the Ghana Dance Ensemble, while Alidu who is a member with the National Dance Company, based at the National Theatre, was brought in to teach the *Jera* dance form. In the case of the *Akwapim Fontomfrom*, Newman disclosed that since the Resource Person was brought to teach the dance in the early 2000s, the lecturers have managed to adapt the dance and continue to teach it till date.

In a similar situation, Benjamin Ayettey a former acting Artistic Director of the GDE and a research fellow at the IAS teaches a compulsory indigenous African dance course as

part of the University of Ghana Required Course (UGRC), at the level 200 stage. In an interview, Mr. Ayertey recounts his experiences as a student in the early 1990s and his experience as a dancer with the GDE in the 1980s. In his submission, he acknowledges observation as one of the key components of teaching methods his teachers in the 1990s used in teaching. Benjamin Ayertey mentioned he did not personally like the Follow-The-Leader approach used by some lecturers as a pedagogical method. This Follow-the-leader method meant that students had to follow the dance teacher through observation without any explanation or correction from the teacher until end of the class. On the other hand, other dance lecturers would break down movements to their simplest form to enable students find it easy to perform. The breakdown of movements is done sometimes in smaller groups where the teacher would use the “lip singing” style or explaining and describing how the movements should be executed. In discussing this teaching approach with some retired senior dance lecturers of the school, Patience Kwakwa is of the view that every teacher has a style in teaching and this style is also influenced by the generation in which he or she learnt the dances.

One very profound account by Seth Asare Newman was how he recounted the approach students used in learning the *Kpanlogo* dance in the early 1970s. In Newman’s narratives, he mentioned that the *Kpanlogo* dance was not taught. Students had to watch (observe) the GDE perform (during their rehearsal sessions) and pick the dance movements from there. On the contrary, in the case of the *Agbekor* dance, the dance was taught but did not have a fixed order or sequence. This, for him, was quite a difficult task since it was strictly observational without any technique or instruction to guide them as students.

As related by Seth Asare Newman during the period 1972 to 1975, another approach mentioned as a pedagogical method was the yearly visits of students in IAS to various traditional festivals. Students were taken to observe the events and also watched dances that were performed by various groups that participated in the festivals. This was another way

student in the dance section of the School of Music and Dance learnt dances. Some of these accounts were confirmed by documents and letters sighted in the Kwabena Nketia Archives supporting travels of students, the GDE and researchers, to various communities, festival events and other social functions to observe how proceedings were carried out.

4.1 Deconstructing Teaching Methods

To interrogate a teaching approach in itself is a research methodology for dance ethnology. The careful observation of teaching approaches to the process of teaching indigenous African dance in the Department of Dance Studies (i.e., observation, participation, listening and imitation) is therefore an excellent research methodology to elicit information and knowledge for an ethnographic study. In the works of Kerry-Berry (2004) she draws on the methodology used in research science as the same in dance epistemology, where the practice of dance in itself, is the methodology of researching dance. I share in the same argument, since the action-based research is the process of engaging in a practice-based-research method to solve, resolve and create new approaches for effective usage. In post-colonial studies teaching and learning has shifted from the teacher centred approach to a more practical orientation. Thus, methods according to the constructivist theory include those where one does not just receive content but actually engages in creating new ideas, concepts and deducing meaning out of the knowledge gained (Kerr-Berry, 2004). In teaching indigenous African dance, the methodological approach therefore is to impart kinaesthetic skills to students who may not have the skill and the technique in perfecting their performance. This is especially true where the learning ability also dwells on connecting to the cross-sensory-motor integration and cognitive developments of the eye and the ear. Even though the *Agbekor* is a dance form already known, the problem for many students is the process of acquiring the dance more effectively. This effective process is dependent on the execution of movement gestures in relation to the rhythmic patterns. Therefore, the approach developed through the research will

develop a mechanism that both instructors and students will have new ways to approach teaching and learning dance practice.

Over the years the teaching approach of traditional dance has not provided the opportunity to question the effective methods of teaching indigenous African dance. As recounted by Seth Asare Newman, relying on Resource Persons from the GDE, observing the GDE rehearse and perform, visiting and observing festivals and imitating and finally following the leader are almost the same approaches being appropriated currently.

Grau (2007) examines the notion of practice as research, practice-based research, practice-led research, as well as research by practice, performance as research, etc. are various names given to the same ethnographic study. In this study the method of gathering data of the fieldwork is through a practical approach a process she also refers to as 'learning to perform' as a research technique. Based on the different names of the research methods the approach I have adopted, in this study is an approach that is not much different from these research practices. This approach is where an individual is immersed in the teaching process as well as observing the process and participate in the learning process. The idea is to learn and be taught through the practice of participation in a field work.

The methodology of action-based research in itself is a research methodology that needs to be interrogated. A subtle distinction: learning rather than being taught, is critical for a researcher to develop new ideas. These methods are similar to those used in ethnology, and in this particular study they are a key component of the research. For me as the researcher immersing myself in the classroom being taught and observing the various teaching styles was totally a new experience. The styles of approach helped shaped my ideas and thinking of the general notion of the teaching methods. It is at this point I realised that dance teachers brought their own nuances to bear on the way practical dance knowledge is disseminated. This was also not devoid of the various experiments conducted to test the approach of using the Ewe language to teach some of the movement gestures.

4.2 Philosophy in Teaching Indigenous African Dance

One of the goals and objectives of the Department of Dance Studies is to provide skills to students and equip them practically in the acquisition of physical dance techniques. This idea is in line with John Dewey's (1859-1952) philosophy of education where teaching and learning is a pragmatic approach which for me, is not very much different from the practices of the indigenous people of Africa. Dewey articulates that "education should not be the pouring of knowledge into a child but supporting its growth from within" (<http://www.yourarticlelibrary.com>) an activity which is exhibited by the custodians of our traditional knowledge system. The quotation by Dewey situates the activities of the Department of Dance Studies in particular and the School of Performing Arts in general as a practice-oriented discipline. One of Dewey's beliefs is that education must be based on the principle of learning through an action where the learner will adjust through the environment in the course of practical learning. Even though Dewey's philosophy is tailored to children in basic elementary school through pedagogy, I very much believe it applies to students at the tertiary level of education where andragogy, which is a teaching approach focused on older person rather than children, seems to be the most preferred methodology in training. This pedagogical notion of John Dewey is especially relevant to both the Department of Dance Studies because the growth of the school from its initial beginnings under IAS to its current dispensation clearly shows that the department has positioned itself to equip students in practical dance training. The training should provide conditions for growth not only in school but also in adult life when students have completed school and acquired skill. In other words, there is the need to provide the student with the necessary tools function in the future. Thus, a critical concept for the department especially in the case of the dance student is providing pragmatic education. To this end almost every dance lecturer teaching IAD has some kind of philosophy that guides his/her teaching even though it is not profound in all cases as in the case of Seth Asare Newman.

Imparting knowledge comes with a philosophy, in so doing every dance instructor must have some knowledge underpinning what he/she is transmitting through the training process in which certain skills must be given to students upon completion of their study. This concept of teaching philosophy must be in congruent with the mission and vision of the Institution. The Department of Dance Studies has a vision and mission which is to give students a hands-on training skill. This will enable them to have constructive minds and skill in experiencing dance education in theory and performance. In a document published in 1988, to develop a new curriculum for the School of Performing Arts, that is, the BFA program, the emphasis of the Dance Department was to train dance ‘professionals’ who will be practically oriented in their delivery.

According to Ben Ayettey a former acting Artistic Director of the GDE, his philosophy in teaching indigenous African dance is that, he expects the students to understand the concept of movements and that will enable them learn a particular dance form. As to how Ben is able to translate this idea in the training of the student, he comments that in his teaching methodology, dance pedagogy must include knowledge of where the emphasis of movement is on the body so that dancers or students do not get hurt anyhow (interview, 7/72016). He further reiterates that before teaching dance movements he tries to analyse the drum language with the movements, then breaks movements down into smaller components before practicing the movements to the rhythms. In this way Ben Ayettey believes students will be able to easily perform the dance. According to another dance lecturer, Sena Atsugah, in her teaching philosophy, she strives to know and understand the background of her students in the class so as to guide the students during teaching. This approach makes her feel she is actually providing guidance for the students to learn during the transmission process. It is important to note that every dance lecturer must have a teaching philosophy that guides the teacher in the transmission of knowledge. Even though many other dance lecturers did not make clear their teaching philosophy known to students, this did not take away the idea that

their teaching methods were not supported with any philosophical foundation. This very fact makes me wonder what the actual philosophical goals are for each dance lecturer and if that actually reflects in their teaching methodologies. From observations and interviews conducted I realise that though some dance lectures provided teaching philosophies underpinning their methods of teaching yet did not really have any philosophy in their teaching practice. May be perhaps in the past there have not been any teaching philosophy until recently when a lecturer is applying for promotion that it will be required for the lecturer to provide a teaching philosophy. In an interviews with Seth Asare Newman, he did not verbalise his dance approach in his teaching, but one realises from his teaching approach that there is an intention to equip the dance student with the stamina for the performance of the dance maybe perhaps developing a dance performer (Professional). This I believe constitutes his philosophy in teaching dance even though he does not necessary vocalize these intentions to students.

4.3 Current Pedagogical Approaches

In observing the level 300 traditional dance class (African Dance Performance, DANC: 335) I realised that, most of the approaches used currently are those that were also practised previously; the teacher-centred-approach, demonstrational and observational, at times other methods like following-the-leader approach as well as vocalization of the rhythms. In the case of the *Agbekor* dance, one of the instructors led a demonstration without the use of drum rhythms but rather ‘mouthed’, or lip sung the rhythm. The first movement the lecturers taught was the ‘turning’ movement in the *Agbekor* dance. After demonstrating the movement, the lecturer tried a description of the dance whiles ‘mouthing’ the rhythm in order to breakdown the various components of the movements for the students. In the process the teacher said, “this is a war dance, so you need to turn and see if your enemies are approaching then you move down and look to your left and to your right”. All these were to describe one dance movement and the rhythmic phrase.



Figure 8 The picture shows a cross section of Level 300 dance students learning the Agbekor turn. Picture credit: David Quaye.

4.4 Teacher-Centred-Approach

This is an approach whereby the dance teacher is at the centre giving instruction or demonstrating movement gestures. The practice allows the student to experience in a shared space: what Edmund Husserl terms in his ‘phenomenology of embodiment’ as a ‘lived centre of experience’. This is because in the teacher-centred-approach through the use of oculesics (observation) and auditory (listening), the body experiences movements which are registered on the sensation of the mind and played back through the body to embody the activities seen and heard by the body. Furthermore, students embody the indigenous dance in an academic environment hence academia becomes a heterogeneous society where students are cut off from the cultural practices of the society where the dance is originating from (Turner, 1987). Therefore, the use of indigenous language in the new classroom space at the tertiary level is not part of the embodiment process. At the tertiary level the experiences of students from various backgrounds find themselves in a common environment in a dance class of an African Indigenous Dance class. To learn about a dance form from a particular culture or ethnic group such as *Agbekor* from the Volta Region the use of indigenous language would enable the

students to experience the dance form in a different context in its new space or environment.

In this way students experience a fusion of the indigenous learning approach with its terminologies in the indigenous language where the teacher is the focal point. Instruction in the indigenous language will effectively enhance the teaching and learning process as part of embodiment of the dance form in the classroom.

4.5 Follow-The-Leader

This basically is an approach used by many instructors and lecturers to teach traditional dance movements to students in the Department of Dance Studies. It can also be referred to as the “do as I do” method. The method enables students to observe instructors as the lecturer demonstrates dance movements while the students follow the leader as he demonstrates without any explanation or verbal instruction. Furthermore, the approach does not provide any opportunity for the students to ask any question throughout the whole class session.



Figure 9. This is a picture showing an example of Follow-The Leader approach or observational method. Picture credit: David Quaye



Figure 10. Another example of Follow-The-Leader or observational approach. Picture credit: David Quaye

4.6 Vocalisation of Rhythms

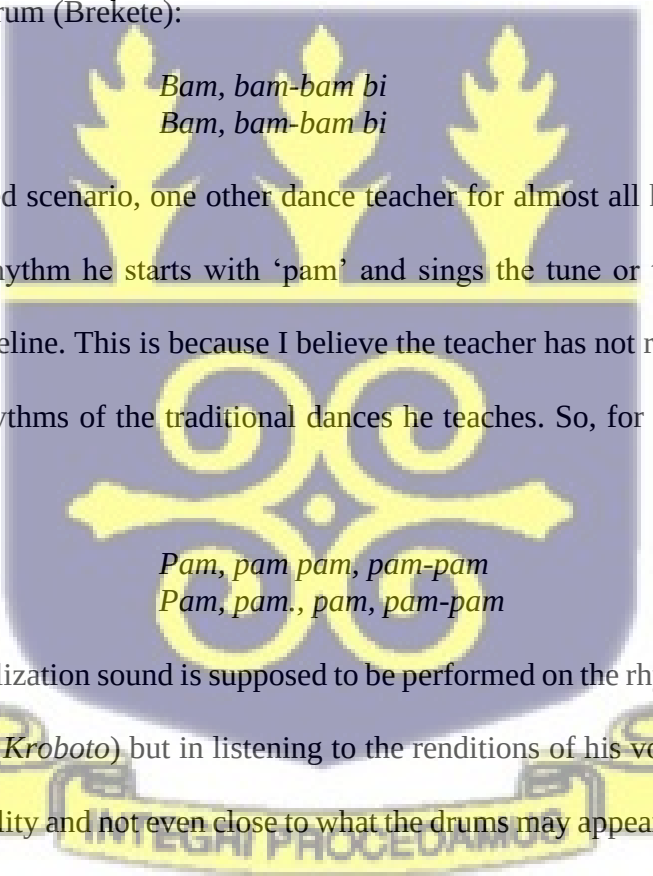
Another pedagogical approach being used to teach indigenous African dance is vocalization of rhythms or ‘mouthing’ the rhythm as mentioned earlier. In this approach, the lecturer sometimes sings the drum rhythms or patterns on the lips²¹ or the mouth and also gets the students to do same. Sometimes the lecturer will represent the drum pattern or rhythm with some rhythmic phrases to make easy interpretation of the rhythms to movement gestures. These pedagogical techniques are to enable the students memorize rhythmic patterns of the drum language and also to embody the rhythms and their corresponding cues. Furthermore, it is supposed to allow the student to understand the tonal patterns of the drum rhythm and know how, where and when to accentuate with its corresponding movement gesture. For example, in observing one of the traditional dance classes on the 26th February, 2018, the instructor resorted to singing a common English Nursery Rhyme phrase which he had adopted to help decode the drum phrase for the students he was teaching. In teaching the *Damba-Takai* dance form from the Northern Ghana, the teacher rhythmically sung:

*One, two, buckle my shoe,
Three, four, shut the door.*

²¹ Lip sing or mouth the rhythm both refer to vocalization of drum rhythmic patterns.

This phrase was repeated several times in correspondence with the drum rhythm and the leg movements. In a discussion, the lecturer explained that he employed this vocalization phrase to enable the students' figure out which leg movement corresponds with the rhythm variations. For me, this adds to the different hermeneutics (various interpretations) in the approach to teaching traditional dance. Students on the other hand, also develop various interpretations of the dances taught based on their understanding. In so doing the students interpret the dance differently using various semiotic interpretations.

In another example of the level 200 traditional dance class, the lecturer used the lip-singing approach where he got the students to lip-sing the rhythm and tap the rhythm on their bodies. This was done using the *Damba-Takai* dance rhythm. The rhythm phrase sound like this on the lead drum (Brekete):



*Bam, bam-bam bi
Bam, bam-bam bi*

In a related scenario, one other dance teacher for almost all his classes when he has to vocalise the rhythm he starts with 'pam' and sings the tune or the phrase of the drum pattern or the timeline. This is because I believe the teacher has not really taken time to give hearing to the rhythms of the traditional dances he teaches. So, for example this is how he sings the rhythm:

*Pam, pam pam, pam-pam
Pam, pam., pam, pam-pam*

This vocalization sound is supposed to be performed on the rhythmic tones of the lead master drum (the *Kroboto*) but in listening to the renditions of his vocalisations, they sound so different in reality and not even close to what the drums may appear to sound. For instance, in the *Bawa* rhythm some aspect of the drum tone sounds like this:

*Gren to-to, gren-to, to-to
Gren to-to, gren-to, to-to
Gren-gren, gren gren, gren
Gren-gren, gren gren, gren*

But the teacher would vocalise or mouth the rhythm as *pam pam* as in the earlier example given above. Therefore, for me, it gives the impression that all the rhythms sound the same, which of course they are not as observed by both Nketia and Agawu in their analysis of drum tonation.

The *Bawa* dance form is one of the many dances that has been totally changed and re-arranged for the stage by Mawere Opoku. This Opoku did in trying to artistically choreograph some of the traditional dances for the GDE. This idea was as a result of the GDE travels around the country to observe these dances. In an attempt not to produce exactly what was observed on the field Opoku decided to use one of the Ewe drum ensembles the *Kroboto* to play the *Bawa*. Originally the ‘*Bawa*’ dance is performed with xylophone and the ‘*wia*’, a wind instrument which adds to the rhythm accompaniment. The re-arrangement is a fusion of different forms of *Bawa* from ‘*Sissala*’, ‘*Nandom*’, and ‘*Mamprussi*’ just to mention a few. Presently what is taught in the dance class and performed by many dance companies is influenced by what Mawere Opoku created and that is mostly dominated by the ‘*Nandom*’ type of movement gestures.

Quite recently, according to Seth Asare Newman, he invited some amateur dancers who have specialized in performing the non-choreographed ‘authentic’ *Bawa* dance form among the ‘*Dagarti*’. These Resource Persons were engaged to teach this dance type and has since been part of the repertoire that is taught at the level 400 traditional African dance class.

To make easy identification by students, I have observed how student are developing ways in learning the cues and the rhythmic phrases on the xylophone to aid the learning of the dance. Since the dance is also done with song accompaniment, the students have resorted to using some lyrical terms (Angraviyie²²), in the song text as the cues for the various movement gestures in the dance. It will therefore be appropriate to devise a common term

²² Angraviyie is the name for Accra in the Dargarti language which is in the song sung during the performance of the *Bawa* dance.

that is related to the dance and meaningful as well so both dance teachers and students alike can use this in learning and teaching. It is not surprising for me to realise that students are codifying the music played on the xylophone for themselves. This needs to be structured and standardised alongside the movement gestures for easy identification and recognition by students.

4.7 The Use of Resource Personnel

One of the pedagogical approaches in teaching indigenous African dance in the Department of Dance studies is the use of Resource Persons. This method as indicated by Adinku (1994) and corroborated by Seth Asare Newman and many others in an interview is not a new practice in the department. From their narratives, specialists and experts were brought from the villages and communities to teach some dances and at other occasion members of the Ghana Dance Ensemble/Ghana Dance Company were also invited to share their skills and knowledge with students in the school.

The presence of Resource Persons in the class sometimes goes a long way to motivate students to endeavour to achieve success. There are other periods when student's enthusiasm is diminished from the teaching methods being used. So that the Resource Persons especially when not supervised can create problem for the students learning. From the experiences gathered in the field in observing most of these classes I believe that the Resource Persons when in the class should be managed during their teaching processes. This will enable students understand the purpose for which the resource person was invited. The idea is just to guide their pedagogical approach.

Sometimes the use of the Resource Person in the dance class is to teach possible new dances being introduced to the class or to emphasize certain movements that the lectures think is not being executed well or that students are finding difficult to learn. In other instances, the Resource Persons are brought in to teach songs to accompany the dances being taught.

4.8 Students' Learning Methods

According to Rimmer (2017, p. 225) “constructivism is a learning approach that allows learners the opportunity to construct meaning and knowledge” in learning dance technique. This constructivism theory may be a good pedagogical approach to teaching dance technique, dance composition or any improvisation dance class, but not the indigenous African dance where there are specific movements to specific dance forms using specific rhythmic patterns (music). Even though I agree to the learning styles of creating innovative ways and forms of learning dance, I do not think this is truly suitable to learn the specific movements of African indigenous dance. With the constructivist theory approach in an African dance class, I argue that, in such a scenario every one of the students will develop their own term for learning a dance form when the terms should be uniform or same. This could be explained through constructivist theory as students of African dance create meaning through their own interpretation of the learning process. However, in order to develop an institutionalised form or technique the terminologies should be uniform.

Students in both the traditional dance class and the ‘Newmantic’ technique class try to create their own methods of movements they learn. While some students would video the dance movements on their smart phones for future recall others would create terms to describe the movement gestures.

4.9 Use of Notation

Within the Department of Dance Studies, one of the core courses taught at the 200-level dance is a dance notation course; ‘Introduction to Movement Analysis and Notation’ (DANC/DANS 222). This course title is popularly known as Labanotation which is based on the notation system developed by Rudolf Von Laban. Labanotation is an art of recording dance movements, and this form of notation is what has been used in providing theory to practical dance teaching. Even though it is both theory and practice, teachers of the subject have mostly dwelled on the theoretical aspect. Ofostu Adinku has chronicled accounts of how

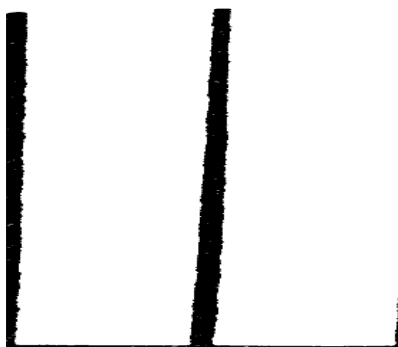
teachers were brought in to teach notation when the dance programme started and there were no persons qualified in the area to teach notation. According to Adinku (1994) those who were brought in to assist the teaching of the subject were American experts or specialists, one such person was Odette Blum.

It was not until 2004 that Beatrice Ayi²³ introduced Motif Description instead of the Movement Analysis and Notation and combined the practice with the theory of dance notation. The teaching and learning of the subject have gained popularity among students. Motif description was developed by Anna Hutchinson Gust, who built upon Rudolf Von Laban's Labanotation, a form which is more difficult to read and understand. Motif description, on the other hand, is a simplified method of notation used in the language of dance movement exploration (Guest, 2007, p. iv). Though it shares the same symbols with Labanotation, motif description has more symbols that better represent dance movements. From 2004 to the present, Motif Description is what is being taught at the undergraduate level up to the level 200 stage. However, even though this is being taught, it is not linked with the teaching of indigenous African dance practice. I argue that especially where motif descriptions deal with concepts of movement, they can be used as examples in teaching, so students can apply the theory to the practice. The concept can be further explored to serve as a guide in describing traditional dance movement gestures. So, the teaching becomes specific to the indigenous African dances currently being taught.

4.10 Greennotation

'Greennotation' is a system of recording traditional African music and dance forms using the Labanotation staff. The Labanotation staff is made up of three main vertical lines, with two horizontal lines in-between the lines at the base of the lines indicating the starting position.

²³ Beatrice Ayi, A dance faculty member who returned to the Department in 2004 with a Master Arts degree in Dance from Ohio State University specialising in Motif Description.



The indigenous African dance rhythm is documented on a score to aid dance movement. The core of 'Greennotation' is centred on African music and its relationship to the dance. "It is a system of writing music for percussion instruments of Africa" (Green, 1989, p. 409). Doris Green, the main architect of 'Greennotation', advocates for standardisation and codification of indigenous African dance. Though, according to her, it is not possible to separate the music from the dance, since the symbols used in 'Greennotation' are based on the Laban notation symbols. It is also quite complex to apply her creation of 'Greennotation' to standardise traditional dance forms. Doris Green tried the fusion of both the musical and the dance score all represented on the same dance score as music and dance exists in the tradition. However, in my experience it is confusing and difficult for any student to comprehend in a practical situation. The notation is more suitable for music learners rather than dance learners. It is therefore not feasible using 'Greennotation' in the teaching of indigenous African dance forms in the classroom.

4.11 Use of Video

Video is a form of mediated space where indigenous African dance can be projected to aid in teaching. Dayan Chun has advanced some studies in this regard and this shows that video is one of the most widely used pedagogical approaches in teaching and documenting dance. Chun (2007, p. 88) argues for the different purposes that video should be for in dance. Although a live presentation of dance on stage may not be the same in video, it could serve different purposes such as archiving and documentation. From personal experience, I have

observed that recording dance on video provides the learner the opportunity to view dance movements repeatedly. These opinions have also been reiterated by Anthonio (2011) and Ayi (2004)) respectively that, it is possible to view dance from different angular shots when recorded. Even though video may be a pedagogical tool in teaching, it is mediated in communication. For example, movement gestures appear compressed in certain directions depending on how the lens is focused. So, the time required to acquire movement skills is longer than necessary and one must keep rewinding or playback the video in order to acquaint him/herself with one particular movement. I do not doubt that it can serve as a supplementary guide after the class, however, it may not help in teaching on the spur of the moment.

4.12 ‘Newmantics’ Dance Technique

This is a form of dance technique designed and developed by Seth Asare Newman in the 1980s to enable dance students studying African dance performance/traditional dance to acquire movement skills during their studies. According to Seth Asare Newman, ‘Newmantics’ is a basic traditional African dance movement like the gumboot dance, and the Zulu dances from South Africa. ‘Newmantics’ is also an exploration of movement gestures beyond Africa into dance forms such as ballet, modern and other contemporary dance styles from Asia, Europe and the Americas. The rationale of ‘Newmantics’ is to make the learning of indigenous African dance/traditional dance easy as well as to provide students with movement vocabulary for ‘Dance Composition’ and ‘Choreography’. The ‘Newmantics’ dance technique is comprised of various movements drawn from most of the indigenous dance forms in Ghana, other Africa countries and beyond. These movement gestures are then simplified through breaking down dance movements into basic gestures in the dance technique class and practiced as routine exercises in various technique classes. Thus, depending on the students’ level (Introductory, Intermediate and the Advanced levels) the routine is enhanced and made more technical or vigorous in terms of execution. The emphasis of the ‘Newmantics’ dance technique is centred on the whole-body parts, beginning from the

head, neck through the torso to the feet of the performer/dancer. Every 'Newmantics' technique is structured into four categories and in two segments. The four categories are southern, northern, ballet and the acrobatics while the segments are the 'mirror' and 'across' movement sections. Typically, within all these segments will have their particular emphasis and the kind of movement gestures that are embedded in the dance? For every category the first part is the 'face the students' method', where the dance teacher faces the students and the students follow by mirroring the teacher. The second part is the across the dance hall movement segment. In here the teacher moves across the dance hall with the students in executing various movements. The students follow suite as in the follow-the-leader approach.

Southern: The southern technique movements are composed of movements from dances such as *Kpanlogo*, *Agbadza*, *Gahu*, *Sohu*, *Agbekor*, *Kundum Kpatsa* and *Adzogbo*. All these dance forms can be located in the Greater Accra, Volta, Central and Western regions of Ghana.

Northern: This section of movement gestures is composed of movements from northern sector dances such as *Adowa*, *Fontonfrom*, *Kete*, *Asaadua*, *Siki*, *Nagla*, *Bawa*, *Bamaaya* and *Damba-Takai*. These dance forms fall within the jurisdiction of Ashanti, Brong Ahafo, Northern, Upper East and Upper West regions of Ghana.

Ballet: In this category, movements are drawn from the Western ballet dance form, where movements are mostly in symmetrical lines, lineal patterns accompanied by stretching gestures. In this segment, one is likely to encounter the ballet positions from the 1st positions to the 6th position. Then also the various types of pliés i.e. demi-plié and the full plié. Another category of movements are the springs, i.e., Jump, Assemblé, Sissonne, Hop and Leap. Finally, there is also stretching and floor movements in addition to leg circling, clockwise and anticlockwise. These are some of the selected movements that have been put together in the set of 'Newmantics' for this particular group.



Figure 11. The picture shows Mr. Seth Asare Newman and a student in a jump with one leg stretched and the other bent in 'Newmantics' dance technique. Picture credit: David Quaye.



Figure 12. This also shows a picture of stretching in 2nd position for both legs and arms in 'Newmantics' dance technique. Picture credit: David Quaye



Figure 13. The picture depicts couple dancing also an aspect of ‘Newmantics’. Picture credit: David Quaye

Acrobatic: This category of movement gestures is comprised of vigorous energetic movements which are mostly dominated by floor gestures. Some of these include cartwheel, somersault, rolling, ballet jumps and turns, contemporary movement gestures, ‘baby elephant’, ‘donkey’ movement etc.



Figure 14. A picture of Mr. Seth Asare Newman (the Lecturer) and a student performing the cartwheel during a ‘Newmantic’ class session. Picture credit: David Quaye



Figure 15. This is a cross section of a ‘Newmantics’ dance technique class with the Lecturer demonstrating floor movement with the legs of the acrobatic segment. Picture credit: David Quaye



Figure 16. Mr. Newman and a student going through somersault in the ‘Newmantics’ dance technique class of acrobatic segment. Picture credit David Quaye.



Figure 17. This picture depicts Mr. Newman and some students assisting a student to perform an acrobatic gesture by holding up his legs to enable the student ‘stand’ with his arms. Picture credit: David Quaye.

Every ‘Newmantics’ class session ends with the same kind of stretching, be it the southern, northern, ballet or floor (acrobatic) movements. In this set of movements, the lecturer sits to lead the exercise where the right leg is stretched and corresponds with the right arm, then the process is repeated for the left leg as well. The next stage of the stretching segment is the crossed over legs while still seated on the dance floor. These sets of movement exercise according to Seth Asare Newman is to help the muscles in the body to relax especially after the rigorous technique routines and also to enable flexibility in movement execution from the body.

Below are various pictures showing Seth Asare Newman and students going through the stretching sessions at the end of a ‘Newmantics’ dance techniques class.

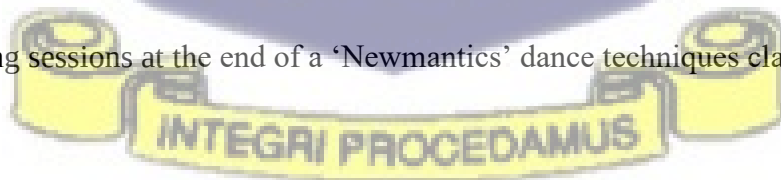




Figure 18. Beginning in a sitting position, one goes through stretching the legs with corresponding arms as well as folding the legs to stretch the back of the body. Picture credit: David Quaye.



Figure 19. Stretching both legs into a splitting position. Picture credit: David Quaye.

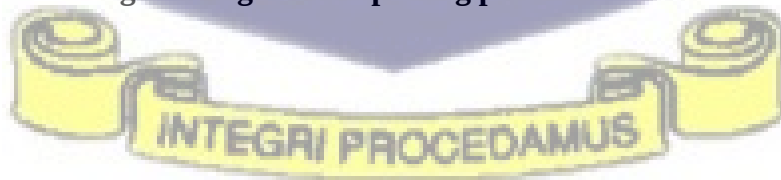




Figure 20. In squatting position and preparing to roll backwards. Picture credit: David Quaye

Apart from these four categories, there is also what is referred to as the ‘combination’. The combination is a series of movement gestures that have been carefully selected and put together for students as a form of choreography. This is done almost towards the tail end of the technique class where students must commit the dance combination to memory and reproduce it at the end of the semester using counts and a basic rhythmic timeline, no specific music is required.

In observing one of the levels 300 ‘Newmantics’ class, (i.e., DANC 301: Intermediate Dance Technique) classes on the 12th February 2018, I realised that the method being used to teach was more of the follow-the-leader approach. In this approach the instructor demonstrates movements and allows students to follow without giving any ‘said’ instruction. For this particular segment, movements have been selected from traditional dances that Mr. Seth Asare Newman has categorized as northern sectors of movement. The movement techniques are mostly accompanied by mostly recorded gospel music or simply highlife drum rhythm.

Talking to the teaching assistant in the dance technique class, she was surprised that movements being executed were extracted from some of the traditional dances in the country that are also taught in the dance class. Even though she identified some of them, she did not realize that the dance technique class was to inform the traditional dance directly. Though she thinks personally that, the dance technique class had a direct impact on her traditional dance performance as a student, yet she is not sure if the dance technique course was designed for that purpose or not.

4.13 Case for Institutionalising ‘Newmantics’ Dance Technique

The form of the ‘Newmantics’ dance technique is different from most dance techniques practiced in dance academies and Institutions across the globe. These dance techniques forms were instituted to inform the dances practiced at the time and also to enhance the performance of these forms. According to Brain, Midlin & Woodford (1988, p. 50) Martha Graham describes her dances “as stylized representation of the times” in which she was creating. This for me situates codification of ‘Newmantics’ as very critical in the teaching and learning of indigenous African dances especially in Ghana and Africa as a whole. As part of my study I have decided to include examples of some such techniques that have influenced some Africans to also build and develop dance technique for the African dancer and choreographer. These works are:

1. The Martha Graham Technique.
2. Katherine Dunham Technique
3. Germaine Acogny Technique

Martha Graham Technique (1894-1991): This is a modern dance technique developed in USA during the early 20th century as a ‘move away’ from the classical ballet. The philosophy which underpins Graham’s technique is movement generated from three places which are: contraction and release of the human torso and the pelvic area of the body and breathing skills. In the Graham technique there are conscious efforts of using strength as

indicated by Mazo (1977)? Today the Martha Graham technique is taught in most dance institutions and is very much synonymous with modern dance and contemporary dance forms. It is however considered as the first codified dance technique used as a stylized pedagogical tool in post-modern dance scholarship. The application of the technique is seen in Martha Graham's contemporary dance choreographies.

Katherine Dunham Technique (1909-2006): This form of dance technique is based on the ballet and the modern dance forms with movements from the Caribbean folk dances. The style of technique is focused on the articulation and flexibility of the torso and the spine.



Figure 21. Picture showing dancers performing Katherine Dunham technique with emphasis on the upper torso and the arms. Source: Kdocah.org, date of download 7/06/2018.

Germaine Acogny Technique: Another selected form is the Acogny's Dance Technique. This form of technique developed as a result of the influence Western dance forms, especially modern dance, had on the African traditional dances Germaine Acogny has acquired over the years. Germaine Acogny is a Senegalese dancer and choreographer who is a major figure in African dance. She has been a choreographer and artistic director for many dance studios focusing on contemporary dance fusing it with African dance styles.

Germaine Acogny dance technique was also to create a contemporary African dance (CAD) as a break away from the traditional indigenous dances in the same way the modern dance and finally to contemporary dance evicted out of ballet. The focal point of the technique is centred on the spine of the body while the movements are based on three foundations such as undulation, contraction and vibration. A faculty member at the Department of Dance Studies, who has worked with and experienced Germaine Acogny's dance technique, Abigail Sena Atsugah, disclosed that the success of Germaine Acogny's technique is codification, packaging and transmission. She further reiterates Acogny's technique has a written legacy like Martha Graham and Katherine Dunham which are all synonymous with the people who created the forms.

So, for me as a researcher, former student of the dance program and a faculty member, I deem it suitable, indeed appropriate, to document and institutionalise the 'Newmantics' dance form. That way, the dance form will be attributed to him (Seth Asare Newman) as in the other forms discussed above. According to Miss Atsugah if this is not done, the 'Newmantics' art form will be available and being practiced but no one will associate it with Seth Asare Newman when he no longer teaches. In an interview session with Miss Atsugah, she disclosed that, institutionalizing 'Newmantics' in the Department of Dance Studies as a dance technique based on Ghanaian dance forms and some African, Western and contemporary dance forms is not too far away from the other forms especially Germaine Acogny which is celebrated in the West African sub region particularly (Senegal).

The 'Newmantics' dance technique method of transmission is an indirect approach used in teaching indigenous African dance at the Department of Dance Studies. Though it is a course structure on its own and assessed on its own merit, it is supposed to aid students in the teaching and learning indigenous African dance. Almost every student in the Department of Dance Studies from level 100 to 400 at least has studied and experienced the 'Newmantics' dance technique one way or the other.

This ‘Newmantics’ dance technique approach for me is an example of a pedagogical approach to teaching indigenous African dance. Even though ‘Dance Technique’ is a subject taught separately and not directly linked to the traditional dance, it serves as a ‘doxa’ for students in the dance class process. The ‘Newmantics’ dance technique is structured in such that it would provide easy access to learning indigenous/traditional dance. From my observation it seems students take the technique class for granted as if it has no connection to the indigenous African dance classes. An interview with a level 400 Bachelor of Arts (BA) student, Benedicta Asamoah, (a dance student combining the study of Dance with Psychology) confirmed many of the assertions made earlier in this thesis. For her, as a BA student, she did not have a good foundation in terms of ‘Newmantics’ dance technique because her level 100 and 200 stages dance technique classes were taught by other lecturers who did not focus on ‘Newmantics’. Therefore, she had challenges in the indigenous African dance class hence, she decided at the level 400 stage to sign up for dance technique to enable her experience ‘Newmantics’ technique to enhance her skill in the traditional dances.

According to Seth Asare Newman as mentioned before that in his student days there was nothing like dance technique as part of their training. The students followed by observation while the drummers played alongside the dances taught”. Listening was another approach used to teach according to Seth Asare Newman. In his statements he narrated how they as students used to listen to the bell pattern and analyse the movements alongside with it. This was also corroborated by Benjamin Ayettey as part of his teaching approach, where he ‘sings’ the drum language and plays the rhythm to synchronize them. He later tries to analyse the movements by breaking them down for students to learn. So, for Benjamin Ayettey if he had used ‘Newmantics’ in his approach to teach I believe that would have been more effective for the students than having to breakdown movements. One wonders if both had received training in ‘Newmantics’, their learning process would have been smoother. Of course, this is likely why Seth Asare Newman developed his own teaching technique.

4.14 Relationship between Indigenous African Dance and its Music

The relationship between music and dance has been extensively discussed by various scholars in ethnomusicology. But the purpose for this discussion here in this study is to interrogate further the extent of the relationship between the indigenous dance and its corresponding music. For me as a dance researcher, especially investigating the indigenous dance and its praxes will not be out of place to discuss the traditional dance as it is affected by its music in relation to kinaesthetic episteme.

Dance scholars such as Adrainne Kaepler, Kariamuwelsh-Asante, Doris Green, Mawere Opoku, Ofotsu Adinku, Patience Kwakwa, Modesto Amegago, Elikem Nyamuame, and Kwashie Kuwor have all discussed the phenomenon of how the African indigenous dance relies heavily on the music. This makes the performance of the indigenous dance a complete whole.

Both dance and music scholars have found the need to discuss the relationship from different perspectives in their scholarship. Nketia (1965) traces the relationship through broad areas including incidental music, occupational music and the rites of passage. In all these musical processes, dance functions as key elements of the ceremony especially through birth, naming, puberty, marriage and funeral ceremonies. The dance enjoys a very close relationship with the music in terms of body movement that accentuates musical notes and rhythms. In the indigenous African setting, it is sometimes difficult to differentiate between a musician and the dancer. David Locke's research in Africa and Ghana in particular, has discussed extensively these relationships between dancers and musicians since many of the musicians can dance as well as the dancers and some dancers can also play the drum. So, in effect there is swapping of roles during indigenous musical and dance performances. The drum rhythms communicate to the dancers in the languages the music and dances originate from. To best understand these rhythmical patterns the dancer must be closely connected to the tradition and understand the nuances of the text being played from the musical

instruments. Within the classroom situation not all students are familiar with the drum language of the dance. So, during the transmission process considerable time is allocated to getting the drum rhythm with its corresponding movement gestures, to assimilate into the student in order to embody both the music as well as the dance. With reference to Locke (1982) timing and rhythm in African music are very important for the dancers. Thus, timing is specifically explored in the relationship of African music and dance.

This aspect of the study deals with the African traditional dance and its relationship to the music. Throughout the discussions above, I have tried to argue that the traditional African dance cannot thrive without music and more specific the traditional dance music. Using the *Agbekor* dance form as the case study, it is very prudent that in the performance and teaching of the *Agbekor* traditional dance, the *Agbekor* music is what must be used in the pedagogical process. One cannot use *Bɔbɔbɔ*, *Adowa* or any other dance music to play and teach *Agbekor* dance form. This is because both the dance and the music possess symbiotic qualities that enable them to function in tandem with each other. In teaching of the *Agbekor* dance, almost every movement gesture has specific rhythmic patterns that corresponds to the dance. Therefore, the student needs to comprehend the rhythmic pattern and the phrase in order to accentuate the movements during the teaching process. This is also in relation to the drum text that is played in the Ewe tonal language which, can be adopted in teaching the dance form. In so doing rhythms have to be played separately and in ‘pockets’ to allow rhythm assimilation, for the student to get conversant to the rhythm and the movement gesture. Additionally, using the specific music in the pedagogical process is what enables the form (both the traditional music and dance) to affectively translate into a performance. It is in view of this that the research proposes the use of terminologies in the pedagogical process and the indigenous language, so as to aid effective transmission and understanding of the tradition in which the dance originates.

4.15 Proposed New Approaches to Teaching Indigenous African Dance.

The aim in this section is to develop new approaches to teaching IAD to augment the existing pedagogical approaches for a better enhancement of the quality of trained students from the Department of Dance Studies. This is not only to provide them with knowledge as observed by John Dewey in his pragmatic philosophy but also equip them with dexterity to go beyond just the performance of these indigenous dances. This also builds on the aim and vision of the recommendations by the Professor Senanu Commission on the review of the programmes in the School of Performing Arts of which the Department of Dance Studies is a section.

Some of the new approaches to develop are the concept of prescriptive, descriptive and directive (PDD), which I have adopted in designing a new pedagogical approach. In addition to the proposal to develop terms in the indigenous languages that will include a manual guide for teaching.

4.16 The Concepts of Prescriptive, Descriptive and Directive (PDD).

This concept is one of the new pedagogical approaches I am adopting in teaching indigenous African dance or traditional dance at the tertiary level specifically University of Ghana. The drum music has the capacity to describe movement gestures in the learning and performance process. This capacity is such that the drum rhythm provides specific rhythmic patterns which describe movement gestures. In the context of 'Music for Dance', this idea can be transformed into a prescriptive set of texts to provide specific movement phrases. In other words, the traditional drum music can describe movement gestures and can also be used to prescribe dance movements as well. During the teaching process the PDD is envisioned as conceptual actions and ideas especially as it is applied to the dance music based on Doris Green's acknowledgment of the complexities of African rhythm, in that;

African dance corresponds to these rhythmic patterns with different parts of the body following separate rhythms of structure. The musicians communicate and actually instruct the dancers, indicating the desired movements or gestures through the rhythms that are duplications of tonalities of the spoken languages (Green, 1989, p. 407).

These statements further demonstrate how drum rhythms are prescribed mostly with cues from the lead drum that the dancer has to interpret through movement gesticulations. Green's assertion forms part of the underpinnings of traditional knowledge transmission in which the PDD concept is framed. What is of interest in this study is the way the series of movements and sequences are identified with distinct drum patterns in terms of the tones referring to Nketia (1965) and Agawu (1988). A change in rhythm automatically causes a change in dance movement, (music prescribing dance). In using the *Agbekor* music and dance form as a case study I have decided to explore the use of tonalities of the spoken language (jargon). Furthermore, I interrogate the pedagogical relationship with the traditional dance music, especially during the transmission process in the way the dance is conducted in the classroom. By so doing the pedagogical approach may prove valuable as well for any other tertiary Institution in Ghana and other African countries. The next chapter will discuss into detail the use of terminologies in relation to drum cues and movement execution.

4.17 Music as a Prescriptive Art

Teaching indigenous or traditional African dance cannot be completed without interrogating the prescriptive aspect of music and its relationship to the dance. Most of the dance types taught in the Department of Dance Studies are either controlled by the music in terms of cues (*Agbekor and Adzogbo*), or have sequential arrangements and are cued by rhythmic phrases (*Bawa*), or by the motivation of the dancer/performer (*Siki*). For example, in the performance of the *Kpanlogo* dance form, the dance sometimes relies on drum cues for changes in dance phrases while some dance phrase do not really rely on the drum cues but rather on the motivation of the dancer (which is part of the aesthetics of the dance).

Music in dance is mostly prescriptive especially when it provides specific rhythm phrases for specific movement gestures. In other words, what the music requires is what the dance must interpret. The musical rhythms are the responses the body interprets in movements when required.

In the *Agbekor* dance form, almost all the rhythms played have their corresponding movement gestures that must be executed. In this vein the music becomes prescriptive for the dancer. For example, the turning movement phrase in the *Agbekor* music has its corresponding movement gesture in the dance. Therefore, the dancer cannot perform any other movement variation except the specific required movement for the turning. And this is how the dance is organized by drum cues which are specific rhythms identified by the dancer/performer to perform. This rhythmic phrase is controlled by the master drummer played on the lead drum the *Atsimevu*. The master drummer on the lead drum prescribes rhythms that have to be interpreted by the dancer/performer. The dancer/performer listens to the rhythms prescribed and carefully executes the movements using the body while interpreting the drum rhythms in movement gestures.

4.18 Music as a Descriptive Art

This is the articulation of the bodily movement gestures to the rhythm. The dancer/performer articulates a series of movement gestures that describes the exact rhythmic phrases and structures provided by the lead master drummer. Furthermore, the body describes the interpretation of the drum rhythms in the dance form. For example, in the *Agbekor* dance form, the master drummer prescribes specific rhythms of the turn and it is required that the dancer performs this prescription. As in the cause of the rhythm being played by the master drum, the dancer/performer begins to describe and interpret the rhythm in movement as the drum instructs. So, in effect every single phrase played by the master drum is actually described in terms of movement gestures of the dancer/performer. In this case the dancer is seen describing the prescriptive rhythm structures the body must exhibit.

4.19 Music as a Directive Art

In the teaching and learning process of indigenous African dance, time (rhythm) in terms of tempo is so critical to the dance. Time controls and determines the pace of the dance and it is provided through the musical instrument known as the gong-gong or the bell. Time in the indigenous African dance guides the musical ensemble and keeps music and dance in control

as well as the instructor and the students. In teaching, the instructor depends on the timeline of the dance to help students determine the characteristics of the dance as to how fast or slow the dance is.

The concept of time in the indigenous African dance is critical since the dance provides the essence of being on time (rhythm), during the performance of the dance. The African time²⁴ is a paradox, where the indigenous African dance teaches humanity the essence of time as against what people perceive to be African time of not being on time, that is, lateness. Being late to functions, not starting programs and events on time and generally not being on time, amounts to the sense of not being rhythmic within the practice of indigenous African dance. For Nii Kwei Sowah, the argument is that there is nothing like African time as purported many times because he believes the traditional dance teaches one to be on time (rhythm) and if attention is given to the African music and its dance it should be enough to change the world.

The *Agbekor* dance form relies on two-time lines, the slow pace and the fast pace. Mostly the slow pace dance type is normally referred to as the procession *Uulolon*, (Younge, 2011). The *Uulolon* is the movement of performers in the traditional setting especially in the migration story, where people move along and position themselves at various places to enact some dance gestures and then continue the journey (Williams, 1994, p. 8).

In teaching the traditional dance therefore, when a student goes off the time (rhythm), it is said that the student has gone off and has made a mistake. So being on rhythm (time) means one is on time and has therefore danced well. Dancing off the rhythm is also considered not paying attention to the timeline, that the gong-gong or bell provides a guide to direct the musical ensemble and the dancers.

Music as directive can also be observed in the *Sorsornnet* dance form from the Baga people of Senegal and some parts of Gambia, both countries within West Africa. The drum

²⁴ Personal discussion with Nii Kwei Sowah

cues in the music serve as directives for change in variation of dance gestures. The dancers/performers listen for these cues to enable change in the variation or the style being performed. In this specific example, the cues do not change as in the *Agbekor* but it is the same as also seen in the example of the *Kpanlogo* dance form of Ga people of the Greater Accra Region of Ghana.

4.20 Proposed Teaching Model (Manual Template)

In line with all the arguments in creating terms for the teaching of indigenous African dance, I have developed a proposed manual (template) to guide teachers to make the teaching of indigenous African dance much easier and simple. This proposed model is designed based on the nuances of the movement gestures, historical narratives and the song texts of the dance which help in teaching process. The template follows eight courses of action, these are:

1. Which language is the dance form embedded in?
2. What are the historical narratives on the dance form?
3. What are the various song types that generally accompany the dance form?
4. How are the movements of the dance form like?
5. What is the structure of the dance form?
6. What are the characteristics of the drum music?
7. Develop jargon and terminologies for movement gestures.
8. Identify which of the instruments is the lead drum?
 - a) What is the nature of the drum rhythm to the movement gesture?
 - b) Prescriptive?
 - c) Descriptive
 - d) Directive
 - e) Is the dance in-strict rhythm or in free-rhythm?

With this teaching model I believe when adopted and applied to other indigenous African dances will help not only in the uniformity in the teaching process of knowledge transmission but also in providing additional knowledge on the dance form. Furthermore, one of the

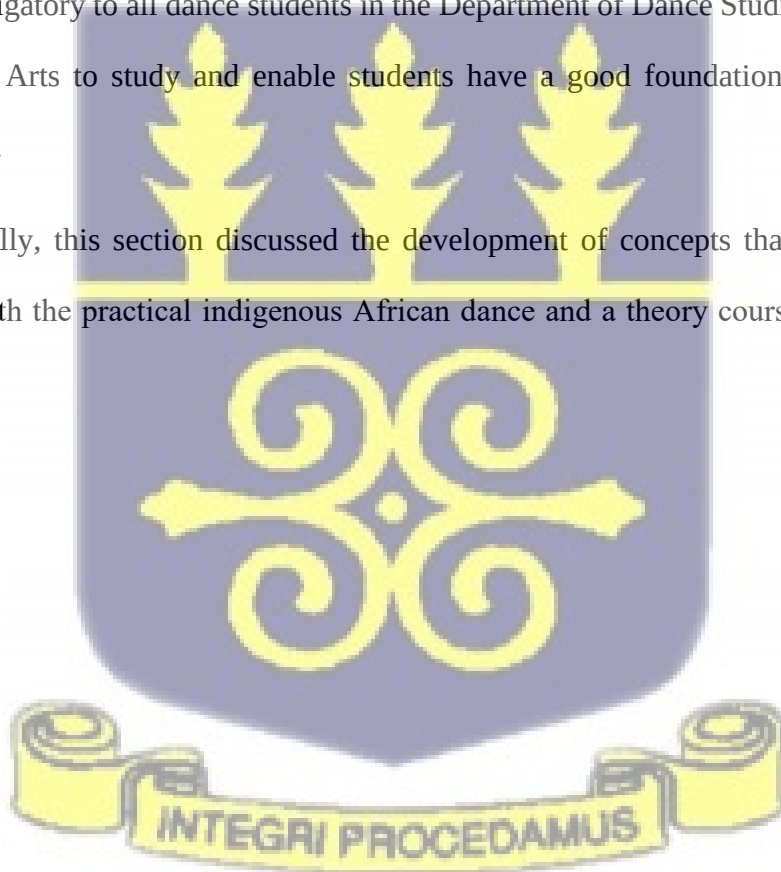
significances that this study brings out is promoting indigenous language of the dance form that students will learn as part of the dance. These languages are the terms, vocabularies and phrases from the language of which the dance originates.

4.21 Conclusion

This chapter discussed various teaching approaches adopted by faculty in the Department of Dance Studies in the current transmission of indigenous African dance knowledge to students. It also discussed various learning approaches students employ in how they acquire movement gestures during the process of teaching and learning.

One of the main thrusts of this chapter is the argument that the ‘Newmantics’ dance technique is a unique form of approach to teaching indigenous African dance, therefore it must be obligatory to all dance students in the Department of Dance Studies of the School of Performing Arts to study and enable students have a good foundation in the indigenous movements.

Finally, this section discussed the development of concepts that could be used in teaching both the practical indigenous African dance and a theory course titled ‘Music for Dance’.



TRANSMITTING INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE THROUGH DANCE

5.0 Introduction

Since the introduction of *Agbekor* as an academic exercise at the tertiary level, the traditional dance has become a significant method of acquiring knowledge through the dance. This learning process can also be achieved in an informal situation where the human body and the reflexes of the eyes and ears (oculesics) are sharpened for acquiring knowledge, (Shore, 1996). The *Agbekor* dance therefore, is an embodiment of an art form experienced through the body and the mind while also providing a platform for indigenous knowledge acquisition through aesthetic performance. *Agbekor* music and dance is purely a work of art which incorporates other art forms like costume, make-up, props, set or scenic design and sometimes lighting effects if need be, i.e. (during theatrical stage performances). Underlining the indigenous knowledge acquisition is the mode of knowledge transmission through pedagogy. For this knowledge to be harnessed and transformed unto the proscenium stage and the classroom, the dance goes through processes of enhancing its quality. These knowledges are carefully structured, packaged and disseminated to students including all other art forms for teaching and learning purposes.

The dance movements have a close relationship with the drum music which serves as a surrogate language, which means the interpretation of the rhythm goes through another medium in knowledge acquisitions within the classroom space. Therefore, in the teaching process the Ewe language provides channels useful in the transmission of the drum rhythms and their interpretations. So that the surrogate language (drum rhythms and their interpretations in that the surrogate language) can be understood within the interpretation of the Ewe language, which also helps in understanding the drum text for easy codification and standardising the rhythms and movement gestures.

It is imperative to note here that the more encompassing nature of traditional African dance demands that *Agbekor* is looked at through its structural elements. These include *Agbekor* Music, *Agbekor* Movement, *Agbekor* Visual Forms and *Agbekor* Philosophies. *Agbekor* Music consists of *Agbekor* drum ensemble, *Agbekor* drum language, *Agbekor* songs and *Agbekor* chants. These elements are necessary for assimilating the learning process in the classroom with the guidance of the dance teacher and the approach to teaching.

Transmission of knowledge is a key component of the education process. While education may be viewed in its broadest context as creation of awareness, it is imperative to interrogate the kind of awareness, what is involved in this process and what kind of knowledge is transmitted. In this section, this thesis interrogates how indigenous Ghanaian or African dance is perpetuated in the indigenous setting and in the academic setting while paying particular attention to the process of transmitting indigenous knowledge through dance in the education process.

Indigenous African dance with its music has been identified as belonging to the people of a given tradition since it involves their total well-being and understanding. Nketia (1965), Opoku (1966), Locke (1982), Kwakwa (1998), Amegago (2000), Sowah (2011), Younge (2011), Flolu ((2005), Green (2013) and Welsh-Asante (1998; 2005) have all in one way or the other made claims that attest to this phenomenon and hence the *Agbekor* dance form of the South-eastern Ewes is a perfect example of such dances. Kwakwa (1998), and Sowah (2011), both agree that the traditional dance belongs to the people who understand the norms, values and the sanctions that accounts for the dance. For that matter, anyone who goes contrary to the norms is believed to be against the traditions of the people and for that, they must be sanctioned. Flolu (2005, p. 61) identifies “dance is a physical manifestation of thinking and expression of ideas, feelings and a way of knowing and communicating”. These expressions of ideas according to James Flolu are interpretation of movements from drum rhythm or language text that must be harnessed and taught as part of the school curriculum

(p. 62). The argument of James Flolu about the drum language being part of the pedagogical process in education will help in the knowledge production of indigenous narratives about the people who practice these knowledge systems.

Ampofo-Duodu's (1994), work on the *Adowa* dance of the Ashantis, is an example that illuminates the critical role/contribution of dance in the educational process. His work provides a comprehensive study on the symbolic movements and gestures that are exhibited by chiefs, executioners, royals and the ordinary citizens. He further gives the meanings of the gestures that a trained dancer/performer is supposed or needs to know and articulate the gestures in context. Ampofo-Duodu explains that, "a trained dancer who is imbued with culture becomes a real asset to the community in social festivities, and on ceremonial occasions" (Ampofo-Duodu, 1994, p. 30). However, Ampofo-Duodu's concern is on the trained dancer/performer in the community rather than the trained dancer from the classroom. My interest in this work is to expand on his work by situating the training of the dancer/performer in the classroom, where the indigenous dance knowledge is transmitted. Unlike the indigenous community that embodies the dance in a homogenous atmosphere, the classroom situation is typically heterogeneous. For this purpose, the indigenous dance assumes some characteristics that are not akin to the homogeneous community people but learnt in the classroom situation. For example, the first picture below shows a group of children from the Anlo State in the south-eastern part of Eweland performing the *Agbekor* dance as part of *Hogbetsotso* festival. In this example, the children would have learnt the dance in the community with all the characteristics and nuances of the dance making the children members of a homogenous community. The students within the classroom in the University system or a tertiary Institution, on the other hand, would become heterogeneous because they do not belong to the community that the dance is originating from. Thus, the students will not have acquired all the necessary characteristics and nuances of the dance such as the Ewe language.

In figure 25, the picture depicts mostly ladies performing a ceremonial dance of one of the Ewe dance forms exhibiting gestures of *Agbadza* being one of the common Anlo-Ewe dance forms. The movement gestures of the *Agbadza* are seen in most of the dance forms from the Volta region, such as the *Agbekor*, *Sohu*, *Gazo*, and *Gahu*. These are dances which are part of the curriculum and taught in Department of Dance Studies. The dances are mostly accompanied with songs while the human body performs movement contractions at the upper torso with the arms slightly bent (Younge, 2011, p. 357). However, it is the *Agbekor* dance of the Anlo-Ewe of the Volta Region that will be the case study for this discussion.



Figure 22. Children performing the Agbekor music as part of the procession of the festival in the streets as part of the ‘Hogbetsotso’ festival. Picture credit; Faisal Mohammed.





Figure 23. Women group performing a ceremonial dance. Picture Credit; Faisal Mohammed

The focus of this chapter is also to examine how *Agbekor* dance is used as a repository of knowledge in education. Therefore, education and dance are the two main concepts in this endeavour. While dance, a holistic art form becomes the store house of cultural knowledge, education in its process of transmitting knowledge unquestionably must draw on this cultural knowledge store house, which in this case is dance. Sadly, in Ghana and some African societies, they have gradually neglected the inclusion of dance knowledge or cultural knowledge in their educational systems. A critical study at Ghana's pre-tertiary school curriculum on dance education, scholars such as Nketia (1979), Hagan (2005), Sutherland-Addy (2005), and Adu-Gymfi (2005), have all contributed to the pedagogical approach to this subject in the school system. My own observation, experience and interaction²⁵ with some of these schools confirm how dance (music and dance) studies is engaged at the pre-tertiary level. Mostly, the music and dance courses have been designed in the curriculum²⁶ such as "Labanotation, fundamental of dance movements, traditional dance, and African

²⁵ I have attended and given lectures on various seminars, workshops and training for GES cultural coordinators at different levels of engagement. In addition, having personally engaged learners in indigenous Ghanaian dance practice at the pre-tertiary level.

²⁶ Ghana Education Service (Ministry of Education), Creative arts curriculum for basic schools (Basic 1-3) September 2019.

musical instruments” (Adu 2019, pp. 82-84) but which are not necessarily taught. This may probably be because of no standard approach to teaching these courses in the curriculum.

Within the context of education dance is more experiential than relying solely on books from the Western world. Primus (1994) confirms this assertion when she opines that “dancing is an education; primary physical” activity (p. 5). It reiterates how knowledge is transmitted through human body exhibiting physical activity. The United Nation’s (UN) definition on education presented at the meeting of international working groups on education in Italy, (2000), identified learners, content, process, environment and outcomes as the key components of education. These are key functional components in pedagogy and for that matter in dance scholarship. Mohammed Ben Abdullah²⁷ in his editor’s note summarizes education as a process by which a particular culture and its constituent conglomerates are subdivided into children, teenagers and adults. In so doing, knowledge is further transmitted from one generation to another. Nsamenang & Tchombe (2011) simplify education and its goals as how students should develop the love of learning something that stays with students through their lives. They further posit that education is knowledge filled with words and has no value if not given meaning. Therefore, education should develop the mind to process information as it is with the indigenous dance where the dance movements gestures gives meaning through drum rhythms. This is also supported by Ampofo-Duodu, in an argument that;

the body must be trained to interpret and translate the musical utterances into appropriate movements. Understanding costumes, taboos, and loco-moto etiquette of the people’s movement mannerisms assist in making it possible to establish one’s self as a cultured dancer (performer) (Ampofo-Duodu, 1994, p. 30).

Ampofo-Duodu’s argument stresses the notion of practical learning in that, the dancer/performer does not only become a ‘cultured dancer’ but also understands the practices

²⁷ Mohammed Ben Abdallah, Culture and Education in Ghana, Report of the National Conference on Culture (NCC) and Education at the Elmina Beach Resort, From 15th to 21st May 2005, Edited by Mohamed Ben Abdallah

of tradition underpinning the dance form. This is done meaningfully by articulating movement gestures of the human body in an indigenous dance performance.

Dance according to Adshead (1988) is a ‘physical activity for the human body in motion and perhaps an artistic interest’. Snipe (2005) also identifies dance as an expression of a physical, psychological and spiritual state of being to enable people give context and meaning to their greatest joys, hopes, frustrations, fears of sorrow”. Others including Judith Lynn Hanna have described dance as a “cultural behaviour due to the people’s beliefs attitudes and values to determine and shape their socio-cultural lifestyle” (Hanna, 1979, p. 6). Welsh-Asante (1994, p. 206) on the other hand identifies African dance as “dance and drum traditions of two distinct expressions of the same entity: namely rhythm. Both dancing and drumming require accompaniment. Dancing demands physical involvement and the other, drumming demands human participation. In other words, the requisite tool of both dancing and drumming is the human body”. One of the key fundamental components of African dance is its music (drum rhythm). This Welsh-Asante has identified to be both physical involvement and human participation to provide music for a cultural activity of physical expression of movement gestures (p. 105). Mawere Opoku, F. Nii-Yartey and Pearl Primus all agree that dance is a cultural expression which is an important component of life’s experience. This is not much different from the performance studies theorists who referred to performance as an everyday activity. Opoku (1966, p. 3) opines that “to us life with its rhythms and cycles is dances. Again, the dance is life exposed in dramatic terms, to us the dance is a language, a mode of expression”.

Jones (1992), Adinku (2003) and Yartey (2012) have all identified African dance as a non-verbal communication tool dealing with symbols and social indicators in the art form. The dance has its cultural form; for example, the way people interact, behave and are all identified as envisaged in the dance form. The indigenous dance possesses holistic and aesthetic forms, which implies that, the dance movements possess, shapes, costumes, props,

and symbols that are transmitted through the learning process in the classroom. This classroom at the tertiary level is where indigenous African dance education must be properly harnessed for knowledge diffusion.

“Education is a torch that can illumine Africans and their Dark Continent”, this statement espoused by Kishani and (cited in Nsamenang & Tchombe 2011, p. 7) is profound since the kind of education received by Africans is largely influenced by their colonial masters hence tend to loose bits and pieces of their indigenous tradition. Education is a broad term which may have varied meanings and definitions, (Sutherland-Addy, 2005, p. 15). These broad terms may include the process of facilitating learning, either through the formal process in the classroom or the informal in the communities, social gatherings and the home. The acquisition of knowledge skills (dance), values (historical knowledge), beliefs (norms) and habits (habitus) are part of this broad term education. The transmission of this knowledge is through the formal and informal. In both cases of the transmission, there is a learning process that provides training, skills, and theoretical understandings of historical accounts and events. In this context one will be discussing both informal and formal in the knowledge acquisition of Indigenous African dance. In both cases of formal and informal make use of the visual (eyes), and audio (ears) through a process of the mind (sensory). Kimbal (2016) has identified a concept known as the cultural transmission acquired through the informal learning process. The cultural transmission affects the individual through the transmission theory. This transmission theory is the process where learning styles are greatly influenced by how communities are socialised (Ampofo, 2013). In this way knowledge and learning skills are transferred especially to the younger generation mostly through the informal transmission process.

5.1 Formal and Informal Dance Education

Formal and informal education are pedagogical tools employed in teaching, and this can be achieved both in the classroom setting and also in the community setting. These educational

tools are also applied in the approach to teaching Indigenous African dance both formally and informally. Informal education is the form of learning transmission that does not go through structured pedagogical processes in imparting knowledge and skills to learners (Adshead, 1988; Adinku, 1994, 2004; Hagan, 2005). It is more of an interest-based approach that occurs outside the structured curriculum setting. Baguma & Aheisibwe (2011) identify informal education as;

truly lifelong process whereby every individual acquires attitudes, values, skills and knowledge from daily experience and the educative influences and resources in his or her environment – from family and neighbours, from work and play, from the market place, the library, the mass media, and so on. (2011, p. 23).

In the case of Indigenous African Dance, informal dance education happens in the indigenous setting mostly through observation, imitation, guidance and voluntary participation as opined by Baguma and Aheisibwe in the above quotation. That is not to say informal education does not happen in the classroom setting as well. The process has to do with oculesics (the ear and the eye) where the brain imitates what the eye sees and processes the movement gestures for the body to execute what the eyes have seen. But within the formal system the indigenous African dance is structured and chronologically graded for assessment purposes in line with the Institution's vision and goals. Even though the informal process has its effective components, it is not a "teacher-centred" approach (Barbour, 2009), where the teacher or the instructor is following laid out or specific curriculum with its mission and vision statements.

In the teaching process, both the music and the dance have communicative elements (Nketia, 1965) that contain signs, symbols and coded gestures (semiotics) which needs interpretation. Through semiotics on the other hand, Indigenous African Dance (IAD), is a discipline that is transmitted through the body with the aid of its musical drum rhythms. The basic commonality in the definition of indigenous African dance or traditional dance for many dance scholars is movement, gesture, rhythm, space and the body as an instrument.

Within the African context, Nesbit (2012) opines that dances exist and possess certain characteristics which are taught and learned in their traditional contexts in communities that create and perform the dance form. The drum rhythms are not incidental or not adjunct to the acquisition of movement. This of course includes the *Agbekor* dance form of the Anlo-Ewes in the Volta Region of Ghana as well as other dance forms across Africa. The choice of *Agbekor* dance form as a case study are due to these reasons.

1. The organisational structure of the dance is good fit for the research study because the drum language, drum text, drum cues have close relationship with movement execution and interpretation.
2. It is one of the dances, I have taught in the Department of Dance Studies for close to a decade now and I believe there is substantial amount of literature on the subject.

Having provided an elaborate discussion to create the sense of what this chapter seeks to communicate, I will now move on to present the *Agbekor* dance which is the main material for this discussion.

5.2 What is *Agbekor*

It is relevant to know what people within the School of Performing Arts think of the dance form *Agbekor*. In discussions and interviews²⁸ with students and lecturers concerning the *Agbekor* dance form, especially within the School of Performing Arts, brought out various views about the dance form.

Agbekor refers to an indigenous music and dance type of the Ewe people of the Volta region of Ghana. When asked, an informant within the Department of Dance Studies, according to him, depending on certain situations the dance could be “different things” such as music, dance, war dance or historical narratives. For him, the dance is a “war dance that exhibits movement gestures that depicts the escape of Dahomey in Benin to their present location in Ghana”. When questioned further on why the dance could be “different things”,

²⁸ Interview date was 2nd October 2018

he said, the dance is actually used to teach history because the dance movements and gestures enact the prowess of their forefathers who fought battles for their liberation. This informant's response is confirmed by Mawere Opoku (1966). Presently the dance form has changed in performance. For instance, many of the stylistics in the dance such as *Atsia*, which means style, have been introduced to the *Agbekor* dance performance hence the name *Atsia Agbekor*. In that the dance form still serves as a reflection of the people anytime the dance is performed. Hanley, (2010, p. 8), maintains that the dance remains a reflection and the soul of life in Africa. She therefore identifies how the indigenous African dance has changed through the years and yet has survived from colonialism and wars to the present day.

The lack of knowledge by the informant on the description of the dance form is not an isolated situation. There may be many of such in the School of Performing Arts who do not quite understand what the *Agbekor* dance form is. Another informant in the Department of Music, could not be sure the *Agbekor* dance form was a human being or a musical type. His quick reaction to my question was whether I meant *Atsia Agbekor* or *Agbekor*. My response confused him even more when I asked, 'well what about *Atsia Agbekor*? In his confused state, he said, they may be the same thing, but he did not know. Even though this informant teaches music at the School of Performing Arts, he could not state clearly what the dance form was.

According to Opoku (1966) *Agbekor*, is a historical dance type performed to recount history and to showcase the warlike nature of the Ewe people. My recent field work in Anloga during the Anlo's Hogbetsotso festival exposed me to the real meaning of *Agbekor*. For my research, this primary data source experience settles the controversy of whether *Agbekor* is solely a war dance or not. The Anlo elders provided me with the etymology of *Agbekor* as coming from two Ewe words *agbe* (life) and *kor* (social ethics). Putting the two words together, *Agbekor* simply means life and social ethics. In my interactions with some chiefs and elders of Anloga including Torgbui Damadzi IV and Kwashie Kuwor, it became clear

that *Agbekor* is a dance form that reinforces social ethics of the people. According to Kwashie Kuwor in an interaction on *Agbekor* as a war dance. He acknowledges that “we do not reject the idea that it (*Agbekor*) is a war dance. Our view is that apart from it being exhibits of a chant at war it (*Agbekor*) is also a form that refurates social ethics”.

5.3 Historical Background of *Agbekor*

Agbekor is an indigenous war dance of the Anlo-Ewe people and in some scholarship (for example in Younge, 2011) it is described as a war dance. It is one of the popular indigenous dance forms taught at the Department of Dance Studies at the University of Ghana. The dance form like many other indigenous African dance forms has more than one account to its origin. Many of the Ghanaian dance forms have characteristics such as those of animals, mystical creatures like dwarfs, hunting activities, and encounters with invisible spirits that serve as basis surrounding their origin. The *Agbekor* dance form in this regard is no different.

According to Younge (2011, p. 70) the *Agbekor* dance form was first performed by monkeys and was adapted by hunter warriors. During the pre-colonial period when Ewe people first encountered the dance, it was credited to the hunter warriors and it was reserved for warriors to perform when they returned from war, which was known as the ‘Atamugah’, the great oath (Younge, 2011). The name ‘Atamugah’ changed and simply became *Agbekor*, especially after Ewe people’s encounters with the colonial masters when the indigenous people stopped going to war. Since then, and now, the dance has assumed other functional roles and it is performed on social occasions like festivals, marriage ceremonies, funeral functions and other events.

5.4 *Agbekor* as Cultural Identity

Culture²⁹ has been identified by numerous scholars as simply a way of life, which involves ideas, customs and social behaviour of a particular people (Williams, 1958; Kessing, 1974 &

²⁹ Indian culture and Heritage Secondary Course.

Awedoba, 2013); the people of the Volta Region are no exception. The *Agbekor* dance is an embodiment of a people that recounts their history and provides knowledge for their identity. Going further, it is important to discuss that this study of *Agbekor* operates within the structures of the classroom. Dor (2015) has been very instrumental in the mediation of the cultural identity of many indigenous dance forms specifically *Agbekor*. Dor's work mostly touches only on the musical segment and not the dance forms.

Mediation of many of these indigenous dance forms such as *Agbekor* have shifted from the cultural space to the classroom and the performance space within academia making it assume other characteristics and a new identity. Shore (1996, p. 311) defines culture as a "dimension of the mind as well as part of social reality". *Agbekor* as a dance form relates to the somatic³⁰ experiences of both image and kinaesthetic schema, which has to do with the cognitive mind. It is only prudent that one can thus reiterate that; *Agbekor* music and dance provides cultural identity for the south-eastern Ewe folks of the Volta region.

Listening to the *Agbekor* sound (music) alone signifies cultural identity, in which Geertz (1993) has identified culture as signs and symbols (semiotics). This concept can readily translate into recognition that shared codes include drum text in the case of *Agbekor* music and the dance. With the Ewe people of southern Volta Region, the scholarship of both Carter & Fuller (2015, pp. 1-2) has various application and contributions to the study of cultural identity through the forms of symbolic interactionism in human behaviour. The social activities as reiterated by Hanna (1979) of the people who engage in the practice of the *Agbekor* dance in the indigenous communities has been mediated into the academy within the classroom space during teaching. So that the concept of symbolic interactionism explains how these shared codes are communicated (Hanna, 1979, pp. 4-6) and can be understood in

³⁰ Somatic Studies and Dance; since the 1970s, a growing number of dancers have sought additional training in mind-body techniques loosely called "somatic studies," or simply, "somatic." Once considered esoteric and far removed from daily technique class, somatic is now a household word in a dancer's training. University dance programs worldwide now offer substantive somatic studies and degree programs, and community studios offer extensive study and certification in various practices.

the classroom situation through meaning, interaction, and interpretation. Finally, continues repetition of the social activity during the teaching process also provides identity of the dance form in the classroom.

This concept of cultural identity is also echoed in Botwe-Asamoah's, (2005) study of *Kwame Nkrumah's Politico-Cultural thought and Policies*. Here he argues that Nkrumah's vision of African culture rested on the establishment of an institute to research into the African personality³¹ consciousness in which I believe that Nkrumah's mission is similar to the transmission theory espoused by Kimball (2016). Today the vision of Nkrumah within this transmission theory together with symbolic interactionism in education demonstrates how the indigenous music and dance forms have been introduced into the mainstream academy in the School of Performing Arts for research, training and analytical purposes.

In order to explore *Agbekor* as an identity of the 'Anlo-Ewe', one needs to examine its political nature, in particular, how it serves as a tool employed by warriors whose responsibility include defending the 'Anlo' state and its citizens. As explained earlier, *Agbekor* developed from 'Atamuga' (the great oath). The question is what this great oath is and what its relevance was in the life of the 'Anlo' state at the time. 'Anlo' tradition keepers explained that warriors were made to swear the oath before going to war and this prepared them spiritually, emotionally and physically for war.

5.5 *Agbekor* as Art and Academic Discipline.

Kwame Nkrumah's concept of cultural emancipation gave birth to the creation of national identity through dance which led to the process known as folklorisation (particularly of traditional forms as theatricalised presentations). *Agbekor* is one of those dances that was collected by Mawere Opoku and his team for the GDE during the process of folklorisation. Modern scholars including Iddrisu (2011) and Kuwor (2013) have examined the creation of

³¹ The African Genius was a speech delivered by Dr. Kwame Nkrumah at the inauguration and formal opening of the Institute of African Studies in 1963.

Ghanaian identity with dance arguing that the process included ‘Parallel Tradition’, a term used by Shay (2002) to describe a process of putting on stage local cultures through theatricalization for the consumption by an audience.

Therefore, *Agbekor* has been a significant part of the repertoire of the Ghana Dance Ensemble as well as part of the School of Performing Arts dance programme’s curriculum since 1962. The interest of this study is to examine the various techniques employed in teaching traditional dances (ref. chapter 4) specifically *Agbekor*, at the University of Ghana to find out how its heavily embedded knowledge has been transmitted over the years to students of the Department of Dance Studies and how it might be taught more effectively.

These individual techniques employed in teaching traditional dance include, observation, demonstration, small groups participation, large groups participation with very little or no discussion. These techniques hardly include songs, and this may be based on the point that singing also forms a course on its own at the School of Performing Arts. To be critical of these approaches is to say openly that since discussions were not encouraged, students may not have had the opportunity to interrogate the socio-cultural relevance of the dance as well as its history and context of performance. In another vein, failure to include discussion on any of its songs may lead to the loss of knowledge that the lyrics embody. In the songs contain the various narratives that exhibit the historical events culminating in the wars fought by the warriors, the display of spiritual and physical prowess and exhibition of law and order in the entire Anlo-Eweland. For example, in the following song text, which is more of a chant than a song, the *Agbekor* warriors are very much aware that in going to war whether good or bad they (the warriors) will be taken care of or be buried by the *Agbekor* people (dancers).

Ewe

Sée, sée, sée loo....

Awoo awoo awoo..... 2x

Enyo loo.... Egble looo

Awoolooo.....

English

Se se se loo is an expression of feeling in a chant of a clarion call.

Aooo, is to say okay we are feeling good in responding to the call

Whether good or bad
We will be cared for.

So, by performing the chant in the classroom, it sets an atmosphere for students to begin the dance. The meaning of the song/chant must be shared so students understand and appreciate the spirit of the dance that underpins the social character of the people. This is the issue of symbolic interactionism where students in the class try to engage in the behaviour and attitudes of the indigenous people. Yet from my observation, many a time the songs and chants are not performed or taught as part of the dance in the classroom because as mentioned earlier singing is taught as a separate course which is not linked to the training of the dance in class.

This is another *Agbekor* song text that describe the characteristics of the dance.

Agbekor Song

Ewe

Tso fia da da
Ame natsɔ fia da da
So de gbe
Ame natsɔ fia da da
Mi nye ahoe

English

Take a sharp axe
One to take a sharp axe
Thunder strikes
One to take a sharp axe
Let's charge to stop him

This song above exhibits not only thematic areas in war but also it presents the sense of activities that took place during the battles the people fought.

All these elements add to the mood and atmosphere of the performance to give aesthetic appeal to the presentation, especially in the setting where movement gestures and variations in *Agbekor* are selected and re-choreographed for the classroom in the academy or the proscenium stage in the theatre. As an art work it appeals to audiences who, though may

not belong to the culture, are able to appreciate the artistic presentation of the dance form and also understand the history that accounts for the origin of the dance.

As an academic discipline, the dance movements and gestures are organised and carefully selected, taught and given meaning. These gestures are symbolic in the sense that they conform to the origin of the dance form and its historical narratives. The dance then becomes an art form subject to aesthetic interpretation such as the use of space, design, re-arrangement of the dance with circular paths and linear lines, dynamics in terms of tempo, levels, and colourful costumes. These elements of choreography enable both teachers and students to provide interpretation and appreciate the analysis that ensues from the indigenous dances of which the *Agbekor* is a part. Organisation of the symbolic gestures of the dance form therefore, become meaningful for the classroom presentation and the performance on the stage.

Within the transmission process of the indigenous African dances in the academic system is the issue of teaching drum interpretation. The study intends to bridge that gap with the terminologies created. The purpose of this is to give meaning and interpretation of the drum language to the movement gesture so as to solve the mouth/lip singing of the drum rhythm in the Department of Dance Studies of the School of Performing Arts. Such an example is the lack of teaching how to translate the drum language into movement gestures, which this study intends to achieve through the codification process. In *Agbekor* dance, the music becomes the protagonist with the master drummer being the commander who dictates movement gestures dancers must execute. In this context, music performs a prescriptive role in what could be described as a unique non-verbal communication between the human body and drum text. These vocalisations become the new language with vocabularies that have specific response from the dancer. What is very fascinating about this dance is the point that every vocalisation has its textualisation in the indigenous Ewe language worthy of exploration to discover the real cultural knowledge they carry. Significantly, a bulk of knowledge still dwells in the music of *Agbekor* and my analysis in the next chapter discusses

many of these knowledge bodies in greater detail. Below is a list of the *Agbekor* drum ensemble.

***Agbekor* Drum Ensemble**

- *Gakogui*- Double bell
- *Axatse*- Rattle
- *Kagan* - First supporting drum
- *Kidi* - Second supporting drum
- *Sogo*- Third supporting drum
- *Kroboto* - Special supporting drum
- *Krobodzi* - Special supporting drum
- *Atimewu* - Master drum
- *Agbekor* Drum Ensemble



Figure 24. Picture of Agbekor Drum Ensemble. Picture credit; Kwashie Kuwor

5.6 *Agbekor* as Performance Identity

The dance form, which was formerly referred to as ‘Atamugah’ was performed mostly as solo performance because it has a royal characteristic that one needs to be able to be connected before one can perform the dance. Senior drummer of the Ghana Dance Ensemble, Christopher Ametafe, confirmed that the drummers mostly knew the appellations of the family members who went to war especially because they were from royal families, so it was easy to identify people, play their appellations and get them to perform the ‘atmugah’. This was kind of a spiritual dance for the warriors, since it meant that the warriors who survived the war were the ones who returned to tell the tales of the events at war. In another etymological explanation of *Agbekor*, both Elikem Nyamuame³² and Christopher Ametefe identify the meaning of the *Agbekor* dance as *agbe*; the people who survived, and *kor*; as, the war. Connecting these accounts to many other royal dances, it was restricted to only the royals where ones’ appellations can be played on the drum by the drummer for the royals to perform when they identify their appellation on the drum. For one to perform the dance form, one has to identify his appellation being played before one can enter the dance circle to perform. This is very significant for the people who performed the dance. According to Younge (2011), Amagago (2012), and corroborated in interviews by ethnomusicologist Elikem Nyamuame and master drummer Christopher Ametafe of the GDE, such events are occasions which bring people from all other places to the Anlo land for a common goal of taking stock and planning ahead.

Today the performance of the *Agbekor* dance is purely an aesthetic presentation that gives identity to how the dance form was articulated years ago. This can be seen in the kind of costume that is used these days in the performance, the props that are used and sometimes the drums (instruments) that are used. In some cases, the *atsimevu* is used as the master (lead)

³² Samuel Elikem Nyamuame, An ethnomusicologist teaching as a visiting scholar at Binghamton University, New York.

drum and in some cases the *sogo* is used. In the case of the song text, from observation some of the songs do not have any link to the war or conflicts but sometimes exists as lullabies. These are new additions to the dance form which makes it more of a recreational performance activity than just a war dance. Below is an example of a lullaby which is mostly used in the classroom while performing the *Agbekor* dance.

Ewe

Nye ɲto fe dɛdɛ veeee looo..... Toboli
Ne ga gblẽ hã nyeee dzi..... Toboli
Ne ga nyo hã nyeee dzi..... Toboli
Mègafa avi le zãme nam ooo
Mègafa avi le zãme nam ooo
Nane la xɔ gbe le asiwò nam oooo
Evinye looo Toboli

English translation

My own baby is crying.....Loveable/Likeable
Who did or beat my lovely child.....Loveable/Likeable
However, he/she is, I gave birth to him/her.....
“Whether (if) bad or good, I still gave birth to him/her”
I do not care whatever anyone says
Don’t cry at night for our neighbours to know you are crying
For them to take or kill you for me..... loveable/Likeable



Figure 25. Agbekor Dance Performance at the Hogbetsotso festival in Anloga, Nov. 2017. Picutre credit: Faisal Mohammed.

Similar to the lullaby song text above which does not reflect the context of the *Agbekor* dance form, so it is with the above picture where the dancers costume does not depict the identity of the *Agbekor* dance form. This was purely done as a social entertaining dance form in contemporary performance space where the festival ceremony has also been affected through acculturation. This is evident in the use of costume which does not reflect the ideals of war and bravery as the literature attests. The costume which also identifies the dance form is not so in the picture of figure 27. The different colours in the picture demonstrates how the dance form has mediated through cultural spaces to the contemporary spaces, gradually affecting the cultural forms as well. The indigenous colour is mostly red with a head band or in some cases only the leader of the dancers may have the head band to differentiate him from other members.

The props used in performing *Agbekor* include sword, horse tails and wooden guns. These props, as articulated by the Anlo-Ewe elders, reflect the kind of battles the warriors fought and the weaponry involved. It was explained that swords and guns were employed as physical weapons that tormented their enemies through corporeality while the horse tails were employed as tools used in charming their enemies in the spiritual realm. These props also are identity markers for the dance form.

5.7 Gender Dimension in *Agbekor*

The perception of gender is a social construct perceived by people based on certain social norms and belief systems. Gender among the Ewe is biological rather than social construct. Ampofo (2013) provides an insightful distinction between the binaries of men and women alongside family, work and livelihoods, leadership, politics and citizenship. Burns (2009, p. 52) on women in performance of Ewe traditional music and dance, postulates that “many west African cultures assign chorus singing and dancing to be female activity and instrument playing to be a male activity”. This observation by Burns is not different from what many scholars have identified. In Africa societies as espoused by Ampofo (2013, p. 95) many of

women's activities are tied to their relationship to men. It is therefore not startling that, activities such as music and dance cultures are often gendered as male or female. The *Agbekor* dance form has become a contributing factor in the gender distinction, until recently when the *Atsia* was introduced and the females began to surface in the dance performance.

These days though almost all the traditional dance forms function in their original domain have all assumed other social and recreational functions such as marriage ceremonies, funeral occasions, harvest festivals etc. It is a common phenomenon today to witness a harvest dance being performed during a marriage occasion and vice versa. According to Patience Kwakwa³³, traditional dance is the dance form that 'belonged to the whole community and everyone within the community can hold claim to it' (Kwakwa, 1998).

Nukunya, reiterates this assertion that:

African societies of the pre-colonial era were largely traditional... because they were characterized by hereditary succession, age, as basis of status and rigid adherence to custom. Since these communities were essentially non-literates, their communications with the outside world was greatly curtailed, if not virtually impossible and therefore, if changes occurred at all, they came very slowly, or in response to special situations such as wars. (Nukunya, 2016, p. 9).

These statements by Nukunya, corroborate how changes has affected the traditional society and for that matter their traditional dances cannot be as original or 'authentic' as the dances were handed over by generations after generations. Therefore, the *Agbekor* dance form has also lost its original function of a male dominated dance form. Since the men no longer went to war, women³⁴ were gradually introduced to the art form on the periphery and finally into the core performance (Quaye, 2006).

The *Agbekor* dance form has been characterised as a male dominated dance form due to various accounts given by warriors who survived the wars and how they narrated their

³³ A retired senior lecturer of the Department of Dance Studies and also a pioneering member of the GDE.

³⁴ Beatrice Lawluvi one of the first women who were officially introduced into the 'Agbekor' dance repertoire with the GDE by Albert Mawere Opoku.

accounts and the tales. Within the Ewe tradition, it was believed that women were not allowed to go to war therefore, it was absurd to find a woman performing the dance form. Rather, the men were perceived as the brave ones who went to war and the women stayed to sing praise songs to enable their men to come home alive. This is an example of a clear distinction of gender roles in the dance form and this is how men's role in the dance form is perceived as well as women's role in the dance form.

Against these backgrounds, women were not represented in the core performance of this dance but rather seen on the periphery providing song text in accompanying enactments of the dance form.

5.8 Women in *Agbekor* Dance Form

African women in general and Ghanaian women to be specific have suffered being stereotyped and continue to go through some of these issues in African societies. From the colonial through the pre-colonial to post-colonial eras, we see the African woman always at the background of events. Yet they are very powerful in their roles. Andrade (2011) tries to identify why African women would create a space for themselves and operate from there, which gave the African woman so much power. The African woman all these years has been battling for a place in society where masculinity is highly respected. Butler (1990) frames the difference between men and women in terms of biological definitions and considerations. Yet she questions the arguments that "gender acts" affects social construction which I think in the African context makes patriarchy more prominent in almost every facet of life. Butler also does not mince words when she acknowledges the fact that "women's lives were either misrepresented or not represented at all" in some cultural conditions. This, in my view, has contributed to the affect and the place of women in the *Agbekor* music and dance performance. The question is, if the written text was not being recognised by the men who dominated literary works as a voice of the African woman, how much more un-noticed or

dismissed actions and her non-verbal actions on the periphery of the dance arena would be noticed?

The non-verbal attributes of the African woman were not given place in literary works due to how patriarchy highlights the role of women. This is done in the way African boys are socialized to become men in a specific historical context. This makes African men behave the way they do in order to be seen and respected as masculine. Epprecht (2007) argues that, African women contribute to the way masculinity is perceived and treated within the African context. No wonder it is perceived that African men were seen to be more recognized even in the indigenous setting as well as in the literary works. This perception is also seen in most of the indigenous war dance forms such as *Agbekor*.

Even though some of these various stereotyped prescribed roles in the indigenous African traditional setting may not be negative (Adjaye & Andrews, 1977), most of the women are projected at the background and on the periphery. The African traditional societies are also organised by gender roles and spaces as postulated by Butler (1990). Hence in the different activities and role playing by women, some of the activities that women engage in manifest themselves in the societies where they belong. Furthermore, the women's activities within the societies subtly nurture younger ones without it being noticed and recognised and invariably these happen within the side-lines of performing the indigenous music and dance in the community. According to Adichie (2005), the African woman and for that matter the Ghanaian women have long been excluded in many activities in social life. Where any role the woman plays, is mostly silent or not heard of at all, likewise the *Agbekor* music and dance of the Anlo people of the Volta region of Ghana is no exception.

As argued earlier until recently, women did not perform the *Agbekor* dance as the movements were exploits of war. The dance gestures were only exhibited by men as it was believed among the Ewe tradition that women did not go to war. Women therefore became key components of the *Agbekor* dance form after independence (post-independence). When

Nkrumah through an act of parliament, established the Institute of African Studies to engage in the training and research into African history and studies. This is shown in the picture below where women are seen in a training process with the Ghana Dance Company (GDC).



Figure 26. Members of the GDC/GDE performing Agbekor in the Mawere Opoku Dance Hall in 1963. Picture credit; J.H.K. Nketia Archives.

It is very interesting to learn how women are presented in the performance of *Agbekor* music and dance. Today, due to the efforts of a single woman, Beatrice Lawluvi, women have been accepted into the manifestation of the performance to express their embodiment through non-verbal exhibition of movements that are related to women. Some of these women's expressions could convey almost similar messages to those that men exhibit in their embodiment. Opoku deliberately created one of the *Agbekor*³⁵ versions for women without the men involvement. This I am sure was to create a balance in the male dominance of the dance and also to give prominence to the woman's place in the dance. Due to these efforts by Opoku, many stylistic movement gestures were introduced to the dance by even people

³⁵ The 'First Slow *Agbekor*' is a female version of *Agbekor* repertoire created by Mawere Opoku.

from the tradition and this brought about the 'Atsia', (style) in the *Agbekor* dance form (Quaye, 2006).

Currently the dance form is performed with women as part of the dance even in the Volta Region and has been accepted by the people who owned the dance form, (Schramm, 2000). The main reason for this shift is so because the people no longer go to war and the dance form is performed purely for social and aesthetic purposes as discussed in figure 27, and also to recount the events of war as in the tails from *Agbe-kɔ*, (the people who survived the war).

As was recounted by Mercy Ayertey³⁶, senior dancer with the Ghana Dance Ensemble, her understanding of the dance being a war dance was compared to a couple who have been attacked and the man has to fight. According to her, the woman on the other hand makes peace and asks the man to stop fighting, and this is exhibited in the bodily praxis for both the man and the woman in the dance. Opoku (1966) posits similar scenario in his works as recounted by Kofi Agawu that, the *Agbekor* dance makes use of real war motifs and stylized war movements. The women in the *Agbekor* dance cheer up as well as counsel the men dancers (warriors) by circling their arms in space. Mercy Ayertey's narratives confirm many of the assertions by Mawere Opoku that also describes women as playing supportive roles and peace makers within the dance performance. Younge (2011) posits that "female dancers who are positioned to the side of the percussion ensemble will accompany the dance-drumming with songs" (p. 355), thus serving as important role in the performance. Therefore, my question is that why women are not recognised as key functionalists during the performance since they provide heroic songs that contribute to the aesthetic of the performance to make the *Agbekor* dance complete?

³⁶ Interview with Mercy Ayertey on 11th November 2015.

Secondly, in analysing the migration story of the Ewes, one realizes that women form a greater part of the escape narrative, carrying all kinds of things including some of the drums used in the *Agbekor* performance as indicated in the picture below. So how can it be said that the *Agbekor* dance form is strictly for men and not women? I can understand how women can intercede and either urge their men on to victory or persuade them to quit. This is exhibited in the various songs that accompany the dances (Burns, 2009).



Figure 27. Picture showcasing women performers carrying various things including drums and singing in a dance procession. Credit: Faisal Mohammed.

During the enactment of the Hogbetsotso festival, I gathered that the *Agbekor* dance mostly begins with a procession where everyone was involved. The dance enactment during the procession is part of the bigger narrative of the escape from ‘Nortsie’ to the present location in the south-eastern part of the Volta Region. As the performers/dancers move in a procession amidst singing and dancing the *Misego*³⁷ dance, they carried their belongings as they escaped from king Agorkorli. As recounted by Williams (1994, p. 11) the performance of *Agbekor* in the traditional setting and that of the academic presentations differ greatly. Therefore, she concludes that “the academic performance cannot be called *Agbekor*”, since it did not reflect what the indigenous people actually do during performances of *Agbekor*.

³⁷ Misego is a dance type that tells the migration story of the Anlo-Ewes.

Williams (1994, p. 12-14) argues that the academic presentation of the performance on stage is representation of the events that happened many centuries ago and the exact dance form cannot be replicated on the stage hence the arrangement by Mawere Opoku.

5.9 Costume Presentation in *Agbekor*

The demonstration of the dance both in the indigenous setting and in the academy, all make use of other related art forms that add to the aesthetics as well as the meaning of the dance. Since the dance form is meant for warriors, the objective of the art form is to first of all identify the cultural values in the dance and secondly to identify the performers/dancers as warriors. Within the performance and presentation of *Agbekor*, the dance form involves other art forms (Green 2013), such as singing, props, (horse tail, wooden swords, sticks), costume, make-up, spatial designs, the drum ensemble, lighting and scenic design to make the performance a holistic art form. These add up to the artistic presentation of the dance form within the classroom and the contemporary stage. It is normally not possible to use some of these art forms in the classroom. These art forms such as make-up, lighting and scenic design are mostly introduced towards performance and not during the training and the teaching process. The picture below exhibits a typical IAD class session where training is in progress with students using ‘drumsticks’ as props to represent swords.



Figure 28. The picture depicts an African Dance Performance class demonstrating the *Agbekor* turn movement and exhibiting miniature sticks as props for the dance. Credit: David Quaye.

Within the traditional setting performers do not make use of designed lighting for their performances unless in the evenings, where some amount of illumination is provided coupled with the moonlight to do their performance. Furthermore, in some instances make-up is adorned on some performers to depict the mood, atmosphere and the character that enacts the identity of the performers of the dance form.

5.10 *Agbekor* Drum Text (Language)

It is general knowledge that music is the ‘sine qua non’ of dance and for that matter Green (2013 & 2014) opines that, the *Agbekor* drum rhythms serve as the soul of the *Agbekor* dance. Without the music the dance is null and void. That is why the drum rhythms are so important to the dance movement gestures since they also ‘prescribe’, ‘describe’ and ‘direct’ (PDD), the *Agbekor* dance piece. The drum rhythms are coded language texts that are interpreted through body movement gestures for in-dept understanding for those who understand the coded texts. As for the uninitiated, the drum rhythms serve as pure entertainment.

The ‘Atsimevu’ (ref. figure 26) drum serves as the lead (master) drum among the chaotic harmony in the musical ensemble of the *Agbekor* dance performance. The rhythmic patterns of the master drum provide cues and coded drum texts that both lecturers and students interpret. The interpretation happens in both drum rhythms and through body hermeneutics. Furthermore, the human body may interpret the drum rhythms differently from what is supposed to be. Likewise, the drum codes where these rhythmic patterns are interpreted differently in drum texts and in body language. This is due to how students understand drum rhythm and the way the rhythm is interpreted. The movement gestures and the dance cues are dependent on the competence of the master drummer in rhythmical structures. It is also interesting to note that the rhythm interpretation is executed by an equally competent dancer who uses the self (body) to give meaning to the rhythms from the ‘atsimevu’ drum. These rhythmic phrases are coded language the master drummer plays for a dancer to perform. In the performance of the movements the dancer is interpreting the

movements within a descriptive form in tandem with rhythmic pattern. This is what I refer to as music describing movements. A kind of symbiosis that is enjoyed between the drummer and the dancer which according to Komla Amoaku is a “close relationship between dancers and drummers as they take cues from each other” (Younge, 2011, p. 4). I share the views of both Komla Amoaku (as cited in Younge, 2011), and Agawu (1995), as well as Nketia (1974, p. 207), when they state that, the distinctive quality of African music is embedded in its rhythmic structures. A phenomenon that is characterised in the *Agbekor* musical patterns through the use of semiotics. The semiotics of the rhythms played, serves as language spoken on the drums while the dancer is expected to respond to these rhythms through body expression in relation with specific movement gestures that describe and interpret specific rhythmic texts.

Critical studies by both Agawu (1995) and Nketia (1963) present a model of what Agawu refers to as the "modes of rhythmic signification" and what Nketia refers to as ‘speech mode’, in which the drum texts are speech tones that generate movement gestures. According to Kofi Agawu the ‘linguistic understanding between two people (such as the drummer and the dancer) assumes shared gestural language’. For him, the song generates into instrumental music, while the instrumental music generates into dance gestures. In all these connections the song and drum rhythm in one way or the other prescribe, describe and direct the dance performance to an appreciable level. Likewise, Nketia’s ‘speech mode’ contain three main modes of drumming. These are;

1. The speech mode: - this is where the drums communicate actual speech, using talking drum.
2. The ‘signals mode’: - where drums convey information through ‘arbitrary signals’
3. The dance mode: - in which the drum accompaniment describes the dance movements and sometimes the dance interprets exactly what the drums communicate for the dance mode to interpret.

Kofi Agawu's shared gestural language and point three of Kwabena Nketia's assertion above are what is very much prevalent in this discussion. This is because in the indigenous dance mode, it is the drums that control the whole dance performance. Inasmuch as I share Agawu's concerns in the speech tone, it is also significantly contributing to the semiotics in the creation of terms for the *Agbekor* dance within the Ewe language. Most master drummers understand and are also privy to the drum language they play; therefore, the drummers have the competence to be able to explain the rhythmic texts and phrases on the drums for the dancers to interpret. Based on this idea of the competence of the master drummer to interpret drum rhythm, I will agree with Foli Alorwoyie and David Locke in the assertion that;

The Western art of writing did not develop among the Ewe until recently, but knowledge and documentation did not elude our forebears. They may not have done so in writing, but the Ewe have indeed couched their knowledge and documented historical events, philosophical and scientific knowledge in other ways, by other means, including musical practice (Alorwoyie and Locke, 2013, p. 25).

This idea is not specific to only the Ewes in Ghana, but also to the entire African traditions where the body of knowledge is embedded in the cultural practices of the people. Therefore, in the above statement and as noted by Shava (2015) the mode of intergenerational transfer has sustained African traditional music and its dance forms. Of-course the whole embodied practice is eminent in most indigenous African music and dance practices where their arts and expression are not documented as written text but rather, a lived experience passed down through various forms including observation, imitation and oral tradition (Shava 2015, p. 5). So that what these traditional artists today have, is very much evident in their musical instruments, and the various roles of articulating them in performance. In effect the sound that these instruments produce in playing bring out these expressions of tone which testify to the assertion espoused by both Nketia and Agawu.

5.11 Agbekor Dance Movements and Gestures

The *Agbekor* dance has many movement gesture³⁸ variations which sometimes makes it difficult for one to determine which of the movements are ‘authentic’ or for lack of a better word, original. Talking to a senior master drummer of the GDE, he stressed that the *Agbekor* dance movements and drum rhythms originate from Anyako, Anlo, and Afiadenyigba all within the south-eastern area of Volta region. Therefore, due to these different places where the dance has its origin accounts for the many variations in the dance movement gestures in the dance over the period. This has contributed to the issue of having specific movement gestures that the Dance Section of the School of Performing Arts ascribes to even though the Dance Section is an offshoot of the GDE. However, according to the senior master drummer some of these movements have been introduced and re-arranged as part of the *Agbekor* repertoire with the GDE. Subsequently, according to him, all traditional drummers have specific unique styles in articulating the rhythms that affect the dance. Some of these articulations and variations have also found their way into both the GDE and the dance department (the academy).

The movement gestures in *Agbekor* dance are so complex to describe such that in the course of teaching it is difficult describing them. Some movement require shuffling of the feet and charging forward. Others also demand moving backwards either slowly or fast while other movements demand bending the torso low or in some cases the whole body needs to go down to a squatting position. In some other instances, the movement is just a gesture of the hand, head, leg, waist or combination of several body parts. All these movements and gestures are determined by the rhythmic patterns and structures that accompany the music. Finally, who determines the right movement quality from the other and what criteria used for assessing students?

³⁸ Movement gesture in this instance is the canon of the entire body articulating movement gestures and steps, rather than only representing just arm gestures.

Over the years of my teaching experience, I have critically observed the *Agbekor* dance form in the Department of Dance Studies and noticed that there are different styles and approaches in which some of the movement gestures are executed, demonstrated and taught to students. It is therefore very difficult to determine the authenticity and the quality of movement gestures that is taught in the classroom. Thus, the onus is on the dance teacher who is in charge teaching and he/she determines the correctness and quality of movement gestures that need to be taught. What he/she teaches may also be due to his/her experiences in addition to how the dance teacher has acquired and embodied the dance form. These experiences form the basis of his/her judgment in the course of assessment of the student during examination.

5.12 Aesthetic Presentation of *Agbekor* dance form in the Department of Dance Studies.

In the classroom when the *Agbekor* dance is structured and standardised, the performance of it will no longer be the same as it is in the traditional setting, hence the taste for this performance will strictly be adhered to by the standardisation and the artistic influence that comes to bear on the dance form. Some of the factors that affect standardisation include the background of the dance teachers who teach the art form in addition to the influence of folklorization through the GDE. Therefore, what would be considered worthy of sustained appreciation and enjoyment in the presentation will be determined by its qualities of organised movement gestures, drum rhythmic structures, song texts presentation, costume and the props used. These may include hermeneutics, that is, the various interpretations the audience may acquire especially for those the dance form is intended for.

The *Agbekor* performance or presentation and its interpretation can appeal to many people depending on the background of the observer or the person passing judgement. In the traditional setting, the people may enjoy the indigenous dance for its own sake (fun), and for no other purposes (Gyekye, 1996; Shiva, 2015). This is because the dance *Agbekor* has its

own stylisation (*Atsia*) embedded in the dance form. This notwithstanding that the *Atsia* also adds to the aesthetics in terms of movement dexterity and the way the music relates to the dance in the tradition. Thus, the classroom situation does not make room for creativity since students' focus is to imitate lectures in order to acquire their grades. This also adds to the changes in the dance form that has enhanced the aesthetics in the dance for different interpretation among the students in the classroom. For many of the dance lecturers who teach the dance form sometimes may not have full knowledge of the indigenous people. Hence, their interpretation of the dance form may not have in-depth underpinnings of the indigenous people. Consequently, this affects the way judgement is passed or assessed in the interpretation of the dance form in the classroom. Early Western philosophers like John Dewey, do not contend that the passive audience has a say in passing judgement in the final work of the creative artist within the traditional society. However, it is also possible certain movement qualities and style of dance presentation may arouse and produce judgement from the same audiences. Within the urban centres and the academic setting, the dance also attracts different kind of hermeneutics from its audience. However, although all the dance presentations may be art forms in their various contexts, the appreciation here may vary due to the taste³⁹ (Ibanga, 2017) of individual audience members. This is evident in what Shava (20015, p. 3) refers to as the "plurality of African cultures and embodied in people's practices within their lived African societal context" of which the classroom situation could be a part.

The concept of aesthetics has been credited to the German philosopher Alexander Baumgarten who is believed to have coined the term in the eighteenth century from the Greek word "aisthesis, aisthanesthai, aisthetos, aisthetikos" which all are connected with sensation and perception. Since the coinage there have been various critics who have also pushed the discussion further. The discursive nature of the term has culminated in ethnocentrism, the

³⁹ Immanuel Kant's notion of beautiful, particularly as it relates to objects of accessory beauty, is a moral relevant category; even though its moral relevance is marginal and indirect.

fact that the belief that one's culture is of a greater value than another and where there is an imposition of other cultures on another. This is easily revealed through the way Western aesthetic concepts are used to judge African cultural values and art works. Gyekye (1996) and Kaeppler (2000, p. 177) have discussed the African philosophy in traditional values. Gyekye (p. 127) opines that, the ethnocentric distinction between African aesthetics and the Western form is revolved around the belief that the latter is functional and the other is not. In his argumentative response, Gyekye identifies how the African art can be functional and also have aesthetic qualities. This is through the symbolisms it draws on and not only based on the function it employs. So, in the case of the *Agbekor* dance form, the aesthetic qualities are not only embedded in the movement qualities and the gestures that the dancers/performers execute, but also in the musical accompaniment where the master drummer prescribe drum language and performers respond to the rhythm with movement gestures. This has been described by many scholars as holistic. Both Angela Impey and Barbara Nussbaum have also identified that "the structural and aesthetic principles inherent in African music and dance are inherent to all art forms, and further, provide the philosophical basis of all aspects of life on the continent" (Impey & Nussbaum, 1996, p. 3). According to them,

Leopold Senghor describes the holistic and integrated concept of rhythm in Africa in this way: 'Rhythm is the architecture of being, the inner dynamic that gives it form, the pure expression of the life force. Rhythm is the vibratory shock, the force which, through our sense, grips us at the root of our being. It is expressed through corporeal and sensual means. (Impey & Nussbaum, 1996, pp. 3-4).

Through their statement one can understand the holistic idea of how integrated African rhythm comprised every facet of life. Rhythm can be experienced through the air we breathe, the way we walk and run, the way the car functions and much more. Likewise, the dance music consists of this kind of rhythm that enables the kinesthetic gestures to function in the body similar to the way the brain functions. It is this rhythm in *Agbekor* that determines the structure of the dance with its aesthetic beauty the dance form possesses.

Additionally, with regards to aesthetics in such situations, the concepts of aesthetic might be perceived from the Western point of view. Within the African cultures, the concentration may not be the work of art per se as in the case of Western cultures. It may be on other aspects of the artwork. This perception mostly concentrates on the importance of the artwork as aesthetics and not the function of the artwork. In the case of the *Agbekor* dance, the aesthetics is dexterity of movement gestures and the intricacies of drum rhythm. In addition to adornments of costume and make-up, singing and chanting songs, which are enjoyed by the members in the community. These were confirmed in my discussions with elders in the society during my field work in the Anlo state.

The practice of *Agbekor* in the classroom enables the dance to function in various categories that will not be seen only from the absolutist perspective but also from the relativist and the referentialist perspectives. The reason for this is in accordance with Merriam's (1964) cross-cultural concept on the term aesthetics, which is, however, very difficult to understand especially when one does not know what exactly the purpose of the art work or for what reason the art work was intended for?⁴⁰ This is a concept Immanuel Kant acknowledges as practical reasoning, which is applied in the dance class in teaching indigenous African dance. In the dance class the 'Indigenous African Dance' is intended for first and foremost for training and secondly for economic and socio-cultural purposes as captured in the mission of the Department of Dance Studies. This therefore does not provide direct focus on the end product of the dance for aesthetic appreciation but rather a myriad of other forms of presentations (Pluhar, 1987, p. xxxix-xl). In so doing the *Agbekor* dance in the classroom can assume the characteristics of Merriam's cross-cultural phenomenon, thus, the final product of the dance will depend on what the dance teacher or the student wants to do with the dance. For example, the lecturer's intention will be for assessment where the student is required to

⁴⁰ Art for art sake is meant for the purpose of art where the objective is not for any material gain but purely for emotional satisfaction. Whiles art for life sake intended to generate some income for survival.

perform the dance as part of the examination process for final assessment. The aesthetics of this performance will be based on the criteria and expectation of the dance teacher. These criteria will be in the qualities of movement execution, how students respond to drum rhythm and its interpretation as well as how they identify drum cues. This will not necessarily be what an audience will be paying particular attention to watching the same performance but will have different interests in the performance, hence will appreciate it differently.

5.13 Conclusion

In this chapter I have given an overview of knowledge transmission through dance in education. The chapter defines and contextualises the relevant concepts and navigates ethno-choreological terrain to focus on *Agbekor* dance. The chapter draws on both primary and secondary sources to provide an understanding of *Agbekor* as a music and dance form, an art form, a knowledge body, a movement articulation system, an identity and a complex socio-cultural phenomenon. The chapter highlights the various structural elements of *Agbekor*, its aesthetics as well as its origin and context of performance. While this chapter traces *Agbekor* from its native soil to the academic setting where it is now accepted as a course of study, many challenges were also noted. These challenges include, lack of standard technique, lack of discussion of its intrinsic elements and difficulty in textualising the vocalisation of drum language which contains much of the knowledge embedded in the dance. The next chapter will discuss in detail the *Agbekor* drum rhythms and their relationship to the movement gestures. Furthermore, the process of standardising and codifying these rhythms and the movements will be addressed.

Finally, it is obvious that the knowledge bodies in Ghanaian cultural forms including music and dance are enough to constitute the core of educational curriculum of Ghanaian schools from primary to the University level if properly harnessed.

TOWARDS STANDARDISING AND CODIFYING INDIGENOUS DANCE MOVEMENT GESTURES AND DRUM RHYTHMIC PHRASES

6.0 Introduction

This chapter's discussion is within the confines of the level 300 indigenous African Dance Performance class of the Department of Dance Studies, School of Performing Arts in the University of Ghana, Legon. The chapter focuses on the proposal in the development and creation of terminologies for the *Agbekor* dance form. In the course of creating the terminologies three main themes are identified. First, the terminologies capture historical narratives of the dance or the tonal sound of the drum rhythm. Secondly, the term is based on the execution of the movement gesture in the performance. Thirdly, the term is based on the response from the dancers as well as the supporting drum rhythms. The ideas are also centred on the framework of the master drummer/lead drum in close relationship with the Ewe language. The study will also help situate the discussion in a framework of triadic communication and surrogate language from the master drummer (lead drum) to the students/dancers/performers. I also refer to dances such as *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* and *Damba-Takai* that are taught at the various levels in the Department of Dance Studies. In addition to this, I include with the dance *Sorsornnet*. Although *Sorsornnet* did not originate in Ghana it constitutes to the dances learnt in classroom. This forms part of the overall repertory for Level 300 students in the Department of Dance Studies. Because *Sorsornnet* is not a Ghana specific dance, I briefly describe the dance, then I compare its performance structure in terms of music with *Agbekor*.

In order to understand *Sorsornnet* dance drumming it is important to give some historical perspective of the dance form. *Sorsornnet* is a dance form performed among the people of Baga from the upper coastal region of Guinea. The Baga people, according to oral

tradition, are an egalitarian society who are believed to have equal rights and opportunities. According to Shamahan (2014) *Sorsornnet* is also a mask dance, which is believed to have both spiritual and physical protection for children and pregnant women while very much associated with fertility. So, each time the dance is performed it is like evoking the spirit of the dance for protection. The spirit of the mask is believed to visit the community once in a year to provide some ritual protection and return or leave the village once the dance is over (Bughi, 2011). The *Sorsornnet* rhythm is mostly played or heard when the *Sorsornnet* mask is being brought to the village or town. It is a very energetic dance interspersed with songs mostly sung by young girls while the instrumentation is done by the men. Even though the mask is associated with women, currently the dance is performed by all, that is, children and adults of both genders. The main instruments used are the *dundun*, *sangba* and *kenken* as supporting instruments with the *djembe* serving as the master drum. It is during the intensity of the dance that the movement gestures are intensified in its performance (Bughi 2011, p. 28). In a *Sorsornnet* drum performance, the lead drummer plays drum cues that are known and understood by all performers. These cues are simple phrases that repeat consistently as signals to change from one movement to the other. *Sorsornnet*, unlike the *Agbekor* dance, has one single identified regulated drum cue which serves as signal for change in drum rhythm and articulation of dance movement gestures. In other words, during the dance performance of the *Sorsornnet* it is the same rhythmic pattern that is used as cue changes for all the movement variations in the dance. This certainly is not the case with *Agbekor*, where the *Agbekor* dance form relies on different rhythmic patterns and phrases as drum cues for different movement gestures. The difference in drum patterns with regards to drum cues makes it necessary for some comparison between the two dance forms to illustrate how teaching is achieved through listening to drum cues relating to the theory of synaesthesia. When attention is given to the symbiotic relationship between the music and the dance the cues become communicative. These communicative drum cues are considered as surrogate

language or triadic communication (Yankah, 1995). So, for the *Agbekor* dance form the dancer become the medium in interpreting the drum cues through movement gestures.

Using the *Bɔbɔbɔ* as another example for contrast with the *Agbekor* drum rhythm it is the songs text that gives cues and descriptions of the dance movement gestures. The sequence in the arrangement of the dance presentation are determined by the song text. In other words, the aesthetic presentation of the dance form revolves around the dancers/performers selecting movement variations from the songs that are sung to accompany the dance. The singing presentation of the dance is referred to as *hadzidzi* (Fiagbedzi, 1997; 2009). The Ewe language, according to Younge (2011, p. 18) “is an art of vocal presentation of music and not necessary the drum rhythmic cues” as in the *Agbekor*. Here the point of contrast with the *Agbekor* is where the song text gives both meaning and historical context of the dance.

To assist in developing terminologies for the *Agbekor* dance it was important to interrogate the various song texts performed during the dance form. Therefore, to illustrate the historical context embedded in *Agbekor* songs, below is an example of a song type that gives a historical account of how Togbui Kundo, one of the Ewe chiefs, was captured and sent to a foreign land and has since not returned. As to what has actually happened to him it remains a myth and a mystery today. This song cited by Gbolonyo (2009) is normally sung during performance of the slow, (*Uulɔlɔ*), *Agbekor*. Locke (1987) has also recorded songs from his Anlo fieldwork research including “Kundo yi Vu”. My field notes on the songs and the interpretations are not much different from what both Gbolonyo and Locke have translated, although there are some slight differences. These differences might be attributed to the fact that when one encounters the traditional people in the field, the song might possibly be sung in the same style. However, despite the historical legacy of these song texts it is often the interpretation and translations which may vary. This I believe maybe due to oral

narratives which sometimes change the meaning but in this case the meaning and the interpretation are the same with what both Gbolonyo (2009) and Locke (1982) had discussed.

Atsiagbeko

*Kundo yi Yevuwode
Megbo o he
Dada be mina mitso gbe de dzi
Kundo yi Yevuwode
land
Megbo o he
Mitso gbe de dzi:
O! Miafe Avafiagã
Do de (ga tsi) aho(ava) me!
war)!
Míeyina aho(ava) wɔ ge
Míeyi aho, miyi aho, miyi aho
to war!
Míde zɔ, míde zɔ, míde zɔ
Kundo yi Yevuwode Kundo
Megbo o he
Mítso gbe de dzi*

Literal translation

Kundo has gone to the Whiteman's land
He has not returned
Mother says let us bet on it
Kundo has gone to the Whiteman's
land
He has not returned
Let us bet on it
Oh! Our Great War King
Is perished in battle (is captured in
war)!
We are going to fight (going to war)
Let's go to war, let's go to war, let's go
to war!
Let's fight, let's fight, let's fight!
has gone to the White man's land
And never returned
Let us bet on it

The second example is a song that was taught in the class during my teaching practice and observations. The dance teacher, upon advice from the drum instructors, realised that there were no songs being sung which could also motivate the students in the learning of the dance. Hence, in the course of the dance enactment, the class was ceased, and the dance teacher asked one of the drum instructors to teach a song. The idea was also to motivate the students to add some performance or aesthetic appeal to the dance. The structure of the song is the call and response style, where the cantor leads and the chorus response.

EWE (FON)⁴¹

Call: - *Woe lo woe zā*
Kɔtsi de woe lo woe zā lo milawoe// 2x
Chorus: *Woe lo woe zā*
Kɔtsi de woe lo woe zā milawoe
Call: - *Milawoe loo*
ɲkpekpe ku gbe ku milawoe ee//2x
Chorus: *Woe lo woe zā*
Kɔtsi de woe lo woe milawoe

⁴¹ The song and the meaning came out of an interview with Gabriel Bokorvi a level 400 dance student on 30th April 2019. He is also part of the experimental group of students that participated in the creating and developing of the jargons or terminologies.

The translation in English is not a direct translation since the language of the song is in the *Fon* language and not in Ewe. Due to the heaviness of the *Fon* language some of the translations were done first into the Ewe language before translating into *Fon* language whilst others were done direct from *Fon* into the English language. So, in trying to break the words down and provide some meaning in the song, the transcription below is what was achieved.

weε zā means 'time to do something'.

Mila woε means that 'we will do it'.

Kotsi de means 'water' or 'pouring of libation'

ɲukpekpe ku gbe ku means 'the day of death of a mighty one or fearful one'

Therefore, putting all these together the song means that, this is the time to fight and go to war, whichever way we will fight and go, if we have to pour libation to strengthen and fortify ourselves, we shall still do it. We must fight for this is the day of death of a mighty one and a fearful one. This song text fits very well with the *Agbekor* dance since it is a war dance and the warriors swear the oath of allegiance to protect their people. The song text for the students in the class helps to motivate them and gives them a pictorial understanding of the historical narrative of the dance and what is required of the warriors. It also contributes to the character formation of the warriors and enables students to try and emulate such attitudes in the classroom. The song is a chant that sets the tone and ignites the students for the dance to begin.

Hadzidzi (singing) forms an integral part of the traditional *Agbekor* performance. This feature is, however missing in the classroom setting. This also is a gap identified in the course of the research which this study has tried to address. Within the classroom situation, and the teaching process, it is the dance movement gestures that are mostly taught with little recognition and attention to the songs (*hadzidzi*). Therefore, in creating terms for the dance form, one of the processes is through the song texts. One can adopt words and phrases from the song that will aid the teaching of specific movements alongside the drum language and the cues as well.

In Anthonio's⁴² (2011) study, he identifies that in teaching the *Damba* dance of the Northern Region of Ghana for easy learning and understanding, the dance form has been decoded and given specific names such as "*Damba Mangli* to mean "Monday" and *Damba Sochandi* to mean "Tuesday". This according to Anthonio corresponds to the rhythmic phrases of the drum (p. 47). This example I believe can be adopted to aid teaching of both the drum language and the movement gestures respectively. In observing a Resource Person, T. N. Alidu, teaching the *Damba-Takai* dance at the level 200 stage in the Department of Dance Studies, I gathered that in his vocalising movements of the *Damba-Takai* dance, he categorises the dance form in eight rhythms.

This was demonstrated by Alidu a Resource Person, with the help from dance teachers and assistants they performed the dance for that class session. During his teaching he mentioned that the different rhythms of the *Takai* have their movement components and they also have names specific to them. These names are *Tipalga*, *Takia*, *Nyalborli*, *Dimsyaka*, *Kalgo*, *Kimlonee*, *Damduru*, *Condominli* gleaned from an interview with Alidu at his base at the National Theatre in the company of another master drummer in *Dagbamgba* drum music, both from the Ghana Dance Company (GDC). They explained the *Damba* dance as well as that of the *Takai* dance forms to me. To this end they clarified some of the perceptions that surrounded the dance form. Over the years the teaching of these two dances (*Damba* and *Takai*) has been taught as one dance form as the Department inherited from the GDE. Therefore, the practice of the dance department till date teaches the dance as one component namely *Damba-Takai* and not separated as *Damba* and *Takai*. According to my informants they clarified the point that most of the rhythms we play at the tertiary level or the school system are that of the *Takai* and just little bits of the *Damba*. For instance, at the Department of Dance Studies in teaching and performing the *Damba-Takai* dance, the rhythms normally

⁴² An unpublished Master's in Fine Arts thesis "Exploring the potential of video as a toll for teaching *Damba* dance of Northing Ghana", by Kofi Antonio.

played are the festival rhythms which is the *Sochenda* and *Mangli*. The two Resource Persons also categorised the dance with its rhythms for me. The first rhythm according to them is *Tilpalga* which is part of the names of the Yaa Naa whose official name is Naa Asante Parlga. They believed the first rhythm was dedicated to the Yaa Naa hence his name, *Tipalga*, which is a combination of the Asante and the Parlga where the *Te* at the end of the Asante has been added to the Parlga to become *Tipalga*. This is synonymous with the codification in the *Agbekor* dance where the language, song text (*hadzidzi*) and the historical narratives have been used in creating terms for the dance form. The presentation of the two dance forms the *Damba* and the *Takai* was merged by the former and first artistic director of the GDE Albert Mawere Opoku who combined the two dance forms into one as the *Damba-Takai*; due to the similarities in the drum music for artistic and aesthetic purposes, (Quaye, 2011).

My interest therefore is that, for the *Damba-Takai* dance there will be no need to create terminologies to teach since there exist already names in the indigenous language that can be employed. The dance form has been categorized with the various rhythms and their corresponding movements, so that the dance names are used in teaching the *Damba-Takai* dance. Therefore, the suggestion is that dance teachers must be encouraged to use the drum language in the *Damgbangba* language to teach the *Damba-Takai* dance.

Using synaesthesia as the theoretical foundation, the analysis of the drum rhythms and the movement gestures touched on the concepts of the use of oculesics and auditory of the drum language (text). This is to engage in the practical learning skills of the student and methods of pedagogy by the lecturer in the dance class. In other words, the framework for this analysis has its basis in verbal arts where Finnegan (1992) suggests that there is a strong indigenous tradition of unwritten literature in Africa. This is due to the presentation style where both the song and the drum text have meaning embedded in them. I find the traditional drum text (cues) and movement gestures as part of these unwritten literature Ruth Finnegan alludes to. As such, this supports the standardising of non-verbal texts such as drum cues and

movement gestures that this study is developing to adopt into the dance curriculum especially in the indigenous language through the terminologies in the *Agbekor* dance form.

Jargons are words and terminologies which have coded interpretations and can either be described as bad language as it can be misunderstood or not understood at all (Marousek, 2015). The terminologies can also be spoken verbally or be communicated through non-verbal means like movement gestures. With reference to John Auston (as cited in Butler, 1997), Auston espouses the notion that language acts. The terms are therefore the same with drum language or the drum text that enables dancers/performers to respond to communicative elements from the lead drum. It is performative and for that matter the surrogate text from the lead drum allows the dancer to respond in movement gesture as has been identified by Agawu (1991, p. 8) and Yankah (1995, p. 8).

Kropp Dakubu (2010) refers to jargons as words and phrases that have been coined and developed for specific purposes. In this study one of the objectives is to create and develop jargons (terms or terminologies) for the dance class by using the drum text and the historical narratives of *Agbekor* dance by deriving terminologies from the Ewe language. This will in order enhance effective teaching and learning of the *Agbekor*. In effect, this can also be applied to other indigenous African dances taught in the Department of Dance Studies at the University of Ghana.

In understanding the basic concepts of linguistic theory, Ferdinand de Saussure's theory on signs, signified and signifier is not only essential for linguistic students but also for anyone studying semiotics, (dance students), when they use various types of signs (whistle, use of horse tail, ululation and drum cues), to communicate as in the case of the indigenous traditional African dance. It makes the understanding of specific rhythms meaningful when played. In developing the terms, Saussure⁴³, as cited by Lesley Lanir (2012) perceived a

⁴³ How to decode Ferdinand de Saussure's Linguistic unit, Sign, Signified and Signifier Explained, 2012 by Lesley Lanir

linguistic unit that will guide in the composition of the terminology which are in two parts, these are:

1. A concept of meaning
2. A sound image

Therefore, using Saussure's concept, the drum rhythms create an impression on the senses using sound which have been created using the terminology. These sounds are perceived in movement gestures as they pertain to the cultural tradition or the environment of the dance. The other is using a linguistic term in the language of the origin of the dance form. This is done through the articulations of the master drummer to produce sound that corresponds to the tonal language of the terminology. For example, the tonal drum sound of the *mibla go dzi* is produced through a low, high, mid and open tones of the membrane to achieve the rhythm. The technique in producing this sound is achieved with two drumsticks and sometimes one hand and a drumstick. In listening to the rhythm, I observed that in the *Ga-ze ga dzi*, (metal has landed on metal) rhythm *ga* (metal) is an open tone⁴⁴ achieved through using the palm. The *ze* (to land) carries a low tone produced by using the tip of the fingers to strike the edge of the membrane. The last two rhythms are combination of the stick and the hand. Playing an open sound with the palm combining it with a mid-tone of the stick to achieve *dzi*. This produces the sound *ga-dzi* a combination of a high and a low tone. Using the *trɔtrɔ le gbe* (long turn) as another example, the *Tò* sound is achieved through a manipulation of the palm to mute the membrane with a low tone strike of the stick on the surface of the membrane to produce the *Tò* sound.

Part of this study is to develop terminologies in the indigenous language that the dance form is originating from. Malinowski (2014, p. 7) opines that "language can be used in many forms, primarily through oral and written communication as well as using expressions through body language. He further posits that language is also considered as a "system of

⁴⁴ To achieve the open tone is to strike the drum surface with drumsticks

communicating with other people using sounds, symbols and words in expressing a meaning or idea or thought”. On the other hand, the question Finnegan (1992, p. 3), asks in relation to a cultural context is how far are different verbal genres recognized by whom and how and finally by what criteria? She further questions “how far is the concept of verbal ‘text’ divorced from music or performance”?

So, using these concepts for the *Agbekor* dance form as a basis for developing a teaching method in the practical dances taught in the Department of Dance Studies, I am particularly intrigued by Finnegan’s (1992, p. 3) assertion that “sometimes anthropologists forget that cultural relativity applies to verbal expression as much as to other conventions”. For me, the drum text as well as bodily expressions are coded speech presented in non-verbal language which is part of the embodiment of acquiring the dance (Hanna, 1979). Therefore, in developing the terms attention is given to the cultural norms and the narratives that surround the dance form.

From various readings, interviews and discussions conducted, I argue that it will be prudent to develop a standard practice in the teaching of traditional indigenous African dance in the Department of Dance Studies. So far, I have observed some attempts by some dance and drum instructors trying to develop or create terminologies in their teaching style to make teaching practical for students to learn and also to identify with the drum rhythm and the dance movement. This invariably falls in line with the kind of standardisation that I am proposing especially using the indigenous terms from the drum text or the language the dance hails from.

Another approach is to synchronise the nuances in movement gestures that the dances have to the rhythms of the created terms. This is because a particular dance form may have different movement styles for a particular movement genre. Due to modernisation, urbanisation and migration purposes, some of the dance movements and gestures have been borrowed from other cultures and overtime have become as it were part of the dance form

especially within the academic circles. This can be seen, for instance, in the synchronisation of the timeline of the bell pattern and how execution of movement gestures is performed. Some of the musical rhythms and phrases are in direct relation with the movement execution. Therefore, in identifying these movement nuances in the dance forms, measures are taken to refine them to bring uniformity and movement sanitisation in the dance class.

So, for this study I have developed some terminologies from the *Agbekor* dance form based on the historical accounts of the dance and on what the drum text provides during the performance of the dance. Both master drummers Foli Alorwoyie and David Locke have attempted standardising the *Agbadza* drum text and rhythms but as Alorwoyie (2013, p. 4) argues, “Since the formula they used was not written and documented, people could not read it”, hence the whole project was lost.

Against the background of standardisation and using historical narratives through the concept of the cultural transmission theory (CTT) espoused by Tindal (1976) it makes use of the social and cultural environment of the learner so that the method and content of education can be fully harnessed for the individual student. This way the whole idea is to make use of the practical approach embedded in the indigenous system as well as the modernised form of teaching.

For this project I developed set of terminologies from the *Agbekor* dance taught at the dance section of the School of Performing Arts. This was done through interaction with drummers of the Department of Dance Studies and some senior drummers with the Ghana Dance Ensemble (GDE) as indicated in the pictures below of figure 31 and 32 respectively. In addition to these were some drummers and musicians also from the Anlo State. Most of the drummers and musicians in the Anlo State still practice and engage in the teaching and training of younger generations in the dance and musical type. For some of these people it would be a good idea if the practice can be incorporated into the academic structure even though some think it would adulterate the practice of the dance and the narratives that accompany the dance form.



Figure 29. Picture showing David Quaye, the researcher in an interaction with master drummer Emmanuel Avornyo (arrowed) from GDE in creating terminologies. Picture credit: David Quaye.



Figure 30. Senior master drummer Christopher Ametefe (middle and standing) the GDE and Seth Gati (sitting with hand on drum) from the Department of Dance Studies, University of Ghana sharing ideas with the researcher David Quaye (close to camera) in creating Ewe terminologies for the Agbekor dance. Picture credit: Dennis Dzah

Generally, cues are signals that are more specific to an action that can effect change in a particular situation. Cues could be both verbal and non-verbal, sign or symbol or a combination of the verbal and non-verbal. Marcel (2004, p. 7) cites St. Augustine (AD 354-430) who defined a natural sign as ‘one that is found, literally, in nature, bodily symptoms, the rustling of leaves, the colours of plants, etc., are all-natural signs, as are the signals that animals emit in response to physical and emotional states’. These ideas and concepts are not much different from what Ferdinand De Saussure (1857-1913) has recognized in relation to what sign and symbol could be in drum language. Marcel (2004) distinguishes this type of

sign from conventional signs and categorizes them into verbal and non-verbal signs determined by Ferdinand De Saussure in semiotics and linguistics and by extension to modern semiotics and performance and performativity by Bauman (1977) and Goffman (1956) respectively.

In my opinion, Goffman (1956) borrowed the term “signal” to develop the idea of performance cues in an everyday activity where activities such as bodily expression, phrases etc., could be interpreted as signs and symbols. Cues could therefore connote various meanings and ideas, depending on the situation and the setting including the audience (Goffman, 1956). Within the indigenous traditional African dance, cues come in various forms that enrich and enhance the affective and communicative potentials of embodied enactments or dance performance. These drum cues, whistling, ululation, song cues and body actions, are components that also add to total aesthetics of the dance performance.

6.1 Drum Cues in Indigenous African Dance Performance

Drum cues are signals that are played from the lead drums by the master drummer to enable dancers and performers change their style of performance. For example, the *Sorsornnet* dance as indicated earlier has just one signal as a cue for all the changes in the dance variations, which is similar to dances such as the traditional dance of South Africa, *Indlamu*, is a Zulu pronunciation for dance among the Zulu people. Similar dances that have the same characteristics in Ghana are *Kpanlogo* and *Kpatsa* among the Ga-Adangmes of Greater Accra Region, *Adowa* of the Asante Region, and *Bɔbɔɔbɔ*, *Agbadza* and *Gota* all Ewes of the Volta Region of Ghana. These are few examples among many more dances with such same cues, but then there are other dances such as the *Agbekor* where the drum cues are many.

In the *Agbekor*, dance cues for the various changes in the dance vary. Therefore, the onus is on the student performer/dancer to listen (auditory), carefully for the cues so as to change to the variation being required by the lead drum. In other words, the cues are specific to the style (*Atsia*) and variations to be performed. However, there is one basic cue that does run across the whole dance piece, and the rhythm for this particular cue is called the *trɔ* (to turn). However, the *trɔ* (to turn) rhythm has two variations, namely, the long and the short,

which all have distinct cues provided by the master drummer. Therefore, the proposed term for the long turn (cue) in the Ewe language is the *trɔtrɔ legbe* and that for the short turn (cue) is *trɔtrɔ kpui*.



Figure 31. The picture shows a cross section of master drummers assisting in the process of coding the *Agbekor* master drum rhythms⁴⁵. Picture credit; Dennis Dzah.

6.2 Drum language (Uugbɛ) in the Classroom Presentation

The drum language is what the lead drum or the master drummer produces in respect to the cues and the signals in the dance form. In the indigenous setting Fiagbedzi (1997, p. 154) has also identified drum language *hugbe*, to be rhythmic patterns of drums taught through musical notation as a form of standardising rhythmic patterns within academia for easy understanding for students and scholars. These rhythmic patterns are based on the tonalities of the drum and how the master drummer creatively employs his tools (the combination of drumsticks and his hands). This creative usage of the drumsticks and hand bring out the communicative elements in the tones so that dancers/performers can identify and respond to the tonal rhythm accordingly. In the performance of *Agbekor* dance in the classroom setting and many other indigenous dance types it is the drum language that determines the structure of the dance performance. If a student dancer/performer cannot identify the drum language, then there will simply be no performance at all since the descriptive aspect of the dance will not be visible.

⁴⁵ The researcher is arrowed. From left to right is Kwashie Kuwor, Seth Gati, Emmanuel Avornyo, David Quaye, Prosper Ablordey and Dennis Dzah.

For example, in the accounts of one of the senior drum instructors of the Department of Dance Studies, Seth Gati recounts how the student must listen to the drum language in order to be successful in the performance of the *Agbekor* dance. He gave the example of a particular drum phrase that students must pay attention to which is,

Giden ga dzi, (mibla-go dzi)
Dza-dza-dza dza-dza-dza. (kaba kaba)
Ga-ze ga dzi, (mibla-go dzi)
dza dza dza dza dza dza. (kaba kaba)
Giden ga dzi, (mibla go dzi)
dza dza dza dza dza dza, dza dza (kaba kaba kaba kaba kaba)
Giden ga dzi, (mibla go dzi)

This drum phrase has to do with the fact that the student dancers/performers must move down and prepare to shoot and later on, upon the instruction from the drum cue dancers have to move forward, *Kaba, Kaba* (hurriedly) in the Ewe language which translates as hurry up in English. This *Kaba, Kaba* according to Seth Gati is transported onto the drum where dancers/performers respond by rushing forward. He also uses the example of *mibla go-dzi*, meaning “tighten your war belt or check your sash/belt and make sure it is fortified”, (figure 34). The rhythm also requires that the prop in the right hand (either the sword or the horse tail), is put in the sash. This according to him can have different interpretations but they all mean the same thing.



Figure 32. The researcher David Quaye conferring with master drummer Seth Gati on codifying drum rhythms at the Department of Dance Studies University of Ghana. Picture credit: Emmanuel Avornyo.

The image displays a musical score for two percussion instruments: Claves and Conga Drums. The score is written in 6/8 time, indicated by the '6' over the '8' in the time signature. The Claves part consists of a continuous eighth-note pattern. The Conga Drums part uses a combination of eighth notes, quarter notes, and rests, with 'x' marks indicating specific rhythmic accents or patterns. The score is divided into measures, with measure numbers 6, 11, 16, and 21 marked at the beginning of their respective staves. A large, semi-transparent watermark of the University of Ghana crest is overlaid on the center of the page, featuring three yellow figures and the motto 'INTEGRI PROCEDAMUS' on a banner at the bottom.

Figure 33. Notation of drum rhythms by the researcher David Quaye. Music scored with finale by Nii Adzei Sowah.

In other dance forms such as the *Adowa*, *Kpanlogo*, *Agbadza* and *Bɔbɔɔbɔ*, there could be drum language by the master drummers as part of the performance which can be interpreted and identified by the performers but these drum languages do not necessary affect changes in the dance movement and performance in any way as espoused by Younge (2011,

p. 355). In other words, the dances do not entirely depend on the drum language for its movement gestures. The drum language rather enhances the music and makes it more exciting. In other occurrences, the drummers themselves or the singers as in the case of the *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* and the *Adzogbo* dance forms, will vocalise the drum language and lip-sing it out as part of the performance.

In the performance of the slow *Agbekor* dance, there is a drum cue that requires dancers/performers to move slowly down while gesticulating the upper torso in and out. The rhythm the lead drummer plays is; *Za-giden dzi*, (a combination of the hand and the drumstick), and the dancers/performers respond *Adzee-sɔɔ*. What the drum language is supposed to be uttering is ‘where the fight/war has got to, would the warriors be able to continue’? The response to these drum text from the dancers is ‘nothing can beat us’. In another account it is believed that the commander commands the warriors to move forward and the people respond ‘No’. Here the drum language instructs *Midie-su midjo* which presupposes someone is telling lies. The response from the dancers/performers is *Adzee-sɔɔ* or *ɛda-dze* which means “telling lies”. This is the explanation the master drummer, Christopher Ametafe, gave when he was asked to clarify what some of these drum texts and what the drums language possibly mean or express. Christopher was of the opinion, that the composition of the drum languages in some cases contained about two dialects put together. This makes it difficult to tell or identify exactly what the drum language would be expressing. This explanation also corroborates with earlier assertion that some of the Ewe languages are heavy and difficult to translate.

In another example, the interpretation of the rhythmic text and response from dancers/performers show the bravery of the warriors and how resilient the Ewe warriors are. The tone of drum rhythms sound are;

Ga-ze gle to with the response ----- *Adzee-sɔɔ*
to te ga ----- *Adzee-sɔɔ*

With this rhythm, dancers shift the prop in the right hand from the right neck to the left neck while responding *Adzee-sɔɔ*. After some time into the performance the cues and the rhythm changes as dancers/performers intensify their dance to ‘place low’ (Labanotation terminology). The whole process begins again until the cue is played, and the drum rhythm instructs the dancers to come up amidst the gesticulation of movements responding to the *Adzee-sɔɔ* the same way they went down.

In another example for the fast version of the *Agbekor* dance, the master drummer plays *Ge-dzi* on the drum and the dancers respond verbally as *Ma yi kalẽwode*. The drum rhythm sounds again, *Ge-dzi ge-dzi* the same response ensues. This is done in the context of call and response between drum rhythm and dancers/performers. The drum rhythm is asking the dancers/performers if ‘they are ready?’ which in Ewe is *Mile te mua*? Then the response is ‘I/we will go to the warriors’ field or the house’. The next drum example also requires responses from the dancers/performers which includes both voice and body expressions. This time the drum language provides *To-to kre kre*, or *To-to kpla kpla* and the response is *Aayie aayie/Eii eii*. In a similar interpretation, the drum text utters *Mitso kren-kren (ka)*, or *Mitso mie tɔ te ka*, which according to Christopher Ametafe means *get up* and be alert or be ready. The response to this statement is *not much different* from the earlier account which is *yooo* in Ewe and in English, ‘Okay’. Although there are many ‘call and responses’ within the rhythm of the drum ensemble, this gives a direct call and response from the drum rhythm and the dancers where the dancers use both body expressions and voice to respond to the drum verbalisation. Therefore, *To-to kren-kren/To-to kpla kpla* is the tonal sound of the drum though not in Ewe language, but what actually is the surrogate speech of the drum in Ewe language is *mitso kren ka* and the vocal language is *mie tɔ te ka* meaning ‘get up and be alert or ready’.

The musical score below in Figure 34 demonstrates both the use of the hand and the stick technique in achieving some of the tonal rhythms in the *Agbekor* dance form. It also shows how the terminologies were created and developed further. The score has the timeline of the dance form as constant from the *gakogui* (cowbell), in a 6/8 timeframe throughout the

piece. On the bar thirteen (13), the master drummer plays the side of the lead drum to produce the *kakaka/tsa tsa tsa* sound for the attention (*toɔɔɔ*) movement gesture in the dance.

In my opinion students will be able to commit these language expressions into memory during the learning process. Furthermore, the phrases should be translated and interpreted to students to enable them to visualise the language phrase to the rhythm and the movement gesture as well.

Tododo

The image displays musical notation for the 'Tododo' drum rhythm. It consists of two main staves: 'Cowbell' and 'Conga Drums'. The notation is written in 6/8 time, indicated by the '6' over the '8' in the key signature. The rhythm is divided into measures, with specific measures (5, 9, 13, and 17) highlighted. The notation uses various symbols including eighth notes, quarter notes, and rests, with 'x' marks indicating specific drum sounds. A watermark of the University of Ghana crest is visible in the background, featuring three palm trees and a banner that reads 'INTEGRI PROCEDAMUS'.

Figure 34. Notation of drum rhythms by the researcher David Quaye. Music scored with finale by Nii Adzei Sowah.

6.3 Process of Developing Terminologies

In the Department of Dance Studies, School of Performing Arts, the *Agbekor* dance is structured into two segments, the slow and the fast *Agbekor*. The slow *Agbekor* is mostly taught within the second-year stage (level 200) of the dance programme while the fast *Agbekor* is taught at the third-year stage (level 300) of the curriculum. As recounted earlier, the method and approach of teaching is mostly follow-the-leader, observation and demonstrational. In addition to descriptions of movements that are sometime done by dance teachers. I believe identifying movements and labelling the movement gesture would give more credence for the student to identify and help in their learning.

The turning part in the *Agbekor* dance, the rhythm as mentioned above, prescribe the movement gesture. There are two rhythms for the slow *Agbekor* dance: one for the long turn and one for the short turn. This is how many of the master drummers in the Dance Department and others I have interacted with ‘mouthed’ the rhythms. Both rhythms sound like this;

1. *To hre be ge deng,*
to tɛ gede, to tegedege
Gede gede
Ten-ten hrebegede
Gede gede
Ga krebe ga krebe
Ga krebe ga kebe
To te ga dzi
Dza dza gide ga gide
2. *Tò te gaze ge/gi, (ge is an open tone while gi is a mute tone)*
Tento, tento, dza,
Tento, tento, dza,
Tòte kre de, dza dza krebe dza krebe.

And the rhythm for the fast version of the *Agbekor* turning is;

To hre be gede, ge de gen
Ge de gen-ge de
Ge de gen- ge de
Ten ten-ten ten giden.

These two rhythms are distinct in sound, but they all require the student dancer to turn and then execute the movements that correspond with it. As identified from the nature of the

rhythms, the first rhythm is slow hence the turning movement will be slow, likewise with the latter rhythm. Therefore, through listening to the drum language, the student dancer will be able to identify the sound of the cue to know the fast or slow rhythm even in the case of the slow where there are the long and the slow turns. It is through listening that one determines which drum cue is for the long turn and for the short.

As to whether the dancer is performing a descriptive movement gesture of the slow-long turn rhythm or the short turn is determined by the rhythms of the short and long *trɔ* rhythms. On the other hand, the fast *Agbekor* dance rhythm prescribes a constant descriptive movement gesture of the fast turn. With the fast turn the rhythm can have three variations, but the movement executed is the same unlike the slow turn rhythm (*trɔtrɔ kpui*). So, for the three fast rhythms the turning simply is coded as *tɔtrɔ*.



6.4 Proposed Drum Terminologies and Some Selected *Agbekor* Movement Gestures.

In trying to decode the drum rhythm of some selected movement gestures in the *Agbekor* dance, I formed a small experimental group as shown in Figure. 37 below. I worked together with these select students to test some of the ideas of codifying and standardising the movements with their corresponding rhythms.

My data collection was though working with master drummers as well as visiting various traditional dance classes and observing the teaching process. The process of engaging the experimental group in testing the developed terminologies at the Department of Dance

Studies, University of Ghana. After working and developing some of the terminologies with the master drummer Emmanuel Avornyo, I tried the terms with the experimental group on their understanding of the terms created especially in relation to the drum language.



Figure 35. The picture shows David Quaye, the researcher experimenting with select students on terminologies created. Picture by Naa Dei.

In one example the drum instruction was for the dancers to sharpen their swords or knives which in the Ewe language is *nyre he* or *nyre he la míyi na ava* which literally means “sharpen your knives for we are going to war”. For that the drum language is *mitso*, *mia tor te kan*, *novio mitso* which sounds like this: *gito*, *gito-tega gasegi-dzi*, *ga*. The meaning of the language is ‘stand upright’ or ‘get up and stand’ and the movement articulation is such that, with a sword prop in one hand, the dancer goes down exhibiting the action of sharpening the sword and immediately stands upright almost at attention. It is through this idea that I developed the jargon of *novio mitso* or *nyre he*.

Another example revolves around an interesting feature in Ewe drum language known as or best described as side drumming. In an interview with Kwashie Kuwor by the researcher at the Department of Dance Studies on 20th May, 2019, he acknowledged that “side (beating) drumming is paramount in most Ewe master drumming styles that employ stick technique. The main purpose is time keeping”. On the other hand, side drum music in *Agbekor* is not only for time keeping as mentioned earlier but also specific for some movement gesture

which the dancer has to perform. This is where there is the likelihood that the drummer will strike the side of the drum many times in the course of the dance performance as indicated in Figure 36 of the above musical score on bar 13 and 14 respectively. A musical software called finale was used to transcribe the rhythms on all the musical score. Finale is a music notation software used in creating music composition for Windows Microsoft computers.

This phenomenon is also very dominant in the *Agbekor* dance for both the slow version of *Agbekor* and the fast version. Part of the aesthetics of the drum music is to strike the side of the master drum to call for attention in order to introduce the next drum cue. In the *Agbekor* dance, the striking of the side drum many times is not really given cognizance due to its insignificance in the performance. So, many do not recognize its function in the dance form. The side drumming technique or feature requires attention from the dancers/performers. During *Agbekor* performance when one hears the sound *kae kae-kae-kae kae/tsa tsa-tsa tsa tsa*, it requires that every performer/dancer should be standing at an attention, (*Toḍoḍo*). This is a command being provided by the master drum as has been established in earlier arguments the master drummer is the commander who controls the whole performance. In the Ewe language attention is referred to as *toḍoḍo* which invariably is translated as, 'be steady' or 'call for attention'. So, the proposed jargon for the attention rhythm and the movement becomes *toḍoḍo*.



Figure 36. The picture shows a master drummer playing one of the created terminologies for the students to perform in the Department of Dance Studies, University of Ghana, 3rd February, 2017. Picture by Naa Dei.

A third example from Figure 34, is that of the rhythm phrase *Kpɔ ɔkuiwò dzi nyuie*.

In this phrase the movement exhibited is a symbolic warning for someone to be very careful. These are supposed to be sets of rhythmic phrases signifying warning to the enemy or the opposing faction. The movement gesture of *Kpɔ ɔkuiwò* is embedded in the *mi bla go dzi* set of rhythms which also signifies warning and preparedness for war.

Another rhythm captured in the score of Figures 35-36 is the set of rhythms that requires that the dancer or performer stretches the prop (sword or the horse tail), to the other or the enemy in the attempt to warn them to be careful. But in the rendition of the rhythm, the master drummer played another set of rhythmic phrases which I have codified as *Me afɔ tu wò ge* meaning ‘I will kick you’. Therefore, the rhythmic phrase in the score is *Me afɔ tu wò ge* and not *kpɔ ɔkui wò* as indicated in the musical score below on Figures 40 to 41.

Me afɔ tu wò ge is a set of rhythmic phrases that involves the kicking of the leg slightly forward interchangeably, all on the instruction of the drum rhythm. The tonal sound is:

Giden giden ga ze giden ga

Giden giden ga ze giden ga

Ga ze-giden ga

Ga ze-giden ga

Ga se gide-dzi dzi

Ga se gide-dzi dzi

Ga se gase gren dzi

Ga se gase gren dzi

Ga se den dzi.....kicking the left leg from inside with the knee up

Gide giden

Gren gren, dzi dzi

dza dzi dza dzi dza dzi dzi dzi.....me gbe (backwards movement)

In the execution of this movement gesture, the first phrase is a cue for the dancer to listen and then respond by executing movement gesture on the next drum phrase till the end. So, in performing the rest of the drum phrase the dancer is actually describing the rhythmic patterns through body expressions. Below is the rhythmic phrase of the above drum instruction shown in Figure 38 in that, the master drummer on the right plays for the students/dancers on the right to articulate the movement gesture. This rhythmic phrase is captured in the Ewe language as:

mitso-mitso, miva midogo
Mitso-mitso, miva midogo
Mi va miogo
Mi va midogo

get up, get up, come, let's go
get up, get up, come, let's go
come let's go
come let's go

After that, the rhythm enters the rhythmic phrase that requires that the dancers exhibit various movement gesture that also includes moving backwards. This I have proposed the term as *Mε gbε*, meaning going back/backwards, on the last line of the drum phrase of Figure 40.

Score

The musical score is written for four parts: Claves, Conga Drums, Clv. (Clavichord), and C. Dr. (Cymbal Drums). The time signature is 6/8. The score is divided into measures, with measure numbers 6, 11, and 16 indicated. The Claves part consists of a continuous eighth-note pattern. The Conga Drums part features a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes with rests. The Clv. part plays a steady eighth-note accompaniment. The C. Dr. part uses a combination of eighth and sixteenth notes with rests, often marked with 'x' to indicate specific cymbal techniques. A large, semi-transparent watermark of the University of Ghana crest is overlaid on the score.

Figure 37 Drum Notation by the researcher David Quaye and musical finale score by Nii Adzei Sowah.

The image displays a musical score for four percussion instruments: Claves, Conga Drums, Clv., and C. Dr. The score is organized into four systems, each containing two staves. The first system (measures 1-5) features Claves and Conga Drums. The second system (measures 6-10) features Clv. and C. Dr. The third system (measures 11-15) features Clv. and C. Dr. The fourth system (measures 16-20) features Clv. and C. Dr. The score is written in 6/8 time, indicated by the '6' over the '8' in the key signature. The notation uses various rhythmic symbols, including eighth notes, sixteenth notes, and rests, to represent the drum patterns. A large, semi-transparent watermark of the University of Ghana crest is overlaid on the center of the score, featuring three yellow palm trees and a banner with the Latin motto 'INTEGRI PROCEDAMUS'.

Figure 38 Drum Notation by the researcher David Quaye and musical finale score by Nii Adzei Sowah.

2

26

Clv.

C. Dr.

31

Clv.

C. Dr.

36

Clv.

C. Dr.

Figure 39. Drum Notation by the researcher David Quaye and musical finale score by Nii Adzei Sowah.

In other examples the interpretations given to a drum rhythm and movement gesture have two or more meanings. In creating jargon out of such interpretations, I considered the similarities in the narratives of the dance as well as what the drum rhythm ‘pronounces’ in the context of the movement gesture. An example of one such drum rhythm is *To-to kre kre* in which the dancers’ vocal response is *ayee ayee*. The understanding of one historical account is that, the rhythms that are produced from the drum are symbolic gunshots and for that reason, the Ewe warriors jump to catch these bullets and throw them away hence the *ayee ayee* (away away).

Another interpretation to the above account of the *To-to kre kre* is that of greetings. According to Wisdom Zigar one of my informants, the master drummer uses the rhythm to congratulate the warriors (dancers/performers) for a good job done. The warriors (dancers/performers) in return respond by saying *yaaaayie*. Understanding what the drum text is playing in the Ewe language is said to be *mɛ do gbe nami* or *medo gbe*, which in English literally translate as I am greeting you. The generic answer will be ‘I respond’ or ‘I’m responding’. Therefore, in analysing these two narratives, the best way to develop the term is to maintain the *aayei aayei* in the Ewe language. This is because the response is

unique to both narratives which will make easy for students to identify with both the movement gesture and its rhythmic phrase. Furthermore, the *aayei aayei* response already exists in the performance of the dance where performers respond to the drum rhythm (language).

In the teaching process of the slow-turn in the *Agbekor* dance, I realized that the leg movement of the dance takes six steps to complete the rhythmic phrase of the slow turning. In the ‘fast-turn’ of *Agbekor* most instructors would audibly count three steps for the execution of the turning. However, the slow turn is normally not counted or even referred to as it is done in the fast turn when teaching. During the teaching process of the fast turn in *Agbekor* due to the fastness in executing the movement gesture after the *trɔ* rhythm, it makes it difficult for students to visualize how the composition of the movement gesture is performed. Therefore, audibly counting the three steps and taking students through the movements, the movement gestures becomes clearer for the students in performing this movement gesture. On the other hand, it is easier for students to see the movements in the slow *Agbekor* and follow suit when learning.

In the introductory movement gestures of the fast *Agbekor*, the dancers are basically moving sideways pointing their prop (the drumstick) to each side in an attempt to look for their enemies. This beginning rhythm in *Agbekor* presupposes the going to war which in the Ewe language and within the context of the *Agbekor* dance, the drum text implies *mieyi na ava wɔ ge*, meaning ‘we are going to war’. So, for easy reference and identification I maintained the *ava wɔ ge* as the proposed term for that rhythmic phrase and the movement gesture.

Within the context of the *Agbekor* dance, the turning in the dance is a language phrase that the drum rhythm plays as ‘*Trɔ na kpor*’, meaning “turn around and look”. This in reference is to the dancer who is being given a cue to turn around and check in case there are any assailants nearby. To make the teaching of the turning simpler and easier for students to identify and remember, I decided to use the term *Trɔtrɔ* to represent the turning in the

Agbekor dance. Furthermore, to differentiate the various turnings in the dance I resort to propose *Trɔtrɔ le gbe* for the long turn and *Trɔtrɔ kpui* for the short turn. The purpose is that a dance lecturer teaching the *Agbekor* dance can just mention the word *Trɔtrɔ* for both drum instructors as well as the students to understand that *Trɔtrɔ* represents turning in *Agbekor* for teaching purposes.

6.5 *Agbekor* Procession (slow)

Within the school system as mentioned earlier, the *Agbekor* dance is categorized into two parts, the first part is the slow part normally taught at the level 200 stage in the university system at the University of Ghana. Even though there are vast range of movements within the repertoire, the movements taught in the Department of Dance Studies, University of Ghana are selected dependent on the dance instructor teaching. For the purposes of this study I have also selected some movement gestures from the slow part which will be discussed in detail in the attempt of creating the standardisation for the *Agbekor* dance.

The slow *Agbekor* dance rhythm has three variations of the turn, that is, the long and the two short turns. In the performance of the gestures the dance exhibits two types of turns, which are the long and short turns. In playing the long turn, the drum instructor or the drummer uses two sticks to produce the rhythm for the dancer to execute. For the other two short turns the drummer uses one stick and the palm of his hand to produce the rhythm. There is a specific period when the short turns are played. The discretion lies solely with the master drummer to vary the rhythms to create variety of rhythms and movements. The long turn (*Trɔtrɔ le gbe*) of the drum tone may sound this way as indicated in the musical score of Figures 38-41; -

*To hrebe ge den,
to te gede togedege
gede gede
Ten-teng hre begede
Geed geed*

Pause for two counts... one – two

The rhythm for the second short turn sounds;

To te gaze-ge/gi
pause for three counts One two three
Gedzi gedzi ga
Pause for two counts ...one, two
Gedzi gedzi ga
To te gadzi/gi
dza dza kerbe ga krebe

The tone for the other rhythm of the turn is;

To te gasen dzi/gi
Gedzi gedzi ga
To-te ga dzi/gi
Dza-dza gidi gen gidi

After the turn, the drummer may choose any of the movement variations to play, one of the drum texts styles that can be played, is the ‘getting ready for war or sharpen your sword’. This in the Ewe language is ‘*mi dzra do mia yi ava*’. This in English translates as ‘prepare and let’s go to war’. So, for the terminology creation it is simple to say *mia yi ava*, that is, ‘we will go to war’.

Another movement variation is the concept of cutting someone into pieces and throwing away or killing someone and being victorious or still be jubilant about the situation. The movement gesture is such that the dancer cuts with the right and left hands and stamps the legs in correspondence with the hands and then either throws the hands in the air or demonstrates the act of slashing the throat with the prop (sword) in hand. The rhythm pattern for the drum cues sounds this way:

Gito-gito, gito-kide ga,
Gito-gito, gito-kide ga.

The interpretation of the drum text in the Ewe language is:

metso ge, metso ge, me-wuo ge, or me se ge, me se ge, me wuo ge.

This in English implies, I will cut/kill you:

Me wu wè kpɔ dzi-dzɔ.

The simple translation in English is: ‘I have killed and am happy or victorious’. That is why at the end of executing the movement gesture the dancer/performer throws his hands in the air with a jump.

The following rhythmic pattern is a drum cue that prescribe that the dancer jumps and goes down to a squatting position, where the left knee is almost touching the floor, with the upper torso up. The drum cues the dancer/performer to either drop the head down or raise the head up. The drum language sounds, *Gi-to*, which requires the head of the performer to look up. The sequel rhythm for the head to drop down is *djan-djan*. The implication of the rhythms in the Ewe language indicates that the dancer is looking around and checking for possible enemies who could be hiding up in nearby trees or in the ‘skies’ or below underneath the ‘earth’.

Another selected movement gesture that is prescribed by the drum rhythm is ‘*to-to kre-kre*’ or *to-to kpla kpla*. Where the dancers/performers respond (*aayei aayei/ayooo ayooo*) in the performance of the movement gesture. So, in effect the whole process is such that there is a call and response between the drummer and the dancer. The idea that ensues in the Ewe language in tandem with the drum text is ‘*mèdo gbe na wò*’, or ‘*mello gbe nawo*’. This is interpreted in English to mean I am greeting you and the response is “I am responding”. In this context of the Ewe tradition sometimes the greetings take certain forms such as ‘you are welcome’ and the response is simply ‘yooo’ with a gesture of a stretched arm. In an interview with Emmanuel Avorny, a master drummer with the GDE, he disclosed that most of these greetings could be translated literally as ‘it is you who have come’, and then the normal greetings follow.

The next selected rhythmic pattern to be analysed and discussed is that of the drum cue *gito dza dza dzi*. The concept around the performance of the movement gesture implies that ‘I will strike you both at the top and the bottom’. This in the Ewe language means *me wò to ge edzi kple anyigba*. Basically, what this implies in the context of war, is that ‘when I get hold of you, I will strike you or cut you anyhow, (top and bottom)’.

The creation of this term ‘I will strike you or cut you anyhow’ was inspired by the name Dzifa Gomashie because the drum language *gito dza dza dzi* corresponds and synonymous with the tonal rhythm of Dzifa Gomashie. Musically the name Dzifa has two syllables Dzi-fa and Gomashie has three syllables, Go-ma-shie. Dzifa Gomashie happened to be a student in the late 1990s and was in the traditional dance class where the *Agbekor* dance was being taught. To enable the students, at the time, grab the movement and the drum rhythm faster, the students developed terms which sounded close to the drum rhythm. It was one such situation that brought in the ‘Dzifa Gomashie’ concept, since it was easy for students to identify with the rhythm and the name of the person in the dance class. Dzifa Gomashie was such a good dance student so watching her perform the movement alone would enable you remember the rhythmic phrase *gi-to dza-dza-dzi*. It is these tonalities in some drum patterns and their relatedness to sound that has helped in the application of creating terminologies in the *Agbekor* dance presentation. The term created for *gito dza dza dzi* and the dance movement gesture is *anyigba*.

Another drum cue prescribes the dancer to turn around to get hold of the enemy and trample upon him as well as kill or stab the person. The drum rhythm the master drummer plays is:

*ga to te-gen-den, to te ge-de,
To-te-ge-de, to te-ge-de, ge ge ka,
Hre be gi ga to tedsì, gide dza dzi dza dzi dza*

This drum language implies that the warrior is looking round; should the warrior find any of the enemies around, ‘I will stamp on them and kill them’. This in Ewe is *mɛ trɔ kpɔwo, mɛ trɔ kpɔwo, mima le ge*, or *mɛ wu geh*. For easy identification and remembrance of the movement as well as the rhythm, the proposed terminology was developed using just *mɛ trɔ kpɔwo* to give students an easy recall of drum rhythm and movement gesture.

In developing jargon/terminologies, it is not in all cases that the drum language vocalises the meaning of the drum text. Sometimes the concept behind the dance and movement also enables the development and creation of the term. One such example is the

narratives of what happened during war the Ewe warriors fought. These narratives are the movement gestures and expressions that dancers and performers articulate with its accompanying rhythm variation. The sound of the drum rhythm is:

*kren gi den dza,
gi-den ga gi den dzi
Djan djan
kren gi den dza,
Gi den ga gi den dzi
Djan djan
To-te ga se dzi.....pause for two counts
Ga-se den dzi Djan djan*

The rhythm requires the dancer/performer to turn as in the turning for *trɔtrɔ*. In this case the dancer/performer after the turn places the sword in the right hand under the left armpit, kneels and claps twice whiles he/she bounces in performing the action. This is repeated until the master drummer provides a cue for the *trɔtrɔ* turning whiles dancers/performers wait for the next variation. The narratives recounts how the dance performance gives meaning to the movement gesture. I gathered that according to a senior master drum instructor in Anlo area during my fieldwork, the performers/dancers jump and look around them in search of any enemies in sight. Then the rhythm asks them to put the swords in their sacs, and finally go down. With the clapping aspect in the dance performance, the master drum instructor asserted that the dancers/performers call out to other fighters or warriors to come together and disperse. In another explanation, Emmanuel Avornyo, the drum instructor provided an interpretation that the clapping could be as a result of the gunshots being fired, which produces an onomatopoeic sound, (*gegem gegem*). This sound could be the clap the performers/dancers exhibit in the dance while possibly catching the bullets in their hands and throwing them away. These narrations and the ideas in the dance form were corroborated by Wisdom Ziga a senior drum instructor with the Department of Dance Studies in Figure 42 below.



Figure 40. Interview with Mr. Wisdom Ziga on the terminologies created on 15/03/2018 at the Department of Dance Studies, University of Ghana. Picture by David Quaye.

With the same drum rhythm, the master drummer prescribes the cue for the dancer to turn around in a way to check if the enemies are in sight. This in Ewe is *mekpɔ axa dzi ma dɛ-kɛ mɛ-lɛo* which means that, 'I have looked around me but cannot find any enemy'. The dancer turns upon the drum instruction to perform a movement gesture that moves downwards in a squatting position with the sword placed under the left armpit of the dancer like the example above. The dancer bounces in the squatting position and gives warning sign to the right using the right hand and does the same to the left using the left hand and claps the hands twice. In the same context, the idea of the movement gesture has double interpretation in that the drum cue is the same, but the movement articulation has two variations. One of the interpretations is that the movement gesture is indicating that, I have looked around me and cannot find any enemy. Therefore, I am just warning anyone should you put up a surprise, in the meantime I must celebrate with a clap. In the other one (styles) the gestures are similar to the description stated earlier but not with the warning sign gesture. In the expression of the Ewe language the drum language is *mekpɔ axa dzi ma dɛ-kɛ mɛ-lɛo* and the term created is *mekpɔ* meaning 'checking'.

6.6 Fast Agbekor

Some of the selected rhythms and movement gestures of the fast *Agbekor* version were carefully chosen for easy identification and transcription for both rhythm and movements.

The beginning rhythm presupposes the going to war, where dancers/performers are in search of their enemies. The drum text instructs the dancer/performer to move sideways and pointing their sword held in the right hand, to the direction as they move before the dancers are instructed to turn. The movement to the side or sideways movement is preparing to go to war, which I have identified to be ‘*mieyina ava wɔ ɣɛ*’ as indicated in the Figure 43 below. The drum rhythm sounds like:

*Ten ten degedege, teng -ten ten gedede...repeatedly
Te gide ga, te gide ga,
Te te gi de ga*



Figure 41. Picture show researcher demonstrating *ava wɔ ɣɛ* (sideways movement) to students in the dance class. Picture by Naa Dei.

Within the context of teaching the dance, I shortened the whole phrase of going or moving to war which in the Ewe language is *mieyina ava wɔ ɣɛ* to simply *ava wɔ ɣɛ*, as the proposed term for the above rhythmic phrase and the movement gestures that ensues with the

drum rhythms. Hence following the above rhythm is the instruction by the master drummer to get the dancers to turn which the sound is:

*Tò hre be ge de gede gen
Ge de gen-gede,
Ge de ge de gede,
Ten ten ten ten ge de.*

The concept for turning in the narratives of the dance context is *trɔ na kpɔ axa dzi*.

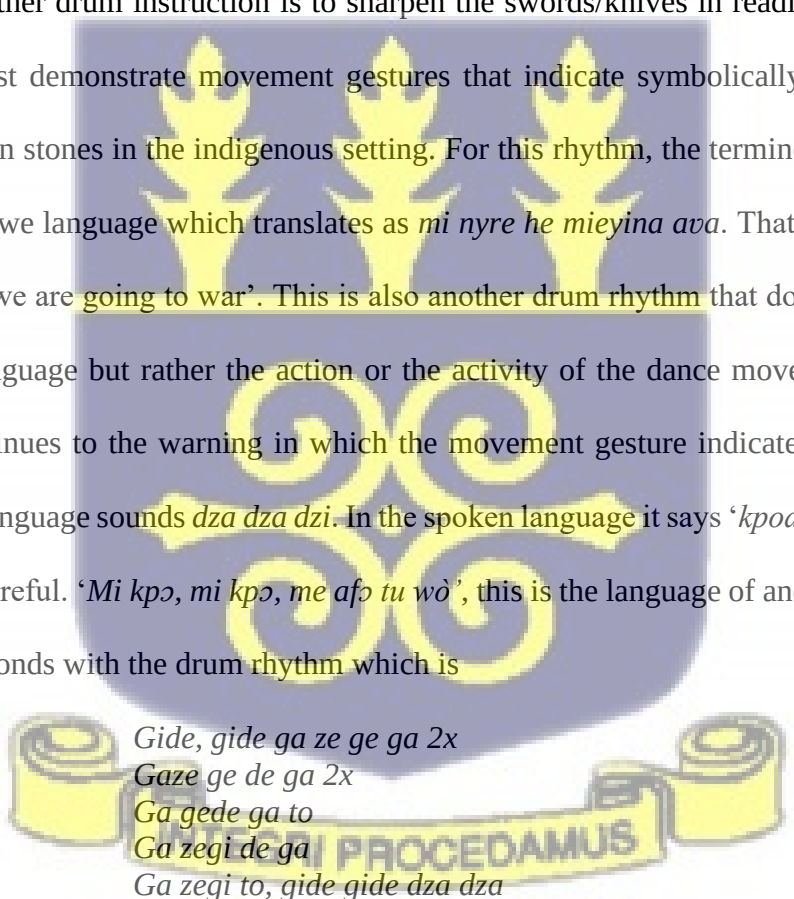
Another selected rhythm is the *ne melé wò, mase wò*, which translates to ‘when I get hold of you, I will cut you up’. For the drum rhythm and the movements, it is a whole range of drum patterns which sounds:

*Ga gide gide, ga gide
Ga gide gide gide
Kitsi kitsi tege
Gide gide ga ze ge ga,
Gide gide ga ze ge ga
Ga ze gede ga
Ga ze gede ga
Ga gede ga to
Ga zegi de ga
Ga zegi to, gide gide gide dza dza
Kre kre ga dzi, ga dzi ga dzi dzi dzi, pausing for counts, one, two.*

Then the rhythm is repeated several times depending on the discretion of the master drummer, until he changes to the *trɔtrɔ* (turning) rhythm. The dancers will respond to the cue and change to that movement gesture. For this rhythm instruction, the dancers’ movement gesture is that of pleading or begging. Within the context of the dance, the idea requires the ladies to be pleading with their men folk or the warriors not to go to war. For that the drum rhythm sounds *To-to-to-to* or *kpɔ-kpɔ-kpɔ-kpɔ-kpɔ*. The latter, which in the Ewe language means look or watch, in the context of the dance, could refer to the ladies begging or pleading with their men as it is expressed in the Ewe language as *mede kuku*. On the contrary the *to-to-to* rhythm according to most master drummers does not really have any meaning unlike *kpɔ-kpɔ-kpɔ-kpɔ-kpɔ* rhythm, so, the term developed for the rhythm and the movement gesture is *mede kuku*.

Though I have already discussed side drumming. I have to broaden its relevance in *Agbekor*, since the sound that side drumming produces has various interpretations in different dance contexts. In *Agbekor* it is a significant signal in the dance performance which provides cues and signals for the dancer to respond. In the *Agbekor* dance form as stated earlier, side drumming signifies ‘attention’ or a cue to call dancers/performers to ‘get ready’. This in the Ewe language is *nuntsuo* and *toḍoḍo* but for easy pronunciation I prefer *toḍoḍo* as the terminology. The term for the side drum was created in view of the movement gesture which is, the dancer putting the two legs together, arms by the side, chest out and the head is also up straight, (standing erect), almost synonymous to a military officer at an attention. These movement gestures are performed when the drum rhythm is prescribed for *toḍoḍo*.

Another drum instruction is to sharpen the swords/knives in readiness for war. The dancers must demonstrate movement gestures that indicate symbolically how swords are sharpened on stones in the indigenous setting. For this rhythm, the terminology was created out of the Ewe language which translates as *mi nyre he mieyina ava*. That is, ‘Sharpen your sword, but we are going to war’. This is also another drum rhythm that does not correspond with the language but rather the action or the activity of the dance movement. The whole phrase continues to the warning in which the movement gesture indicates a warning sign. The drum language sounds *dza dza dzi*. In the spoken language it says ‘*kpodo kuio dzi*’, which means be careful. ‘*Mi kpɔ, mi kpɔ, me afo tu wo*’, this is the language of another drum phrase that corresponds with the drum rhythm which is



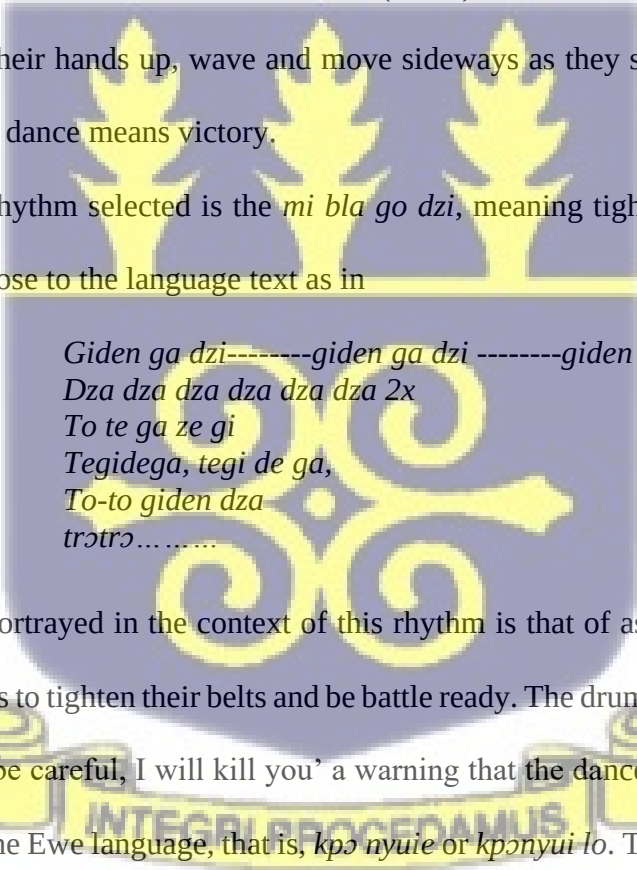
Gide, gide ga ze ge ga 2x
Gaze ge de ga 2x
Ga gede ga to
Ga zegi de ga
Ga zegi to, gide gide dza dza
Kre kre ga dzi, ga dzi, ga dzi ga dzi dzi dzi, (me gbɛ/mbɛ dome)
Meaning retreat or go back.

The performance of these movement gestures is such that, the dancer gives a warning like look/ watch I will kick you. This is demonstrated in the gesture and continues with all the rhythmic variations to the point where the drummer instructs the dancer to retreat or move

backwards, (*megbe*). In the Ewe language moving backwards or retreat is simply *me gbe/me gbe dome*. Therefore, the term *me gbe/me gbe* was created simply based on the concept of the backward movement which the drummer plays as *ga dzi, ga dzi ga dzi dzi dzi*, then the *trɔtrɔ* rhythm is played to change the variation or the sequence.

The next rhythmic phrase selected is the '*mikpɔ dzidzɔ*', meaning be happy in the Ewe language. The rhythm sounds are *To-toto to-toto, to-to toto*. This rhythm played by the master drummer instructs the dancers to roll the prop (sword) in their hand and step on the heel of the feet interchangeably as the rhythm plays. In an earlier rhythm such as *Kpɔ-kpɔ kpɔ – kpɔ kpɔ kpɔ* in which I have identified to be 'look/watch', this time in, the context of the dance performance, '*mikpɔ dzidzɔ*' signifies 'look around you for we are victorious, so be happy'. The next rhythmic cue that follows is the turn (*trɔtrɔ*) and the cue that follows requires the dancers to raise their hands up, wave and move sideways as they shout or ululate which in the context of the dance means victory.

The last rhythm selected is the *mi bla go dzi*, meaning tighten your belt. The drum rhythm sounds close to the language text as in



Giden ga dzi-----giden ga dzi -----giden ga dzi
Dza dza dza dza dza dza 2x
To te ga ze gi
Tegidega, tegi de ga,
To-to giden dza
trɔtrɔ.....

The dance idea portrayed in the context of this rhythm is that of asking the warriors or the dancer/performers to tighten their belts and be battle ready. The drum rhythm instructs further that one should 'be careful, I will kill you' a warning that the dancers articulate through the drum rhythm in the Ewe language, that is, *kpɔ nyui* or *kpɔnyui lo*. The performers finish that rhythm phrase with '*mea sɛɛ mea sɛɛ mi kpɔ! mi kpɔ!*', 'which means I will kill you, look! Look!'. To the end of the fast version of the *Agbekor*, the drummers play a series of instructions which indicates to the dancer/performer that the performance is gradually coming to an end. Some of the rhythm indicators are the *Mia yie kalɛwode*. This statement

and term mean ‘let’s go to the land of the warriors. The drum rhythm that the drummer plays is *Dza Dzi* which in verbal Ewe language is *Mitso ka* meaning ‘get up/stand upright’. And it is to this that the expected response is *Mia yie Kalewode* meaning ‘let’s go to the land of the warriors. The next rhythmic phrase is:

Drum call

To-to kre kre/kpla kpla
To-to kre kre/kpla kpla

Dancer/Performer Response

Ayee
Ayee

The verbal Ewe drum text is *Mitso ka-mitso ka* and the dancers’ response is *Aayie* which is more of a nonsense syllable but meaning ‘okay’. For these sets of rhythms, I simply used the existing response within the dance form as the terminology because students already are familiar with the response, but not necessarily the drum rhythm. So, in putting emphasis on the drum rhythm during the teaching process students will become used to the drum rhythm itself.

Other rhythms follow suit in readiness for battle or the enactment of the battle. As recounted earlier in chapter four, it has also been observed by other scholars like Euba (1970), Nketia (1974), Green (1985), Younge (2011) and Amegago (2012) in recent times, that drum music is a living archive of historical narratives communicated through drum language and re-enacted in the human body. The *Agbekor* dance form is clearly a reflection of the various accounts and narratives of warriors who survived the war and returned to give accounts of their exploits on the battlefield.

This is a chart showing a summary of the various drum cues and their corresponding proposed terminologies created.

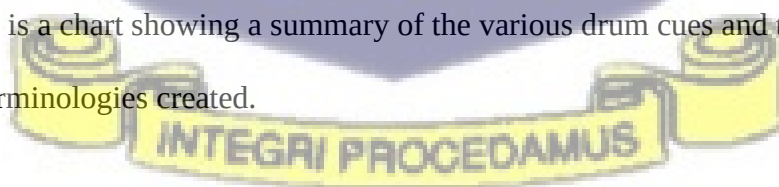


Table 3. Summary chart

Drum Cue (Rhythm)	Drum Text (language)	Term/Jargon Created
<i>Tò te gaze gi</i>	<i>Trɔ na kpɔ axa dzi</i>	<i>Trɔtrɔ kpui</i>
<i>Tò hre be ge deng</i>	<i>trɔ na kpɔ axa dzi.</i>	<i>Trɔtrɔ le gbe</i>
<i>To-to kre kre</i>	<i>Mitso ka/Misto kpla kpla</i>	<i>Aayie Aayie</i>
<i>Kae kae kae kae</i>	<i>Tsa tsa tsa</i>	<i>Toɔoɔo</i>
<i>Dza dzin</i>		<i>Mia yi Kalɛwode</i>
<i>Gide ga dzi</i>	<i>Mi bla go dzi</i>	<i>Mi bla go dzi</i>
<i>Gya, gya, gya gyan</i>		<i>Kpo dokuiwo</i>
<i>Dza dzi</i>	<i>Mikpɔ dzidzɔ</i>	<i>Mikpɔ dzidzɔ</i>
<i>Tò-tòtò tò</i>	<i>Kpɔ-kpɔ kpɔ</i>	<i>medɛ kuku</i>
<i>Gide, gide ga ze ge ga</i>	<i>Mi kpo mi kpo me afo tu wo</i>	<i>Me afo tu wò</i>
<i>Gya gyi gya gyi gya gyi gyi</i>	<i>Me gbe me gbe me gbe gbe gbe</i>	<i>Me gbe</i>
<i>Gito, gito-tega gasegi dzi, ga</i>	<i>Nyere he la miyi na ava</i>	<i>Nyere he</i>
<i>Ga zigren to</i>	<i>Futɔ wo gbɔna</i>	<i>Adzesɔɔ</i>
<i>Gi-to</i>	<i>Mitsio</i>	<i>kotae dzi/Fɔta dzi</i>
<i>Giden ga giden to Dza- dza</i>		<i>Bobo ta</i>

6.7 Conclusion

This chapter analysed *Agbekor* drum texts by proposing codifying and developing jargons and terminologies in the Ewe language for the dance form. Using the narratives of the dance and the tonal sound image of the drums, the chapter also discussed other dance forms taught at the Department of Dance Studies of the University of Ghana. As identified in the example of the *Damba-Takai* drum rhythms and the dance gestures the drum rhythms could be termed as codification within the indigenous language.

Furthermore, this chapter sought to create the understanding of what the indigenous drum cues and the drum languages could be uttering on one hand and what the expressions and articulation of bodily movement gestures could also be expressing on the other hand. This is because the study has tried to articulate the various drum interpretations and their meanings in the indigenous Ewe language as well as vocalised their tonal sounds. This in fact is a symbiotic relationship that has enabled jargon or terminologies to be created and developed for several movement gestures and their rhythmic patterns and phrases specifically for this study in *Agbekor* dance form. This whole idea I have analysed using the concept of prescriptive, descriptive and directive (PDD), of how traditional African music affects its dance. I argue that almost all movement gestures in the *Agbekor* dance are prescriptive and they also describe as well as direct the body movement in motion.

ANALYSIS AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

7.0 Introduction

This chapter builds up on the previous chapter and further concentrates on analysing the data gathered from the fieldwork interviews, videos and audio recordings, and participant observation as a student in class as well as an instructor involved in the teaching practice. The discussion also extends to other indigenous dance forms observed in the other classes such as the level 200 Traditional Dance class and the level 300 and 400 Dance Technique classes. I am interested in the teaching methods employed in transmitting the practical dance form to students particularly in the level 200 and 300 class. Whiles in the dance technique class my interest is in the kind of technique that informed the teaching of indigenous African dance forms in the various classes.

This study helps situate the discussion in a framework that will enable understanding in the whole practice of the master drummer through playing of the drum rhythm and the reaction from dancers/performers through descriptive movement gestures. Finally, the interpretation that is given by the performer through bodily praxis as a performance, is a communication style known as triadic communication espoused by Hill & McGrath (2008). Triadic communication is an approach of interacting with another through a third party. In that the way drum instrumentation affect communication with dancers through the drum medium is termed as triadic communication, (Hill & McGrath, 2008, p. 52). Here, the master drummer communicates to the performers/dancers through a medium with very close symbiotic attributes in the indigenous drum rhythms, the song texts and the movement gestures. Communication is a two-way affair which involves both the eyes and the ears in that be it a sign action or a sound, there is communication. Therefore, in the traditional dance form, the drums provide communicative tools that are understood by the dancer/performer, and the performers intend to respond through bodily articulation, which Jackson (1983, p.

328) regards as secondary to verbal 'praxis'. In the course of my analysis, the discussion makes reference to the movement gestures that are articulated as a result of the drum rhythms as performance of non-verbal art (Bateson & Ruesch, 1968, p. 209; Hymes, 1975, Yankah, 1995, and 2000, p. 644).

In analysing the *Agbekor* lead drum rhythm as text to the dance movement gesture executed using the body, Danesi (2004, pp. 4-5) identifies signs as anything such as colour, gesture, wink etc. The concept was initially termed by Ferdinand de Saussure and Sanders Piers into symbols and signification where meaning is deduced from anything that seems to communicate. In view of this, the drum rhythm and the body movement gestures are signs and symbols that derive interpretations for which the drum rhythm and the body movements communicate symbiotically. In the performance of indigenous African dance, both the drum rhythm and the bodily movement expressions/gestures are communicative signs and symbols subject to interpretation.

The symbiotic relationships of the drum text and the dances are the signs and symbols that need to be understood by students. For teaching purpose, students, drum instructors and finally dance lecturers also need to know these coded signs and symbols to aid knowledge transmission. For instance, in the case of different narratives for the same drum rhythm (with reference to Seth Gati) where the movement gesture is the same, what happens to the jargon or the terminologies? Clifford Geertz (as cited in Sklar, 1991, p. 6) identifies that it is "impossible to determine a wink without referring to the social codes that lie behind the movement gesture". Anyone can give interpretation subject to the understanding of the tonal language of the drum. In this analysis, the interpretation of the drum language is not only based on the tonal language as David Locke has identified, but also firstly on the historical narrative of the dance and, secondly, the movement gestures. This is supported by Holzhausen (2000), who discusses the creation of traditional dances in the northern parts of Tanzania where historical narratives as well as information gathered within the communities (pp. 542 -46) were used in creating traditional dances for the people.

There is always common ground where one can find an avenue to operate and create a terminology using the social narratives as well as the movement gesture. That is why for the narratives about the dancers catching the supposed bullets coming from the symbolic gunshots from the drum and the idea of greetings, I maintained the terminology on the response of *aayie- aayie* due to the common grounds for both narratives.

7.1 The role of Synaesthesia in *Agbekor* Drum Performance

In analysing the *Agbekor* drum rhythm as verbal or speech text, it is important to deconstruct what makes the drum rhythm a verbal or a speech text. To employ John Austin's speech acts theory and support it with Richard Bauman's concept of a verbal act as performance as discussed in the literature review. The drum language can be analysed as text and as a speech act that enables dancers/performers to respond to the drum rhythms when it is played, specifically the perlocutionary acts, (Ong, 2002, p. 157). Williams (1976; 1994) advocates the use of linguistics model for a dance ethnography research which according to her helps with analysing dance movements in relation to music. Sklar (1991) argues that theoretical approaches to movement analysis vary. Therefore, this supports my argument that the use of Labanotation in analysing Western dances such as ballet, does not need to be a model for indigenous African dance forms. Since in indigenous African dance one needs to describe a series of movement gestures to determine a particular movement. Unlike the ballet where words are used to determine movements in the description and analysing of African dance movements, there are other theoretical approaches to consider. For example, Kaeppler (1972) depends on structural analysis as the analytical tool in examining dance movements. She resorts to interrogating 'micro and macro' movements to illuminate the complex correspondence between Tongan dance and music. Joan Kaeliinohomoku elaborates the functions dance plays in culture to compare Hopi and Hawaiian movement aesthetics. All these forms describe and analyse dance movements in various ways; however, they do not

concentrate on the tonal elements of the drum text as discussed by Kwabena Nketia, Doris Green, Kofi Agawu and Paschal Younge.

In chapter five I have discussed and explored further the PDD (prescriptive, descriptive and directive), concept. I identified how traditional drum music prescribe dance gestures and vice versa describing movements in relationship to the music rhythm and finally, how traditional drum music through the bell pattern directs the dance form through a concept known as the metronome (Hanna, 1979). Locke (1980, p. 130), has also identified this phenomenon and describes it as “meter in which the bell pattern controls not only the rhythm” but also the songs and the dancers as well to stay within time frame.

The consideration of the coded language that the drum rhythm plays for the dancer/performer/student to interpret in terms of movement gestures, translates into the whole performance of African indigenous music and dance performance. This whole study is underpinned by Geurts’s theory of synaesthesia. This where the student hears the *Agbekor* rhythm to turn (*Trōtrō*) for example responds to rhythm and articulates the exact gestures using the body. Watching the dance lecturer demonstrate a particular *Agbekor* movement or *Atsia*, the student will be expected to perform exactly just what the student has observed. This situation of synaesthesia is an example of triadic communication where the command to perform *Atsia* in the *Agbekor* dance form is given through a third party being the drum rhythm (language). From the class presentation one gets the image of triadic communication surrounding the master drummer, the drum (rhythm) and the performer. The master drummer provides the cue and the rhythmic patterns and phrases for the dancers/students to respond in movements. The master drummer could have easily told the dancers/students to turn verbally and this would be easily understood by the student/dancers. But in this case the instruction is provided through a medium of the drum where the rhythm is coded for the student/dancer to unravel the coded message and execute in non-verbal gesture.

Synaesthesia as mentioned earlier, deals with the effect of the senses on a part of the body So, that the use of sound on the ear and eye affects the cognitive mind which makes the

body react in response to the sound. For this purpose, decoding the drum rhythm for easy understanding helps the dancer/performer/student to respond exactly to the speech acts that comprises the drum rhythm. This also provides its corresponding interpretation through descriptive movement gestures.

Another consideration in developing the terminology was the genre of movement gestures that the dance possesses. In an interview, Wisdom Ziga⁴⁶ recounts that the drum language in the *Agbekor* dance is a symbol of the gun shots that were fired during the wars the Ewes fought. He argues that this is especially true for the *Tò* sound in the *Trɔtrɔ* (turning) rhythm, as well as the rest of the turning rhythm which sounds *rebege dem gedem, gedem, ge-ge-ge-gedem*. Thus, the dancers/performers turn around to see the direction the sound is coming from in an attempt to hide or run. This, according to Wisdom Zigar, is *trɔ na kpɔ da, fika estsuo di"dem le*. This in the Ewe language is, turn your back and watch where the gun shots are from, and subsequently react to the sound.

This contributes to the reaction of movement gesture to the drum rhythm which, is in line with the ‘perlocutionary’ speech acts elaborated by John Auston and (cited in Ong, 2002, p. 165). Perlocutionary is action words or phrases when said requires that an action is taking place. In that regard, the *Agbekor* drum rhythm is about the exchange of bullets and the reaction from the warriors (dancers/performers). Since the rhythms are verbal acts played through the drum, the drum rhythm therefore requires an action (movement gesture) from the human body. Judith Lynn Hanna (1979) identifies the nonverbal communication elements in the dance gestures that the body express when these drum rhythms are played. So that for me using the term in the Ewe language corroborates Hanna (p. 83) assertion that “creating new taxonomies does not destroy old ones in existence”. These new phrases and terms rather re-enforce the signs and the whole activities performed through another coded medium (drums) which needs decoding.

⁴⁶ Wisdom Ziga is a senior drum instructor with the Department of Dance Studies who, also serves as a resource person for Ewe music and dance performance with special interest in drum language.

In the teaching of the dance gestures, the *Agbekor* drum rhythm prescribes surrogate drum texts for its articulations in dance movement gestures. This is also related to PDD concept identified in chapter four. The surrogate drum text implies that the master drummer gives instruction to the dancers/students through a medium (drum) to be interpreted by the students/dancers/performers in movements. The drum rhythm provides cues for dancers to articulate movement gesture, (Green 1985, p. 408). These cues as identified by Euba (1970), Nketia (1974), Locke (1980) and corroborated by Green, (2013; 2014), are played within the Ewe context and the dancers demonstrate the movement gestures using their bodies which also describes the drum rhythm as it is being played. In other words, the students' dance gestures are descriptions of the prescriptive rhythms played for the student dancer to respond in terms of dance movement. I very much share the concerns and concepts of Green when she states that:

The concept of traditional African music is a source of communication and history retold through sound. Traditional African music consists of numerous drum signals and drum languages probably as numerous and diversified as the people and languages of Africa. Drum signals were used to send and relay messages, to attract attention, and to summon people. Drum languages were used to communicate as well as an accompaniment for dance. Drum signals and languages imitate the tonality of the spoken language (Green, 1985, p. 406).

It is in line with Green's assertion that I find the *Agbekor* movement gestures describing the drum rhythms that communicate to the dancers for interpretation using their body. For example, the *Agbekor* rhythm contains turning movement gestures, which in the Ewe language is *trɔtrɔ*. So, for every *trɔtrɔ* rhythm the dancer hears by listening, the dancer exhibits a description of the heard turning rhythm. In other words, the traditional drum music makes the movement gesture of the drum rhythm visual. It is in reference to this concept that I refer to traditional drum music as prescribing dance. Doris Green is but one among other music and dance scholars who also identify music as making dance visible especially the indigenous dance with its music (Green, 2013; 2014).

Green has always been a strong advocate for the use of Greenotation as the best form of standardising the performance of African music and dance by providing the musical symbol and dance gestures on the score developed by Rudolf Von Laban in describing and analysing dance movements. Though both Labanotation and Greenotation are good approaches in analysing and describing dance, it is difficult for Labanotation to capture all the nuances that the body articulates in indigenous African dance movements and its relationship to its music. Greenotation on the other hand provides a notation of the rhythm but does not give concise description and analysis of the traditional dance form. Below is an example of a Greenotation on the *Agbekor* music and dance form.

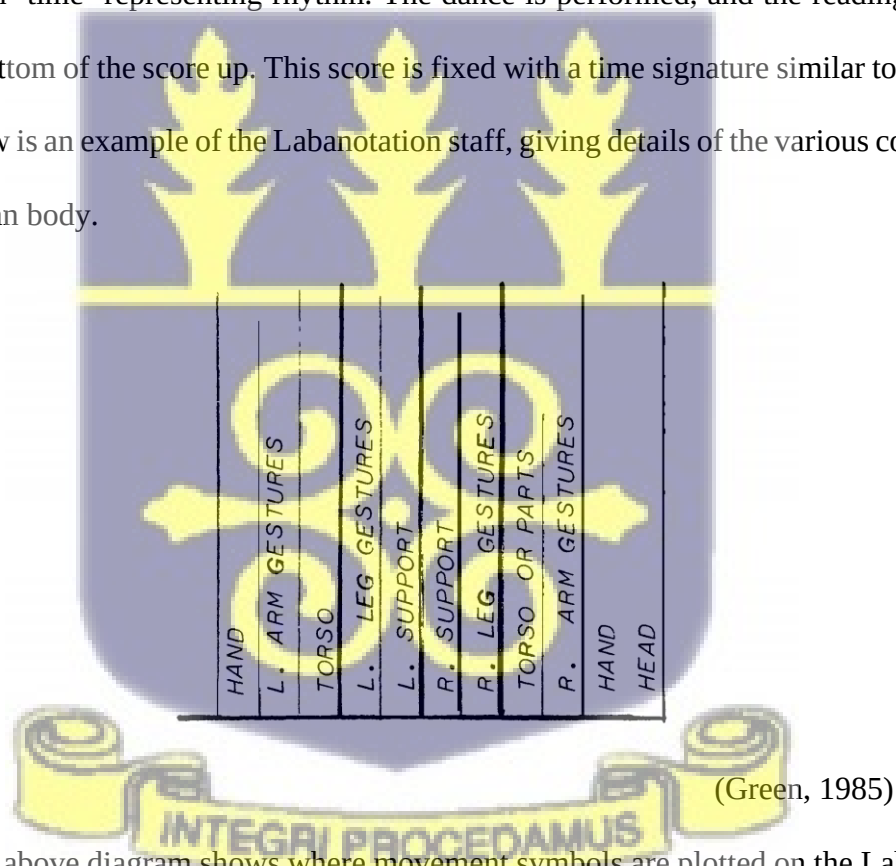
Atsiabekor

(Green, 1985, p. 423)

The above notation provides the drum rhythms for all the *Agbekor* drum ensemble as well as the movement gestures of the dance. The notation by Doris Green also draws on the Labanotation symbols to develop her creation and analysis. The *Agbekor* dance notation still does not provide all the nuances and how movement gestures are performed. Students in the

Department of Dance studies are not trained in Greennotation. Therefore, cannot understand the concept even though the students can identify the symbols due to its closeness to Labanotation. The advantage of the Greennotation is that the notation provides the rhythm alongside the movement gesture. In other words, for examples, the *Tò* rhythm for turn is parallel to the *Tròtrò* movement gesture of the dance.

Therefore, using Anna Hutchinson's motif description which also relies on the Labanotation symbols but simplified for easy interpretation can be argued as better than Labanotation for analysing and describing indigenous African dance movements. But the same cannot be said about the indigenous African dance music. For instance, motif description uses vertical lines to represent movement on the Laban Staff. The lines are measured in 'time' representing rhythm. The dance is performed, and the reading analysed from the bottom of the score up. This score is fixed with a time signature similar to the Laban staff. Below is an example of the Labanotation staff, giving details of the various components of the human body.



The above diagram shows where movement symbols are plotted on the Labanotation staff. As compared to the music staff, every space has a name which indicates the symbol of the body part to be indicated in the space. A careful observation of the staff has shown where a hand gesture is to be placed. Likewise, the left arm as well as the torso, the left and the right leg respectively.

Amegago's (2000, pp. 247-268) description of *Agbekor* movements provides a long winding phrases of words describing a single movement gesture or series of gestures that can be very exhausting to remember. For example, in describing the *ava wo ge* movement gestures, this is how Modesto Amegago captured the movement articulation.

In the School of Performing Arts *kpakpo*, which is usually referred to as the long turning, the dancers would round off every main figure with a tum and perform the basic Ewe movement sideways right-left-right, followed by two additional steps toward sideways left and outward-inward-outward twisting of the right foot simultaneously with inward slashing and outward arcing with horsetail or sword held in the right hand, and spreading to almost second position, punctuated with sideways gestures of both hands and a leg (Amegago, 2000, p. 247).

This is a clear indication of why these movement gestures need to be named in the Ewe language to make it simple for interpretation and easy recall. This is because descriptions of the dance movement gestures are too long and winding to follow. It is sometimes difficult for students to capture the descriptions during the teaching process. Thus, students may lose focus in the description of one movement and may possibly not interpret the movements well in executing the written description in movement gestures. Furthermore, the movement description is not congruent to the rhythmic phrase hence how does a student relate the rhythm to the movement? Unless both rhythm and movement possess the same name or jargon that can be understood by the performer executing the dance. From Amegago's description above, I get the impression that "*Kpakpo*" could be a term given to the turning in the *Agbekor* dance during his days in the School of Performing Arts. In summary, codifying these rhythms to the movement gestures will provide better approach in describing and interpreting dance movements with its music.

7.2 Understanding Drum Language and its Relationship to Body Gestures

The indigenous African dance class is one place where students get the opportunity to listen to the drum rhythm for the dances they learn. The 'Newmantics' dance technique class provides also another avenue where students meet almost all the movements, they learn in

the indigenous African dance, although they do not learn them with its music. However, almost all the dance faculty members agree that ‘Newmantics’ serve as a good basis for learning of traditional dance forms in simplified forms. This ‘Newmantic’ approach helps in the teaching of the traditional dances, which many of the students are not aware of. This was corroborated by Donna Amoah, a teaching assistant who was assisting in the ‘Newmantics’ class. For her she became conscious of some of the movements when she became a National Service Personnel and was now teaching traditional dance in the Department of Dance Studies. According to her ‘Newmantics’ must be made known to the students and not left as a silo and expect students to figure its relevance and importance when they are told. Donna argues that it empowers students and encourages them even more in their learning abilities. Even though she acknowledged that the ‘Newmantics’ class had a direct impact on her, she questions if the ‘Newmantics’ technique class was designed for that purpose. For the standardisation process, she hoped that every faculty member will be encouraged to input some of these in their teaching methods. As espoused simply by a dance faculty member⁴⁷ on the issue of standardising Newmantics, the faculty member said ‘it is about time ‘Newmantics’ was codified to relate to the traditional dances in that way students can also identify with it.

In teaching movement gestures, students observe the movements that must be executed from a dance teacher. In addition to observation, the student has to listen to the drum cues, the language being ‘spoken’ from the master drummer and articulate the drum language with its corresponding movement gesture. So, for every drum rhythm that is played/provided by the master drummer, the student must listen first, process, and then articulate it in a movement gesture. Therefore, in the *trɔtrɔ* (turning) movement in the *Agbekor*, the student must pay close attention to the cue that is provided in order to hear the *Tò* sound. The sound enables the student to prepare and turn immediately after the *Tò* sound.

⁴⁷ Interview with Sena Atsugah on the 5th of March 2018

In this case the cue to exhibit the turn movement gesture relies strongly on the sound from the master drum. This therefore applies to almost all the movement variations in *Agbekor* where the reliance on the drum rhythm and movement execution depends on a cue(s). The cues in the dance form serve as communicative elements discussed in various forms as performance. With reference to the speech acts theory and the verbal acts as performance espoused by both Austin (1975) and developed later by Bauman (1977) respectively, the drum gives action activities in coded language for the dancer to respond in another coded language. This coded language is decoded for the students to understand to make the expression of the movement gestures meaningful. In other words, to complete the whole phrase of the communication chain, both the drum text and the non-verbal bodily actions must be decoded for easy comprehension. When students understand these meaning of gestures in addition to the oral and historical narratives of the dance, the performance of the dance becomes easy to express and articulate with the right emotions and feeling. The lack of understanding of the nuances of the dance normally will lead to spontaneous and jerky movement expression.

The lead drum gives directives and instruction as to what the dancers should do. Without the instruction one cannot do otherwise. So, from observing the teaching performance in the classroom one realized that even the dance teacher at a point was anticipating the rhythm and wanting to turn when the drummer had not given the instruction, (cue). This practice happens a lot to students during teaching and learning situation because most students have not developed the habit of listening out for the *To* sound cue but rather anticipate the rhythm hence the student will keep making mistakes.

7.3 The Use of Resource Person in Teaching.

Most of the classes I observed had Resource Persons being used to teach some of the dances in the class. As indicated in chapter four, the use of Resource Persons has always been part of the pedagogical approach right from the early beginning for the dance school. Most of

them proved very effective which invariably augments the dance teacher's efforts in the classroom.

During the fieldwork process I visited several classes where I observed the teaching methods being used. In some of the classes visited I noticed the use of Resource Persons either explaining the execution of some movement or demonstrating for the students to learn. In another example, I gathered from the resource person in the class that he felt his role was only to correct certain movement gestures that were not being executed well. Therefore, he most often sat in the class to observe and then comes in at certain points during the class to do what sometimes 'we' refer to as 'cleaning' or 'polishing'. The idea is to move on with teaching movements so students get the structure and understanding of how the dance form should be and then go back to 'clean'.

In another example, I witnessed a Resource Personnel who was brought to the class to assist but rather became a problem for the students. In this situation it seemed the students were not comfortable with his style or method of transmission. Thus, it turned out that the Resource Person described the students as not serious, lazy and not wanting to learn. Observing him teach, I realized that the Resource Person's main aim was to correct movement gestures that the students had already been taught which he felt were wrongly executed by the students. In his attempt to correct the movements, the students became more confused. As I have recounted earlier, some movement gestures are similar in execution and belong to sets of movement variations that have mutual resemblance. However, in some cases the drum rhythm may be different. In other words, a particular drum rhythm may describe different movement gestures to be executed. Who determines which of the movement gestures is correct? And this became an issue in the classroom. This problem was quite embarrassing for the Resource Person since the lecturers in the class felt that what they had taught the students was right. Talking to some of the students after the class, the students were of the view that the Resource Personnel did not speak to them well and that he wanted to change some of the movements the Resource Person felt were not 'original' or 'authentic'.

This issue of originality got the students more confused since what the students felt had already been taught by their dance teachers was original. In such a situation it becomes very embarrassing as well as troubling for the dance lecturer hence the standard practice of the set of movement gestures that are taught in the class. It is obvious that the *Agbekor*, possesses lots of movement variations which cannot be exhausted within one performance, likewise in a classroom situation. Thus, with these new terminologies for example, there will be a uniform agreement in the execution of such movements that have different variations. This will help to forestall future occurrence such as this. By using one particular movement gesture as an example, that is, *Metso ge/Me se ge* (Ref. p.195), to deconstruct and illustrate this possibility. For this particular movement gesture there are different interpretation to the performance. In the first one the dancer is expected to throw his or her right hand in the air. With the second, using the prop in the right hand to slash his or her neck to symbolise cutting of the neck or killing. These two variations can create confusion in a classroom situation if careful analysis is not done to choose one for the classroom. It is due to such situations during teaching that I argue for standardised movement gestures in that a symbolic cutting of the neck with the prop is not done in mid-air to avert the confusion. So, this become the norm and standard practice in the Department of Dance Studies for all indigenous dance teachers, drum instructors and teaching/graduate assistance to know how a particular movement or gesture will be performed with their names (terms/jargon). In that case when Resource Persons are invited to the class there should be dialogue between the dance teacher and the Resource Person as to how the adoptions of certain movements would be executed for uniformity and the purposes of standardisation. If for any reason the Resource Person feels that the movement gestures being performed are not right, there must be discussion between all drum instructors and dance teachers with the Resource Personnel to agree on any new forms before the movement gestures are accepted and changed. That way students who have previous indigenous African dance experience before gaining admission the university would conform to the new situations and not what they know already. This especially is important

since the experiences of such students can become confused in the classroom. In this situation such students should be encouraged to rather add on to the indigenous dance knowledge as well as movement vocabulary that the dance may possess especially in the case of *Agbekor* dance form.

7.4 Demonstrations amidst Vocalisation of Drum Language.

This section analyses how vocalisation of drum rhythm amid teaching indigenous African dance can be employed. In the teaching process it is necessary to create a situation where the dance teacher transmits the drum language to the student through the process of vocalisation. This process of transmission is to break down movement gestures for easy assimilation of rhythm and movement. In this situation cues are sometimes not really given attention to and at times, the concentration is on how movements are acquired and executed. For this purpose, the dance teacher allows the master drummer to stay on a particular rhythm for as long as possible, employing the method of repetition in teaching. In one of the instances during my field work in the level 200 dance class, the lecturer tasked the students to literally “eat the drum language”. The statement “eat the drum language” implies that the students were to memorize and embody the drum language for easy identification and assimilation.

In another example when observing the *Agbekor* dance class as usual the dance lecturer teaching used certain phrase to describe some movement gestures in the dance form. In the description of the movement phrase the dance lecturer said, “on the second rhythm phrase, you start moving backwards”. This for me is a vague statement and the question that ensued is how should students 'move' backwards? In the understanding of the rhythm how should the student identify and know the rhythm phrase? The solution is that in teaching the movement pattern of dance as well as trying to relate to the rhythm pattern to the movements the dance teacher can easily mention the term in the indigenous language, in this case, the Ewe language. Once that movement has been explained with its musical drum pattern it will

be easy for the students to identify the term with the movement gesture and respond to it accordingly.

In another example, there is a particular movement gesture that has many interpretations in its execution. This I have termed as the 'cutting movement' gesture in the *Agbekor* dance form. This movement gesture also became an issue in the class as to which of the 'cutting movement' was to be done. In performing the 'cutting' gesture there are various narratives that account to how the gesture is embodied. The gesture is a symbolic slashing or cutting of the neck in the oral narratives but other accounts also recount that the movement gesture is through the skies, while others too have seen the movement through the side of the right leg when raised during performance. All these accounts and narratives use the same drum rhythmic phrase to express these movements. The question I asked was, which of the movements is the appropriate one to be taught in the class? Since all the various narratives depict the same symbolic slashing of the neck, I therefore draw the conclusion that, there may not be only one possible one movement gesture to use to determine that particular movement phrase for the dance form but rather, determine the symbolic nature of the dance. From the narratives and interviews conducted, it has been established in this thesis that the movements and gestures were from accounts of the warriors who survived the war (*Agbekor*). Therefore, the different gestures could be the result of the various accounts of the different warriors. On the other hand, according to Seth Gati the various movement accounts could also be from the different places in Volta Region, that is, Anyako, Afiadenyigba, Dogadzi and Anlo where the *Agbekor* dance is believed to have originated. I therefore deduce that, there could possibly be a family of movement resemblances that the movements could be sourced from in the indigenous setting. Thus, the Department of Dance Studies needs to decide among numerous movement resemblances which one to opt for in the academy.

With the example of *Bawa* dance form in the level 300 traditional dance class, I observed that at the beginning of the class the dance teacher introduced the drum rhythm to the students. He made the students just sit and listen to the whole drum rhythm of the dance

form. The next stage, the lecturer with the teaching assistants in the class performed the whole dance as demonstrational dance for the students to see and appreciate the nature of the dance form. At this stage students are made to employ observational skills and the listening to the drum rhythm in the teaching approach. Sometimes the dance lecturer just made the lead drum the *Kroboto* play with only the timeline (double bell) or the bell for students to listen. All these teaching approaches are to enable the student to develop mechanisms of assimilating the dance both rhythmically, and as sequence and movement embodiment.

The characteristics of the *Bawa* dance form are such that, it is a sequential dance arranged from movement one to movement nine. So, it is quite easy to follow the sequence because the teacher makes it clear that it is an orderly arranged dance from one sequence of movement to the other set of movement sequence. What the student will have to do is to pay attention to the cues from the drum rhythm. It is the cues and the drum rhythm that determine the description of movement in the next sequence. Though the student dancer must listen out for the cues for the next rhythm, the students may know which movement sequence is next and prepare for it. Unlike dances such as *Bawa*, *Gahu* and *Siki* to mention some few sequential dances, the *Agbekor* dance form is not sequential. The dance form is solely dependent on the master drummer to provide cues for the variation to be performed at each point. This makes the teaching of *Agbekor* dance performance quite confusing and difficult to grasp due to the understanding of the drum rhythm, (language).

In analysing some of the selected *Agbekor* drum rhythms and their corresponding movement gestures, for example the rhythm for *Trɔtrɔ* (turning) readily is the first option since it serves as rhythm break to change from one variation to the other. In the *Agbekor* dance form all the first rhythms played or heard are cues for the dancer to prepare and execute on the next rhythmic phrase. It operates in giving command for someone to respond as it is with the speech act. The command is given before the person responds. Therefore, until the *Tò* rhythm is played and heard distinctly the dancer will not be able to respond. On the other hand, with the slow version of the dance form where the turning has two variations of

rhythms, the dancers must listen to the variation and process the rhythm in memory to know which of the variation is meant for the long *Trɔtrɔ le gbe* or the short *Trɔtrɔ kpui*. It is when the rhythm is distinctly heard that the dancer can now communicate to the rhythm with its articulating movement gesture. The dance lecturer in teaching the movement describes how the movement should be while demonstrating the movement. For the description of the *Trɔtrɔ* in the slow *Agbekor* movement, one must kick the left leg slightly forward and step on the right foot. Then perform a half turn through the left, then step starting from the right leg to the left leg and then turn to face the original orientation started from. This could be executed within six (6) counts after the *Tò* rhythm is played. For the fast *Agbekor* turn, the same concept is applied but executed within five (5) counts to come to your original position.

The next rhythmic phrase and its movement is the *ava wɔ ge*. The movement executed is the side to side movement; pointing with the prop-like sword dancers/students have in the right hand with the left hand (the palm), on their chest. So, from the various exercises and experiments done through this research, students are going through learning *ava wɔ ge* and the *trɔ nakpo dzi* movement gestures as the dance teacher leads them in the follow-the leader approach. One notices that the master drum in the class is the *Sogo* drum, instead of the *Atsimevu* drum. There is certainly a great difference in the tonal sound of the *Atsimevu* and the *Sogo* which dancers must get used to. Because the switch from one drum language tone to the other is likely to confuse students in hearing the drum language, I always advocate that the right drum ensemble be used in the various classes since it helps in listening out for cues to enhance their performance during practical dance examinations.

I realised that the drum instructors also assist in the teaching of the dances. This is because there were many occasions that the instructors would either stop drumming to correct some incident of movement gesture that is not being performed well by students. A typical example was when the drum instructor stopped drumming to comment on an incident where the students were not responding to the drum rhythm for them to go down and were remaining upright. He stated that he would continue playing the same rhythm until the students go down.

This quickly changed the attitude of the students into doing the correct movement variation in the class. Again, sometimes the drum instructors are called upon to come and explain the idea behind a certain movement gesture and also to demonstrate or to teach a song type that relates with the dance.

7.5 Findings

So far in the teaching approaches I observed I have come to the realization that almost all the teaching faculty in the Department of Dance Studies agree that there should be a common method in dance instruction and what actually goes into the teaching (content). From various interviews and discussions, I have observed that in teaching movement gestures there are differences and variations in movement execution by students. Though this invariably is not a negative approach to teaching and learning, it does not also help in the synchronization of movement gestures. Currently, it is a common practice to encounter students who complain that ‘we were not taught like this’ or ‘we were not taught these movements.’ This is especially true when different teachers have taught different groups of the same cohorts who get together at their final year due to the structure of the dance curriculum. The expectation of the dance lecturer is that the students perform the indigenous dance in unison by the time the students get to the third and the fourth years, respectively. However, due to the different experiences’ students have at the Level 100 and 200 stages they are faced with these challenges when they get together at the Level 300 and 400 stages. The dance curriculum is structured in such a way that the BA and the BFA students have separate dance classes and instructors teaching at different times. This is mostly so for the practical classes and the indigenous African dance classes as well. Furthermore, both cohorts have different dance teachers hence their different experiences. For the 2017/18 and 2018/19 academic years the teaching timetable shows the various teachers for traditional dance for these periods.

In February 2019, the Department of Dance Studies, led by faculty member Beatrice Ayi, organized a workshop for teaching faculty, drum instructors, graduate students and

teaching assistants on the modalities of teaching traditional dances. Additionally, it was also to review some of the dances being taught in the department at the various levels. The workshop had quite a number of the senior faculty members with all the drum instructors, the national service personnel as well as the teaching assistants and graduate assistants present. These personalities form the core of knowledge transmission of indigenous African dance and therefore had fair representation of the Department of Dance Studies. In the course of the workshop, Beatrice Ayi set the premise and the agenda for the gathering and started to recount the dances taught and the kind of problem that she had encountered especially in almost all the dance classes in dances such as *Agbadza*, *Kpatsa*, *Bima*, *Gota*, *Bawa*, *Agbekor* etc. So, in view of the corrections, she began picking the dances from the Level 100 stage for review and then tackled 200, 300 and 400 stages.

For this reason, all teachers/instructors need to re-learn the indigenous dances and agree on the components of drum cues and movement gestures to be codified purposely for teaching⁴⁸. This way standardisation is probably the best practice for the dance so instructors would be sure students at all levels, both BA and BFA students have standardised pedagogical approach across their learning process at the University of Ghana, Department of Dance Studies.

At the Level 100 stage, dances such *Agbadza*, *Kpatsa*, *Gota* and *Kpanlogo* were discussed in detail with practical examples done with the drummers. This was to ascertain the best practice of drum language and its execution to movement gesture during teaching. For instance, in the *Gota* dance, it was realised that every drum instructor had his own style of playing cues for a particular change, hence the advocacy for standardisation and codification. During the discussion it was demonstrated whether to introduce a cue for a jump before the execution of the movement gestures (styles) or the drummer should play the

⁴⁸ However, it should also be the responsibility to explain that the dance form is codified across the University curriculum, but this does not mean the dance will be exactly the same across other companies and local dance settings. For indeed, variation does exist across similarly named traditional dance forms.

rhythm without the cue. So, in the two examples demonstrated, we had each drummer play with a cue for a jump and the other play the rhythm variation without a cue so that the student can figure out when to jump and respond to the rhythm and perform the movement gesture. After deliberation and consultations with the drummers it was agreed that the drummers should provide a cue for the change in the movement gesture. This serves as one form of standardising the indigenous African dance with its drum rhythm for teaching purposes.

The same exercise was done with the *Agbadza* dance form. It was identified that the various movement gestures (dance styles), in the dance form do not really have an organized form. Though in performing the *Agbadza* the dancers/performers also rely on drum cues to execute various movements in the dance performance. So, to standardise the dance form, faculty members agreed that the drummers provide cues for the change, so it makes easy to listen for the cue. On the other hand, some dances were identified in that they shared movement gestures with other dance forms such as *Agbekor* and therefore it would not be effective to use those movement gestures in the *Agbadza* dance form.



Figure 42. A picture showing Dr. Beatrice T. Ayi, the facilitator of the dance workshop at the Department of Dance Studies, University of Ghana, on September 20th, 2018. Credit: David Quaye.



Figure 43. A picture of a drum instructor explaining his point by demonstration during the workshop at the Department of Dance Studies, University of Ghana on September 20th, 2018. Credit; David Quaye.



Figure 44. Picture showing the end freezing style of the Gota Dance at the Department of Dance Studies, University of Ghana. 20th September 2017. Credit; David Quaye.



Figure 45. A picture showing movement enactment of the Gota Dance at the Department of Dance Studies, University of Ghana, on 20th September, 2017. Credit: David Quaye.



Figure 46. A picture showing a cross section of the Drum Instructors during the workshop at the Department of Dance Studies, University of Ghana Legon on 20th September 2017. Credit: David Quaye.



**Figure 47. A graduate student taking down notes of the whole process. 20/09/2017.
Credit David Quaye**

With the help of the experimental group, some terminologies were developed on some of the movement gestures on the *Agbekor* dance in the classroom. The experiment turned out that both the drum instructor and the students were comfortable with the terms created. Furthermore, during the application in teaching it was quite effective for the students to identify with the coded name or term with the respective rhythmic phrase or drum language. The effect of the term became the decoded drum rhythm for the movement gestures created for the students to execute. In the analysis I explained to students why a particular terminology was created alongside its rhythm. For example, to enable students understand how some of the rhythms were created. I had to explain to the students how some of the rhythms played on the drum represent symbolic sounds of gun shots as examples. Secondly, having realized that almost all the drum rhythms are supposed to be gun shots that were actually fired and heard during the war front, made students appreciate the dance. The narrative also changed their reaction to the gestures and the articulation of the dance became more profound and meaningful in performance. In a typical series of example, some movement variations in *Agbekor* have to do with the dancers having to go down upon instruction from the drum rhythm and then to move up as well. Sometime dancers must look

up or look down. Other times dancers must retreat and stay down while other times dancers would have to attack, then charge ahead or even run. All these rhythm variations are instructed and prescribed on the drum rhythm to elicit body gestures from dancers/students.

One key finding in the *Damba-Takai* dance gestures and its rhythmic patterns is how dance movements and the drum rhythms have names accompanying the rhythms. Through my interaction with senior ‘Damgbamgba’ dancers and drummers, I realised that what we teach in the Department of Dance Studies is a fusion of two dance forms, that is, *Damba* and *Takai* (*Takar*), as discussed in this chapter and chapter six respectively. This I found fascinating because it ties in with what my research interest and the study is addressing in the *Agbekor* dance. This serves as a benchmark that the Department of Dance Studies can follow up on to create terminologies for the other drum rhythms and their corresponding dance movement gestures. In so doing and with continued practice in the teaching and learning process learning the practical indigenous African dance will become very easy for students.

The picture below shows J. H. Kwabena Nketia teaching drumming as African music classes in the then School of Music, Dance and Drama.



Figure 48. Picture of J.H. Kwabena Nketia (arrowed) teaching African drumming to students. Credit: J. H. K. Nketia Archives.

As part of the training, students learnt to play the drum rhythms which I think also helps in the embodiment and acquisition of movement gestures that accompany the rhythms. As observed earlier, students at the dance school took theory classes in the morning and practical lessons with GDE in the afternoons. As part of my recommendation, I propose that teaching of indigenous African drumming should be linked to dances students learn in the dance class.

In another example from observing the teaching of dance and drumming in the field I noticed that in the teaching of drum rhythms to the students, the dance teacher vocalised the drum tone for students to listen before demonstrating the dance movements. To make it easy for the students to learn the drum language the instructor resorted to a popular music phrase in Ga, (Hani emo oley seke ni wo ye, meaning; ‘do you know how crazy we are, let him/her touch’). This was to enable the dance teacher to teach the drum rhythm accompanying the dance movement. So, in the process of teaching this rhythm the instructor sang the song for the students in order to transmit what the drummers have heard onto the drum. This the dance teacher in (Figure 52) did in correspondence with the movement gesture that the dancers in (Figure 53) were performing.



Figure 49. Vocalising drum rhythm. Picture credit, David Quaye



Figure 50. The picture shows the transmission of drum rhythm to movement gesture.
Picture credit: David Quaye.

One thing I realised from the field was that vocalisation or mouth/lip singing has been an existing practice that has always been there in the teaching process, but the practice has really not been fully explored in making it a standard practice in the transmission process.

7.6 Outcomes of the study

As part of the findings in this study, the concept and definition of pedagogy is an aspect of education which deals with teaching children and young adults. While the concept/definition of andragogy deals with teaching and learning among adults. The emphasis of this thesis is on pedagogy. The study involves university students who fall within the category of young adults where andragogy is applied as the teaching methodology. Within the pedagogical process there are elements of andragogy such as self-directed learner, problem-centred and intrinsically motivated approach. These learning approaches are related to outcomes of the student learner with the pedagogical approach the student is guided towards a goal which requires learning outcomes. From observation during this research I found out that pedagogy is more centred at the University level than andragogy. This is because pedagogy allows for students to be guided by their teachers to achieve their goal and that is why my focus is on pedagogy.

This thesis has shown that there are certain particular learning (domains) outcomes when dealing with pedagogy or teaching process that will be achieved by the learner. These domains are aesthetic, cognitive, affective, and psychomotor activities. All these domains have close relations with stimulation of the brain. This study so far has been able to show that both the dance teachers and students employ various methods in learning. These methods deal with the cognitive and the affective domains of learning. Hanna (2014) acknowledges that, it is the responsibility of the educator to assist the student in the transfer of knowledge from one discipline to another. Since this study is centred on locomotion (dance), the affective sensation draws on both cognitive function and physical movement. This enables the dancer/student to process sound and what the eyes see during teaching and learning process of any traditional dance form.

This thesis is also designed to address the issue of dance education through dance pedagogy in embodying the practice of traditional dance and its music. Dance pedagogy is an aspect of dance education on the broader spectrum where the study explores various teaching methods and curriculums that have been in existence for some period in the Department of Dance Studies. This study also stretches the discursive debate on the issue of African dance education particularly at the tertiary institutions where the study of dance is not popular and not given much recognition.

Works such as Adinku (1994), Amegago (2000) and Ablordey (2013) have discussed issues concerning dance curriculum in Ghana at various and different levels. Adinku's work focuses on the initial beginnings of dance education in Ghana at the University level. Amegago's work discusses further the holistic approach to African music and dance education with emphasis on curriculum development. Ablordey's study concentrates on the implementation of dance curriculum at the basic level of school education focusing on using dance to teach other subjects, (2013). The critical point in all these works is the synaesthesia element embedded in the method and style the body articulates movement during African

dance performance which is aided through the cognitive (brain). The brain controls the activity of the body and the actual movement gestures. As indicated by Ratey (2001) and cited in Kovailk & Oslen (2002) they point out what the brain communicates to the body and this depends largely on what messages the body receives from the brain. In other words, through synaesthesia the ears and the eyes send information to the brain for the body to react to the information received. This phenomenon begins either by visualising movement gestures or listening to traditional drum rhythm (music). Therefore, by adopting the teaching model for indigenous African dance, the teaching and learning becomes more effective and easier for students to grasp.

This study contributes to the scholarship and epistemology of dance education practice in Ghana, concentrating on teaching methods and learning outcomes of indigenous African dance practice and its music. Furthermore, as reiterated by Stone (1989, pp. 5-6) I believe it is about time that dance education merges theory and practice in the teaching and learning of indigenous African dance especially at the School of Performing Arts, University of Ghana. This study further advocates for use of jargon and terminology in the indigenous language in the teaching of various movement gestures in the dance forms. These movement gestures are mostly a challenge for students in the dance class to grapple with during the teaching and learning of these indigenous dances. The approach this study advocates will be a significant contribution in teaching methods and thus makes acquisition of skills easier and better.

The movement gestures and the terminologies created are stored on the cognitive mind of the student/dancer for easy recall during teaching. The students eventually end up with the new terms created in the indigenous language as part of their learning domains. This through the learning of the indigenous African dance. With this the learner's cognitive mind is not really affected by all the new developments but also by the psychomotor as well. Since the term functions as a code or a verb when spoken/heard will require movement activity. To

this end the *Agbekor* dance form assumes new aesthetics within the proximity of the new performance space (the classroom) and its rhythmic structure.

7.7 Conclusion

This section of the thesis has discussed analysis of the data gathered for the study. The study has also focused on learning outcomes and major contributions this study has added to academic discourse in knowledge production of dance pedagogy and dance education in general. For example, the section analysed the coded *Agbekor* drum rhythms/languages with its relationship to body gestures. Furthermore, the section analysed the use of resources persons in teaching and how their approach should be managed in tandem with the new approach and the terms created. In the course of the analysis, the study also discussed some approaches and initiatives by some dance faculty members in the attempt at standardising the teaching of traditional dances in the department. Finally, discussing the findings of the research and summarising how the jargon/terminologies were created for the *Agbekor* dance form for teaching purposes in the classroom at the tertiary level.

Jargon	Meaning/Translation
<i>Trɔtrɔ le gbe</i>	Long turn
<i>Trɔtrɔ le kpui</i>	Short turn
<i>Ava wɔ ge</i>	Let's go to war
<i>Toɔɔɔ</i>	Attention (be ready prepared)
<i>Ma wu torgɛ</i>	I will strike you
<i>Mi bla go dzi</i>	Tighten your belt
<i>Mikpo dzidzor</i>	be happy/victory
<i>Megbe</i>	Back
<i>Metso ge/Me se ge</i>	I will cut/kill you (drum text)
<i>Kpodo kuio dzi</i>	Warning/be careful
<i>Mia yi Kalewudae</i>	Lets go to the land of the strongmen/because of the strongmen
<i>Aayie aayie</i>	Okay/Yoo
<i>Adze-sɔɔ</i>	telling lies
<i>Tso-ka</i>	Hey hey (the response constitutes the jargon)

This thesis has investigated and interrogated the various pedagogical approaches to teaching indigenous African dance in tertiary institutions. In achieving its aim, the study made use of *Agbekor* dance from the south-east location of the Volta Region of Ghana as a case study. The information gathered from my investigation into the phenomena of teaching approaches has taught me a lot and has further made me experience different ideas I did not know before going into the field. For example:

1. I have learnt new drum languages and drum rhythms I did not know before embarking on the study and not only in *Agbekor* but in other traditional dances too such *Adowa* and *Kpanlogo* and *Damba Takai*
2. I have also learnt how to pronounce words and phrases in the Ewe language that express drum rhythmic patterns and their relationship to the articulation of movement gestures, such as *Trɔ trɔ legbe*, *Trɔ trɔ kpui*, *Mɛ-gbe*, *Ava wɔ ge*.
3. Observing different dance technique classes from level 100 to 400 taught me lots of new things which have been included in the thesis, such as the four categories of Mr. Newman's dance techniques, that is, southern, northern, ballet and floor/acrobatic movements, (Newmantics).
4. Participating in traditional dance classes from level 200 to 400 also revealed new ideas that were discussed in the study. Especially the different styles various lecturers used in vocalizing drum rhythms in the *Damba/Takai* dance and the *Fume Fume* dance respectively.
5. I developed the concept I call PDD, (prescriptive, descriptive, and directive) through observing traditional dance class as well as gathering data from master drummers and listening to the drum rhythms with the dance

Furthermore, the study has created and employed terminologies in order to develop more effective teaching methods in addition to proposing three standardised teaching methods in tertiary institutions. These include mouth drumming, interpretations of this research were carried out on the *Agbekor* dance form in the Department of Dance Studies, School of Performing Arts, University of Ghana.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

8.0 Conclusion

This chapter discusses some challenges and limitations of the study and provide concise summary of the study. The study has discussed major contribution and provides suggestions and recommendations for future studies in dance pedagogy. This has been investigated and interrogated through various methods of teaching indigenous African dance in the Department of Dance Studies, University of Ghana.

Through the theory of synaesthesia, this study has been able to establish that, the embodiment of traditional dance in the classroom has to do with the cognitive. For that reason, the embodiment of the human body makes it possible for the other parts of the body, such as the ears and the eyes to embody the sensation of feeling. These parts of the body transmit signals to the brain which enables the human body to react to indigenous dance rhythm and movement gesture. The research has also demonstrated through analysis that, it is possible to develop terminologies in the language of the dance form and use them for teaching. This can be developed on other traditional dance forms being taught in the Department of Dance Studies to eventually codify and standardise the rhythms to the gestures. This study on standardisation has an innovative and evidenced based path forward through using the proposed template and guide that this study has been able to develop for future researchers to employ.

Chapter one of this thesis has focused on the background of the study with an emphasis on identifying the problem, the kind of research questions to use in the field, identified the study area and how the research was conducted. The next chapter continued with a discursive review on selected literature that helped to shape the direction of this thesis. This notwithstanding, the various concepts, frameworks and theoretical underpinnings were designed and discussed to guide the study to its logical conclusions.

The following chapter is focused on the study area, the SPA, with emphasis on the Department of Dance Studies as one of the three departments, (that is, Music, Drama and Dance). The discussions also touched on the beginning of formal dance education in Ghana with introduction of the GDE as the core formal dance education in any tertiary institution in Ghana. Furthermore, it also discussed the early beginnings of the IAS through the establishment of the GDE.

Through the process of an action-based methodology, I practiced some teaching exercises where I experimented with the concept of the prescriptive, descriptive, and directive (PDD) approach to teaching traditional dances. In the process I used synaesthesia as a key component of imparting practical dance knowledge to students in the class. The indigenous dance has a symbiotic relationship with the music such that, the dance is performed in tandem with its music. This relationship of music and dance, as discussed in the thesis, is one where music makes the dance visible without necessarily watching the dance. Just by hearing the music, it is possible to determine the kind of dance movement gesture to be performed, because music (drum rhythm), prescribed dance.

The indigenous dance as it is experienced and taught in the original context has characteristics which are not present in the way the same dance has been experienced and taught outside its domain. One such domain is the university system where the dance is taught in the formal environment using different approaches. In chapter five, the central argument was focused on how indigenous dance knowledge is transmitted through the *Agbekor* dance. And this was done through the lens of formal and informal dance education. The purpose for this, was to find out the effective method of transmission when the dance has mediated to the classroom and the performance space where it is affected with other artistic art forms such as time, costume, lighting images, scenic design and stage dimension. The dance also suffers from issues of identity, hybridity and acculturation, but as stated by Geurts (2002) the Anlo Ewes still possess what makes them unique especially within the ‘feeling’ (p. 250) in their

music and dance. Likewise, this is true with the *Agbekor* or any traditional African dance in the Academy.

The arguments in chapter six presents the creation of terminologies in codifying selected movement gestures within the *Agbekor* dance. This was carefully done in the Ewe language for the purposes of teaching *Agbekor* in the classroom. My argument in this thesis is to propose an alternative teaching model that will include the indigenous language of the dance form. Again, the intension is also to provide an alternative and effective method in transmitting traditional dance knowledge practically to students at the tertiary level. This I believe would enhance students' ability to learn the traditional dances more effectively through a well-designed method. During the standardisation process, the formal nuances in the teaching of the dance rhythmic phrase was also treated in the same process of standardisation. Hence the music and the dance assume a new aesthetic appeal which comes to bear on the dance form in its new environment.

Chapter seven continued the analysis started in the previous chapter of the study through the understanding of the coded drum language as well as the movement gestures. Drum signals are sent to the cognitive (the brain) for a result in bodily articulation of the organised movement gestures. These were discussed using the theory of synaesthesia, where the dance is imbibed from the effect of the eye and the ear. The movement gestures are feeling sensations the dancer embodies by observing dance lecturers/instructors and listening to rhythmic patterns from musical instruments.

8.1 Suggestions and Recommendations

Through interviews with seasoned Ewe master drummers and performers this study has been able propose terminologies in the Ewe language that can be used to augment the teaching of *Agbekor* dance which can be extended to other dance forms as well. I believe when this is done the student do not only learn the mechanics of the dances taught but also

vocabularies about the dance form in the language the dance originates as discussed in chapters six and seven.

The study was limited to the classroom activities around the Department of Dance Studies, University of Ghana. Some interviews were conducted in other tertiary Institutions practicing dance studies in Ghana to understand the approaches used there. Since most of the teachers were trained at the University of Ghana. I believe formalising the indigenous dance activities at the pre-tertiary level will enable the study of dance education at the university be appreciative by all. This will also erase any possible stigma that surrounds the study of dance education in the minds of many people. In addition to further develop interest in dance at the basic level the curricula can be designed in a form such as:

1. Identifying a dance type from one's hometown/locality
2. Who performs the dance in the area?
3. How did the dance come about (origin)?
4. How is the dance performed?

With these to begin the interest in learners, teachers can further sustain the interest and make the learning of the dance form more fun by engaging learners in practicing the dance form, that is, embodying the dance practically.

At the second cycle schools the interest can be developed further to include classification or categorization of dance forms. These classification or categorization are:

1. Social or recreational dances
2. Harvest dances
3. Festival dances
4. Religious or possession dances
5. Popular dances

In this way learners are engaged more formally and prepared towards formal examination to be conducted by an external body such as the West Africa Examination Council (WAEC). These activities provide a more concrete foundation for learners at the pre-tertiary level which eventually makes learners more informed before entering the University to study Dance as an academic area of discipline.

It is my hope that the analysis presented on the data collected will in the future provide an avenue for creating terms especially using the model for developing terminologies. Finally, other dance forms taught in the Department of Dance Studies could be given attention in the standardisation process with the use of the template that this study has proposed so that these dances are standardised for teaching and learning purposes. When this is adhered to, it will bring uniformity in the learning process for students. While dance teachers and instructors will also enhance the knowledge and skill in teaching the practical indigenous dance more effectively. It will also help both teachers and learners acquire further knowledge in some vocabularies that will be developed in describing specific movement gestures with their musical rhythms in the various dances in their indigenous languages.

Finally, to address each of the objectives I set out to investigate in the study. My first objective was to develop a model for teaching indigenous African dance. As mention above on page 241, through an action based ethnographic study I was able to develop a proposed model or template that can serve as a guide in the teaching of indigenous Africa dance in the Department of Dance Studies.

On the issue of the second objective, I have discussed in the study the various processes and methodologies I employed in decoding the dance text, that is, movement gestures in the context of the Ewe language for teaching. This can be extended to other indigenous African dance taught in the department as captured in the research question.

The last but not the least objective was to identify various musical phrases in the teaching of *Agbekor* and codify them as part of developing terminologies in teaching using the indigenous language of the dance. This objective has been carefully executed and some terminologies have been created in the Ewe language as teaching aids and materials. Furthermore, the study has proposed the effective packaging of ‘Newmantics’ as a methodology in teaching of indigenous African dance as well as using the pedagogical concept of prescriptive, descriptive, and directive (PDD).



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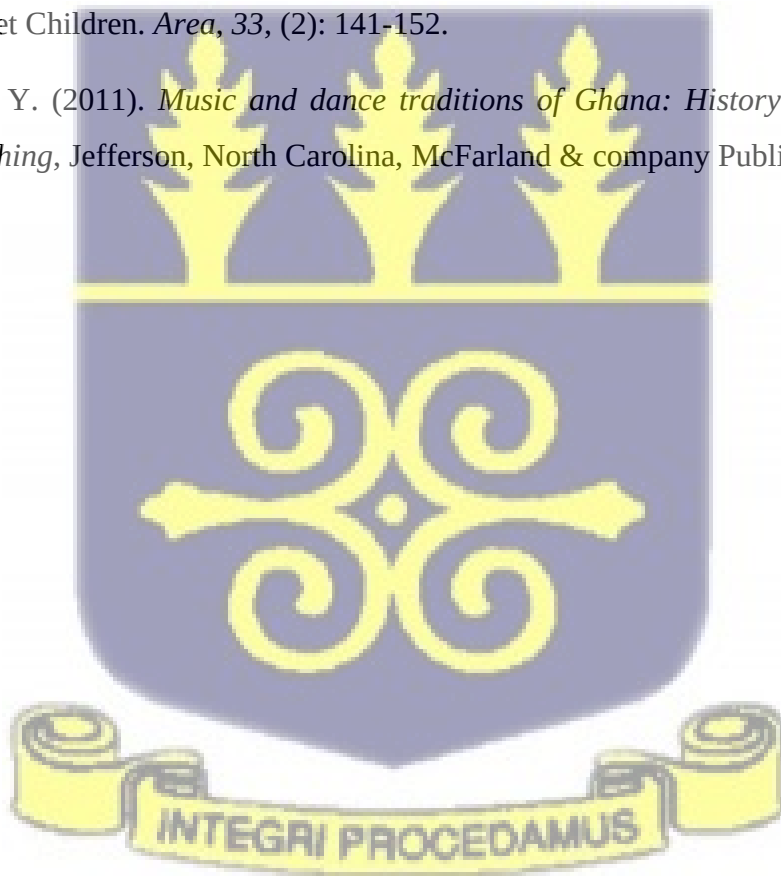
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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Interview Guide

Research Title: Pedagogical Approaches to African Dance in Tertiary Institutions: The Case of the *Agbekor* Dance Form.

The main goal for this study is towards a PhD degree and not for any other purpose.

Researcher/Student: David E. A. Quaye

Institute: Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana.

Dance Instructors (lecturers) with your kind permission and consent, can I record the interview,

1. Name?
2. Position?
3. Background of the person?
4. How do you define traditional dance?
5. Why does the department think it is important to teach traditional dance?
6. What elements of traditional African dances are taught or form part of the school curriculum?
7. How long have you taught traditional dance?
8. You teach traditional dance /you have taught traditional dance. What is your philosophy in teaching traditional dance?
9. How did you or do you teach traditional dance?
10. Is your method different from how you were taught?
11. Is your approach different from other faculty members?

Budget

Working with 8 students	GH C 200 (@ 20 Cedis each)
5 Drum Instructors	GH C 500 (@ 30 Cedis each)
5 Dance instructors (Lecturers)	GH C 200 (souvenirs)
One research assistant/cameraman etc.	GH C 500 (50 Cedis)
Transportation: - Going to Volta Region, Cape Coast and Winneba	GH C 2000
Miscellaneous	GH C 1000
Total	GH C 4,400

Appendix B: Ethical Approval Letter



UNIVERSITY OF GHANA
ETHICS COMMITTEE FOR THE HUMANITIES (ECH)

P. O. Box LG 74, Legon, Accra, Ghana

My Ref. No.....

15th June, 2018

Mr. David E. A. Quaye
Institute of African Studies
University of Ghana
Legon

Dear Mr. Quaye,

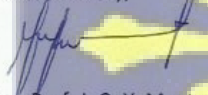
**ECH 151/17-18: PEDAGOGICAL APPROACHES TO TEACHING INDIGENOUS AFRICAN DANCE
IN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS: THE CASE OF 'AGBEKOR' DANCE FORM**

This is to advise you that the above reference study has been presented to the Ethics Committee for the Humanities for a full board review and the following actions taken subject to the conditions and explanation provided below:

Expiry Date:	14/06/19
On Agenda for:	Initial Submission
Date of Submission:	14/05/18
ECH Action:	Approved
Reporting:	Bi-Annually

Please accept my congratulations.

Yours Sincerely,


Rev. Prof. J. O. Y. Mante
ECH Chair

CC: Prof. Dzodzi Tsikata, Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana.



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Email: ech@ug.edu.gh | ech@isser.edu.gh