



Framing of COVID-19 safety protocols in Kusaal musical health communication: Language and literary analysis

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ABSTRACT

This article examines how indigenous language and music are used to promote the education of the Kusaal-speaking communities within the Upper East Region of Ghana on the COVID-19 safety protocols. Using the framing theory, the study conceptualises how the music composer frames COVID-19 safety protocols in a very practical yet entertaining manner to evoke adherence by natives to the protocols through a local musical performance called *googi*. The singer who doubles as the composer employs several language, linguistic and literary techniques to communicate the major themes (COVID-19 protocols) of the song. Further, the music communicates hope and promise in the capacity of ancestral deities to step back into time during periods of catastrophe to alleviate the sufferings of their subjects. The paper is entirely qualitative; it deploys the parallel text approach in transliterating the song. This study is the first of its kind in Kusaal and in the Mabia languages of West Africa and it has the potential of contributing significantly to debates around the subject matter. Future studies could examine how other local languages could be adopted as edutainment tools in the fight against global pandemics.

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1. Introduction¹

This article examines the use of an indigenous language in musical communication to educate the Kusaal speaking communities in the Upper East Region of Ghana and surrounding communities on the COVID-19 safety protocols. It analyses how creatively the singer who doubles as the composer employs language crafted through several rhetorical devices to entertain and to educate people on the various COVID-19 themes and safety protocols using a musical performance called *googi*. What appears quite fascinating is the manner in which a woman with no formal western education is able to articulate with emphasis, blended with entertainment, education, fear and hope, the safety protocols to prevent the spread of this disease to the local indigenes of these communities.

This paper is an example of the contribution of local music to the prevention of COVID-19, highlighting the impact of associating local ideas, and practices through music to enhance social responsibilities and arouse emotions all in the bid to eliminate fear and instill discipline to the common good of all. The paper draws on evidence gathered from the observation and analysis of COVID-19 preventive messages to overcome anger and fear and promote the understanding of a foreign and unfamiliar disease. In addition to the strengthening of health care facilities in Ghana and Africa as a whole, there is the need for localized strategies to address the “ecology of fear” which has the potential to undermine the efforts to respond positively and effectively to public-health crises (Mitman, 2014 cf. McConnell and Darboe, 2017).

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¹ Use this URL for an audio of the song and a short note: <http://ugspace.ug.edu.gh/handle/123456789/36655> (Abubakari, 2021).

The main objectives of this paper include: (i) to analyse the various COVID-19 themes observed in the *googi* performance, (ii) to discuss the language and literary techniques employed by the composer to convey her message to her target audience and (iii) to explore aspects of the cultural and traditional beliefs of the Kusaas expressed through the COVID-19 musical tune under study. The research questions that guide this article include: (i) What is *googi*, how and when is it performed and who among the Kusaas enjoy this genre? (ii) Which safety protocols of COVID-19 are addressed and how exhaustive is the song on the various COVID-19 themes? (iii) What literary and linguistic tools did the composer employ in the music and how have these contributed in achieving the basic objectives of the song? And (iv) Which aspects of the culture and tradition of the Kusaas is portrayed through the COVID-19 *googi* performance? This study is very significant since it is the first of its kind in Kusaal and little can be said of the same among the Mabia (Gur) languages of West Africa. Nothing is traced in the literature on a study that looks at musical health communication on a global pandemic expressed through the indigenous Kusaal language.

The corona virus disease knows no boundaries, respects no persons, and discriminates not the rich from the poor. It puts all categories of persons to a common destiny. This then calls for a common effort to fight the battle. What has been propagated by nations and backed by calls from the World Health Organisation (WHO) has been self-discipline, staying indoors, basic hygiene: frequent washing of hands, using sanitizers, wearing facial masks among other measures. Almost all the regions in Ghana have recorded cases of COVID-19 and the fear is a possible outbreak in slums and rural areas where the majority of people still do not understand the dangers posed by this global pandemic. The questions that beg for answers include: How effectively are these disciplinary measures communicated to the ordinary folks who lack formal education, in the villages in Ghana? What measures are put in place to enhance quality education on the disease through effective communication? Though messages can be crafted to suit different categories of people; there are media that can also transcend all manner of persons. The corona virus disease calls for a common medium that is appreciated by all manner of persons. One such communicative means is music. Music is a powerful means of communication which provides an avenue for people to share emotions, ideas, intentions etc. whether their spoken languages are mutually intelligible or not. COVID-19 messages in Ghana have taken several trends and these deserve documentation which could guide and inform messages for similar future pandemics whether positively or negatively.

As a multilingual nation, communication on important national issues, in Ghana, are mostly carried out in English before translations, if any, are made into the nine selected languages of education and media: Akan (Fante and Twi), Nzema, Ga, Ga-Adangbe, Ewe, Gonja, Kasem, Dagbani, and Dagaare (see [Owu-Ewie, 2006:77](#)). If critical, efforts are further made to summarise messages into smaller languages so as to reach the indigenous people who may have had no benefit of formal education nor any knowledge of the languages selected for the media. In Ghana, the National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE) is an institution responsible for educating the masses on their civic rights and responsibilities and does so by translating messages in as many indigenous languages as possible. It is one institution that could be trusted with the responsibility of educating the masses on safety measures to combat COVID-19. Unfortunately, it is one of the least resourced institutions crippled with logistical challenges and barely able to stand and discharge most of its mandates ([CHRI, 2020](#)). The ingenuity of the Ghanaian is demonstrated as individuals craft COVID-19 related messages in several literary and cultural genres.

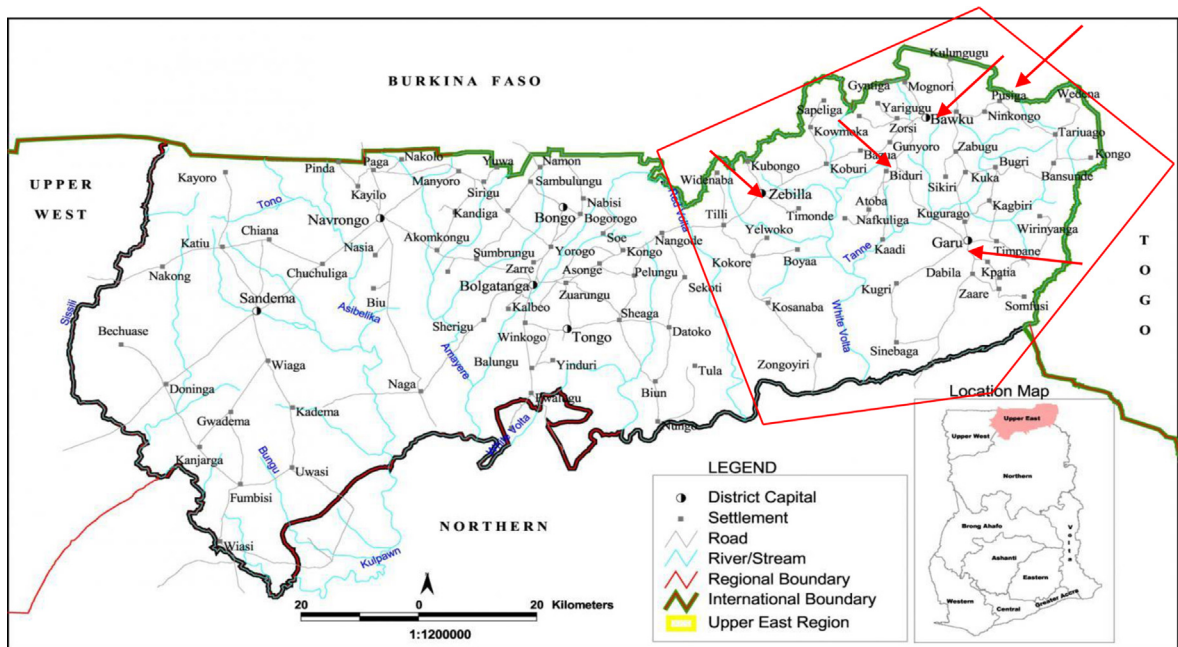
This paper looks at the way COVID-19 messages are passed to a section of the people in the Upper East region of Ghana in a language called Kusaal. COVID-19 messages, in this language, have taken several forms including audios, videos, poetry, music among others. Indigenous speakers of Kusaal creatively crafted COVID-19 messages in cultural and linguistic forms that reflect their daily life styles as a group of people. This article selects one such music and discusses its themes, linguistics and literary style. Thus, the purpose of this work is to look at how music, through the use of local languages, can be deployed as a vehicle to intensify public education on the need to protect oneself and others by adhering to the outlined safety protocols of the WHO. The COVID-19 *googi* song under analysis in this study was composed by Alembood Akidaug Akologo from Yakuti-Bawku in the Upper East Region of Ghana. It will discuss the importance of *googi* in the life of the Kusaas and why it serves as an appropriate medium for COVID-19 musical communication among the selected group of people. The impact of this type of music is directly realized by the communal interest shown for this genre. The people identify with it and its message is directly assimilated. On occasions such as funerals when *googi* is sung, people feel the impact to the extent that it moves almost everyone to tears. Similarly, it is hypothesized that using *googi* to convey COVID-19 messages will have the great tendency of influencing the desired attitudinal changes in the targeted group of people.

This paper is divided into 7 sections, Section 2 gives a brief background discussion on the Kusaal language and its speakers, the methodology and also some background information on the performance of *googi* among the Kusaas which is deemed relevant for the study. Section 3 is the theoretical framework. Section 4 is the literature review. Section 5 looks at the various COVID-19 safety protocols termed as COVID-19 themes in this work. Section 6 examines the linguistics and literary tools employed by the composer in the *googi*. Section 7 is a conclusion to the paper.

1.1. The Kusaal language and its speakers

According to [Abubakari \(2018, 2020\)](#), Kusaal, spoken in Ghana, Burkina Faso and Togo, is a less-studied language spoken by the group of people called the Kusaa (SG), Kusaas (PL). It is a Central Mabia subgroup of Mabia languages ([Bodomo, 2020](#)), previously known as the Western Oti-Volta subgroup of Gur languages ([Westermann and Bryan, 1952](#); [Greenberg, 1963](#)) of the Niger-Congo language family. The term Mabia is a compound word composed of the words *ma* 'mother' and *bia* 'child'. This term is argued to be more representative of the languages under this group since these two words can be traced in almost all the languages compared to the term 'Gur' which is derived from the initial syllables of only three/four of the languages in this group: Gurense, Gurma and Guren (see [Abubakari, 2020](#); [Bodomo, 2020](#)).

There are two dialects of Kusaal: Agole and Toende. While the Toende dialect is spoken in Zebilla and its surrounding areas the Agole dialect is spoken in Bawku Municipal, Garu-Tempene and adjoining areas. The COVID-19 musical tune under study is in the Agole dialect of Kusaal. Fig. 1 is the map of the Upper East Region of Ghana showing the Kusaal-speaking areas. The arrows point to the five district capitals of Bawku West: Zebilla, Bawku Municipal: Bawku and Garu-Tempene: Garu, Binduri and Pusiga (Abubakari, 2018, n.d.).



Source: Mary Esther Kropp Dakubu (n.d.). Online material:

<http://aodl.org/oralnarratives/farefari/object/4A-1C5-B/>

Fig. 1. Map of Upper East Region of Ghana (Dakubu, n.d.).

Abubakari (2018, 2020) explains that although no official census on the number of speakers of Kusaal is currently available, information gathered from the Ghana Statistical Service Department based on the 2010 population and housing census shows that there are 534,681 speakers of Kusaal in the various regions and districts of Ghana. With Ghana having a total population of 24,658,823 (GSS, 2012). Kusasis make approximately 2.2% of the population of Ghana as at 2010 (Abubakari 2018, 2020).

1.2. Methodology/data collection

This article is entirely qualitative and discusses the use of an indigenous language in health musical communication to create awareness on COVID-19 safety protocols. The primary data is a COVID-19 *googi* performance. The song became popular in all the Kusaal speaking communities around the time Ghana was preparing to impose a lockdown in some major cities: Accra and Kumasi. Thus, the song was recorded between March and April 2020.² It is important to add that it is still trending as at the time of writing this paper. The love for this song, among the Kusaas, can be attributed to two major reasons: (i) *googi* music is enjoyed by both children and adults, males and females and it serves as one of the major means of entertainment, (ii) the song calls for awareness on a topical issue pertinent to the lives of the people. The COVID-19 *googi* under study is transcribed and transliterated. Thus, the parallel text approach is adopted to give non-speakers of the language an understanding of the song. The lines are numbered arbitrarily to facilitate the correct mapping of transcriptions and transliterations. The full parallel translation is attached as an appendix to the paper. Sections of the song are quoted and analysed in an attempt to answer the outlined research questions. To gather more information on the performance of *googi* among the Kusaas, semi-structured interviews were conducted using two elderly native speakers of Kusaal: ACP (rt'd) James Abass-Abaah, and Mr. Michael Awimbilla. Our language consultant, Mr. Sampson Abuosi of Bawku, helped with background information on *duundi*, thus, the instrument used in the performance of *googi*.

² Osman Achidaago Samio, son and manager of the singer who doubles as the composer reveals through personal conversation that the song was recorded by invited media houses in the Hall of Mr/Hon. Akunye, a senior nurse and owner of a clinic in Bawku. Hon Akunye also doubles as a politician and was the member of Parliament for the Pusiga constituency in the Upper East Region, between 2005 and 2009. Hon Akunye invited the media to record this *googi* for sensitization and education of the rural folks against COVID-19. To keep the original form of the song, the title Doctor is used for Hon Akunye in the translation anytime the same is used in the *googi*.

1.3. The local fiddle for performing *googi*: *Duundiŋ*

The main instruments used in the performance of *googi* are: *duundiŋ* (SG) and *duundis* (PL) ‘fiddle’ and the *siya’ar* (SG) and *siyada* (PL) ‘maracas’. The primary materials for the fiddle are: the calabash, the skin of an amphibian, strips of hair from the tail of a horse and a stick. There is a witty saying among the people that to have a good sound from your fiddle, look for the calabash of a talkative woman. One has to give a fowl to the owner of a horse before getting permission to trim some hair from its tail. The skin of an agama lizard on the other hand, is purchased from its hunters. A suitable playing stick *duundiŋ-biig* ‘the child of the fiddle, usually a curved stick, is sourced from the forest. The image in Fig. 2 shows a scene at a *googi* performance involving Alembood Akidaug Akologo with her Winpang goje team in action exhibiting the fiddle and the maracas.



Fig. 2. The *duundiŋ* ‘fiddle’ and *siya’ar* ‘maracas’.

Djedje (1984:166) explains that the labeling of music as a particular song type, in many African societies, may be guided by different considerations. She refers to the Africanist scholar J. H. Kwabena Nketia who opines that a musical type may acquire its name based on one of the several following reasons; it may be named after: (1) those who perform it, (2) the function or social occasion on which it is performed, (3) a proverbial saying that catches the fancy of a performing group, (4) the principal instruments used during the performance, (5) or for the dance for which the music is performed. The name of the instrument: *duundiŋ* ‘fiddle’, derives from how it is played; the small curved stick is rubbed on the string of hair from the horse tail which is fastened on another stick attached to the calabash as can be seen in the picture in Fig. 2. The singer and or the one who plays the *duundiŋ* ‘fiddle’ is called *Agoogi* (SG) and *Agooginam* (PL).

It is important to add that the name *googi* is borrowed from Hausa where a similar musical performance is traced in the culture of the people. The performance among the Hausa is called *goje* ‘rubbing’ also derived from the way the fiddle is played, thus, by rubbing. The *goje*, among the Hausas, is a kind of praise song normally sung in the palace and during occasions such as naming ceremonies, marriages etc. but never at funerals.³ However, unlike the Hausas, the Kusaas perform the fiddle at funerals as well. It is hypothesized that the Kusaas learnt the fiddling tradition from the Hausa’s who, alongside other groups of people: Yoruba, Igbo, Mossi, Wanagara etc, migrated to Bawku which was a commercial hub in the pre-colonial era. Djedje (2008)

³ Information sourced through personal communication with a native speaker of Hausa; Mr. Tawfik Adam a PhD candidate at the University of Ghana, Legon, and a lecturer at the University of Professional Studies.

indicates that all her research participants with the exception of one, deny the influence of the Hausa in the Dagbamba fiddling tradition but rather argue that the Gurma introduced the instrument to the Dagbamba. DjeDje in a way disagrees with this assertion arguing that Dagbamba fiddling songs are often in the Hausa language and this confirms the influence of the Hausa in the fiddling of the Dagbamba: the denial by the latter could be linked to historical hostilities between the two groups.

Googi performance and music in general is known to possess the power that enhances social cohesion and draws human attention to salient issues of great global and national concerns. People are able to express emotions and concerns through music. This form of communication eliminates stress and contributes immensely in managing situations that fall between life and death (also see [McConnell and Darboe, 2017](#)).

1.4. *Googi* performance among the Kusaas

On the performance of *googi* among the Kusaas, we sourced direct information from four consultants: Mr Michael Awimbilla-GILLBT, Tamale, and ACP (rtd) James Abass-Abaah from Zebilla, the COVID-19 *googi* singer: Fati Osman with the stage name Alembood Akidaug Akologo, and the son of the *googi* performer Osman Achidaago Samio who doubles as his mother's manager. It is gathered that *googi* is entirely oral with no rehearsal prior to performance. It is often performed by inspiration. The singer only needs to know the event that occasioned the song and may ask few questions on the family totems and appellations of some individuals and the rest is by inspiration. *Googi* performers are the custodians of the oral culture, history and tradition of the people and can easily give information on the ancestry of all the people in the community. They are often praise singers and they solicit for funds during their performance since that is their trade. They are mostly people without any formal education but with loads of information. They have the skill and power of language just as poets. Among the Kusaas, *googi* is seen as a type of calling. One cannot just decide to perform it. One has to be possessed by the god of music to be able to perform the *googi*. One's ability to perform *googi* is believed to be passed from one generation to the next within the family lineage. One cannot perform *googi* if they have not received any calling from the god of music and if their ancestors are not *googi* performers. The young are initiated into it by becoming apprentices to the old, often their parents.



A *googi* performer and his apprentice.

Googi is sung by both males and females and it is often performed at events that attract the participation of chiefs and prominent people in the community such as festivals, ceremonies and funerals of the elderly. *Googi* is the basic means of information dissemination during events. The performers criticize the leaders and sing on important social issues. They sing to extol a virtue and to condemn a vice when the need arises. They are often considered as the voice of the voiceless and the mouthpiece of the people. They do not have any liability and cannot be sued.

2. History/perspectives on discourse of disease in Ghana: literature review

The contribution of music to health communication has been significant in Africa and the world at large. Music has been successfully used to facilitate health communication about deadly sicknesses and diseases including some of the world's known pandemics and global epidemics such as the Ebola Virus (Stone, 2017) and HIV/AIDS (Bastien, 2009). In December 2019, the world recorded a new disease outbreak namely, the novel coronavirus disease. This disease was later given an official name by the World Health Organisation (WHO) as COVID-19 and was also declared by WHO as a pandemic on March 11, 2020.

Many African countries including Ghana were not spared from this disease outbreak. To help create awareness and stop the spread of the disease, Ghana widely relied on audio-visual messaging through mass media: radio, television and billboards. The use of these media is undoubtedly fast and can help reach out to many people; however, it may also be lacking because it is passively and socially received by the target audience (Frishkopf et al., 2016). Additionally, the rural parts of Ghana are noted for high rates of illiteracy and limited media presence (Frishkopf et al., 2016) and this can serve as a communication barrier to the rural dwellers.

That notwithstanding, music, particularly, traditional African music, has proven to be an effective tool in health awareness creation (Bastien, 2009; Frishkopf et al., 2016; McConnell, 2016). It is therefore not surprising that many African artists employed catchy songs to promote best preventive practices at the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic and this move is the premise for the present paper. Specifically, the paper seeks to give a textual analysis of one of the traditional songs about COVID-19 in Kusaal, a northern language in Ghana. Northern Ghana is made up of three administrative regions namely, Northern, Upper East and Upper West (Yaro and Hesselberg, 2010). These regions in northern Ghana fit what is described by Ocholla (2006) as information poor or marginalized communities in that they are economically disadvantaged, geographically isolated and on the high side of illiteracy (Frishkopf et al., 2016; Yaro and Hesselberg, 2010). Specifically, the Upper East Region has been tagged as the least urbanized region in Ghana with a rural population exceeding 79% (Ghana Statistical Service, 2012). The song for this study's analysis is in Kusaal, spoken by a group of people domiciled in Bawku, Zebilla and their surrounding environs of the Upper East Region.

As already indicated, the majority of Kusaas people are rural folks and as such, categorise as people living in an information poor community. Accordingly, Ocholla (2006:3–4) makes this observation about information poor communities that:

Although information can be accessed textually, electronically, visually, audibly and orally, most information poor communities prefer information orally and such information should be provided closest to them by sources familiar to them such as colleagues, neighbors, relatives and friends as attested in most studies. The conception of knowledge sharing through "community of practice" works fairly well in this environment.

It is against this backdrop that this study settles on a traditional song from the Upper East Region of Ghana in an attempt to unveil the rich culture and artistry adopted to compose a traditional song to create awareness about the deadly COVID-19. Since the language used to compose this song is a minority language, we hope that this study will serve as one of the means to enhance the documentation of the rich culture, tradition and history that may be hidden in Kusaal songs.

2.1. Traditional music as a vehicle for health awareness creation

Music is vital in the day-to-day activities of Africans and for that matter Ghanaians. It is used to celebrate many important events such as marriage, birth, or rite of passage ceremonies. Additionally, Africans use music to cure the sick, bring rain, and even connect with the spirit world. The culture of African traditional music is such that it is face-to-face, affective, engaging, interpersonal and intergenerational (Frishkopf et al., 2016). Traditional music is an example of oral expressive culture also referred to as oraculture by Ugboajah (1985) and it has been proven as an important tool for health communication in communities within sub-Saharan Africa (Barz, 2006; Barz and Cohen, 2011; Bastien, 2009; Holstad et al., 2013). For instance, Bastien (2009:1) suggests that,

Failure to recognize the importance of oral traditions in Africa and the potential of music and song for stimulating social and behavior change would represent a missed opportunity in HIV prevention strategies.

Similarly, Panter-Brick et al. (2006) demonstrate in their research that songs may be effective in health communication for malaria specifically in the Senegambia region, and again, Aibel et al. (2004) confirm the successful use of songs in maternal and child health communication. The use of music for health communication has long existed in edutainment partly because music is easy to remember and can be easily passed on from one person or community to the other (Frishkopf et al., 2016). It can be argued, from the ongoing discussion, that traditional music and song is an effective tool in health communication and COVID-19 is no exception. It even becomes more vital for the rural folks because they are familiar with, and appreciate the traditions and customs that are portrayed in traditional songs and music. Subsequently, this study is guided by this notion to give a textual analysis of a Kusaal traditional song about COVID-19.

3. Theoretical framework

Musical communication is conceptualised in this paper as the art of using vocal, written, instrumental or mechanical sounds to disseminate information (Obono, 2018). This paper employs the Framing Theory of Communication to conceptualise how music is used to disseminate information during the COVID era. Framing is how a communication source defines and constructs a communication piece, message or information (Scheufele, 1999). Framing theory postulates that how information is presented to the audience influences how people choose to process and act on the information. Framing describes narratives that construct social reality. As an interpretation-driven study, the theory is relevant to this study because the intention of the eduinformatonal music advertisement on COVID-19 was to focus citizens' attention on key situations within a sociocultural field of meaning.

Gamson and Mogdalini (1987: 143) define frames as “a central organizing idea or story line that provides meaning to an unfolding strip of events ... The frame suggests what the controversy is about, the essence of the issue”. Thus, the frames or diction deployed highlight some aspects of reality at the expense of others by facilitating the organisation of meanings of messages. They enable simplification, prioritization and narration of events for quick sorting, interpretation and evaluation (Norris et al., 2003).

According to Ardèvol-Abreu (2015 cited in Obono 2018: 34), how people interpret reality and everyday life experiences depend fundamentally on interaction and definition of situations. Framing is contextualised within the four communication elements: sender, receiver, message and culture (Ardèvol-Abreu, 2015). Framing takes cognisance of human elements within sociocultural realities to enhance interpretation. Thus, with the aim of achieving a desired communication goal, the sender or originator of this music piece applies cultural images that capture receivers' world views, identities and imaginations to enhance understanding by appealing and sharing meaningful information about COVID-19 with the receiver.

Framing is often applied to the media in terms of how news is constructed and how messages are interpreted. In other words, it refers to how the audience perceives the message. They tell the audience not only how to think but also what to think about. Thus, according to its main proponent Goffman (1974), framing enables people to interpret what is happening around them through their primary framework. These frameworks create frames in our communication that significantly influence how data is interpreted, processed and communicated. Thus, in this paper, the COVID-19 pandemic is the framework within which the frame, that is the lyrics of this infortainment piece or music is played out.

Primary frameworks comprise natural and social frameworks that facilitate message interpretation. Natural frameworks enable the identification of events as physical occurrences with no causative aspects to the events while social frameworks conceptualise events as socially driven happenings attributed to the overt and covert actions of relevant social actors. Social frameworks are derived from the natural frameworks. Thus, the study interrogates how the Kusaal language, using the vehicle of music, has framed the COVID-19 narrative to educate indigenes in the most effective way.

3.1. Adopted definition and dimension of communication used in this paper

In this article, communication is defined as an act of sharing, thus: giving, receiving and exchanging, ideas, messages, emotions, information or signals using appropriate media which makes it possible for people or a group of people to give, to seek and to receive information as well as to express emotion. Several models of communication corresponding to several dimensions of communications are propagated in the literature. Johnson-Laird (1992) placed emphasis on the ways in which symbolic codes are used by communicators in message transmission to receivers. The code is a representation of the message which needs to be decoded by the receiver. This requires a mutual understanding of the symbolic coding system. This study following Johnson and Laird (1992) assumes that the dimension of communication spans from the composer to the performer then to the listener and feedback is accessed indirectly from the actions of the listener based on the latter's ability to decode the message. Impact is greatly achieved when a common code (symbol) is used such that the intention is well communicated. The Kusaal music on COVID-19 is argued to be a classic example of music communication which employs a composer/performer and a listener. Message is transmitted in a common code (the Kusaal language) packaged in indigenous music which is both culturally and linguistically linked to the life of the target audience.

Googi is crafted and played to suit several occasions, events and ceremonies. The theme is typical of the event that occasioned its composition. In the wake of COVID-19 pandemic, the *googi* performer Alembood Akidaug Akologo and the Winpang goje troupe in Bawku composed the COVID-19 tune to spread the message mainly on the prevention of COVID-19 among the people of the Upper-east Region, to be precise the Kusaal speaking communities. The central thematic areas of the song are the various prevention methods for COVID-19 as outlined by the World Health Organisation (WHO). According to the WHO, coronavirus disease is an infectious disease that is caused by a newly discovered virus. Some of the symptoms of COVID-19 include mild to moderate respiratory illness for the young, and the people without any underlying health conditions may recover without requiring special treatment. Others who are more likely to develop serious illnesses are people with underlying medical problems like cardiovascular disease, diabetes, chronic respiratory disease, and cancer (WHO website, accessed 27/11/2020). The most critical part of the whole narrative is the way to prevent and slow down the transmission of the virus. This is achievable through constant education that seeks to inform the general public about COVID-19. Below are the various measure outlined by WHO:

To prevent infection and to slow transmission of COVID-19, do the following:

- Wash your hands regularly with soap and water, or clean them with alcohol-based hand rub.
- Maintain at least 1 m distance between you and people coughing or sneezing.
- Avoid touching your face.
- Cover your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing.
- Stay home if you feel unwell.
- Refrain from smoking and other activities that weaken the lungs.
- Practice physical distancing by avoiding unnecessary travel and staying away from large groups of people.

(see: https://www.who.int/health-topics/coronavirus#tab=tab_1).

In the rest of the paper, we intend to examine the various COVID-19 prevention themes in the *googi* under study. The intention is to analyse the way the local Kusaa *googi* singer crafts this message in a manner that resonates with the culture of the target audience through language, linguistics and literary approaches.

4. Language and literary analysis of the Covid-19 Kusaa *googi*

As is typical of most *googi* performances, it is almost impossible to record this genre from the very beginning. This is because the songs are spontaneous and unrehearsed. The very initial lines of the song under study are missing, perhaps because the recorder did not know when exactly the singer was going to start as is the case in spontaneous speech. However, more importantly, the central elements needed for our discussion in this paper are captured in the parts that are recorded. The recorded portion starts with *Din yela ka ti bir taaba anwa la, zɔŋ ban'ad wabɔg biigi kaasee, teŋ la dammidaa, o teŋ la dammidaa* '... That's why we are grouped together like that, the blind person who rides on an elephant's son is crying, that his place is shaking.'

The excerpt above shows that the music begins with the singer informing the audience of the purpose of the gathering. It continues with an allusion to the chief of the Kusaa traditional area: Naba Asigri Abugrago Azoka II. The composer gives a background information on the lineage of this chief as the son of the blind man who rides on an elephant: *zɔŋ ban'ad wabɔg biigi* 'the son of the blind person riding on an elephant'. This allusion is shrouded in mysticism; it connotes someone who is physically weak but mighty in power. One wonders how a blind man who will usually be supported by family members, rides and commands one of the biggest animals in the forest. The composer tells the audience that the chief is greatly troubled as reflected in the word *kaasee* which literally means 'crying'. This echoes the fact that there is trouble in the land and that the land is shaking: *teŋ la dammidaa, o teŋ la dammidaa*. Then comes an imagery that aptly creates a scary mood of a fast-approaching COVID-19 to the Kusaa speaking communities. The composer informs the audience that the virus is at their doorstep after cases have been recorded in all the major towns in the Upper East region leading to the Bawku Municipal area. The composer then delves into the various COVID-19 safety protocols after setting the most needed background and ensuring that she has successfully managed to capture the full attention of her audience. The various COVID-19 safety protocols which we refer to as COVID-19 themes mentioned by the composer are discussed as below:

4.1. Covid-19 themes in the Kusaa Covid-19 *googi*

The composer emphasizes six safety protocols of COVID-19: ban on social gathering, physical distancing and isolation, avoidance of hand shake, lack of cure for COVID-19, frequent hand washing and the need for border closures. The outlined measures are part of the major themes put in place by the government of Ghana prior to the lockdown and also, they form aspects of the protocols outlined by WHO to help control the spread of the virus. The following are the measures put out by WHO on its website at the time of writing of this paper: (i) Wash your hands regularly with soap and water, or clean them with alcohol-based hand rub. (ii) Maintain at least 1 m distance between you and people coughing or sneezing. (iii) Avoid touching your face (iv) Cover your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing (v) Stay home if you feel unwell (vi) Refrain from smoking and other activities that weaken the lungs and (vii) Practice physical distancing by avoiding unnecessary travel and stay away from large groups of people. Below we discuss the various safety protocols from the music with illustrative citations.

4.1.1. Ban on social gathering

In the following excerpts, the composer amplifies the ban on all social gatherings and alludes the directive as emanating from the chief. People are banned from performing funerals, and organizing all types of meetings.

Asigiri kaas, so' da maan kuuree, Amadu yel yaa, so' da la'asee, Kusa'al yel yaa, so' da maal mitinnee

'Asigiri is crying that no one should perform a funeral, Amadu has said, no one should gather, Akusa'al has said, no one should hold a meeting.'

The excerpt below, lines 12–16, also adds that, just as people are banned from performing funerals, so also are they banned from attending funerals. They are also banned from going to the market. These are all part of the rules that were put in place during the lockdown in Ghana. Equally important is the additional information on the implication of disobeying these directives. The consequences are not only on the recalcitrant but also on the entire neighborhood.

(12) Dunia dim ya di'em keligi ya, so' da ke ka o biig yi yiija. (13) Koronavirus yel la yee, so' da ke ka o pu'a yi yiijaa, so' woo pu len kpen'ed da'a aba. (14) O ye nid woo da keḡ kuure, so' da keḡ o suzua yire. (15) Fu ya'a zan'as ka yii keḡe, fu ya'a mor yelaa paae naa, bun la ka' fu kon'okon' kum yoo, fu na taas buraa la meḡaa, ka taasi fu nintaas la wusaa; ka lebna taas biis la wusaa. (16) Li ya'a yi la ye li yadig teḡ la ne, li ya'a yadig teḡ la ya maan wala-wala be?

(12) The world should hear, no one should allow his child to go out. (13) Because of Coronavirus, no one is going to the market again. (14) He said no one should attend a funeral; no one should go to the parent house. (15) If you refuse and go, if you bring the problem, the death is not yours alone, you will infect the man himself, and infect all your rivals, and also infect all the children. (16) When it attacks, it covers the whole area, if it covers the whole area what will you then do?

The entire *googi* ends with a repetition of the ban on no social gathering: funerals, weddings etc. We hear through the *googi* singer, the Chief's reiteration of the ban on social gathering and emphasizing that Kusaug will continue to have life if people adhere to these orders. The most prominent nurse in the Kusaug traditional area, Mr. Akunye, is mentioned as saying the disease has no cure.

(46) Ka Asigiri ye yaa, o pon yeli ba, koor da maale, binnir da nwe'eda, dek da nwe'eda, kona da nwe'eda. (47) Ba ya'a ku din la kasa gbagba ti nyoor kpen be ne yee. (48) Mmmmm, M maa- m maa, Dogta kunye yel ye yaa, docta kunye yel ye yaa, Asigiri daa yel ye koor da maanna, ka ba su'a maale, awure da loada, ka ba su'adi load, mitin da ditta, ka ba su'adi dit, ka Akunye paae na, ka yu'on yeli ba, ban'a la kae tiim, li kae nya'ari tukida ...

(46) Then Asigiri responded that he already told them, no funeral, no playing of drums, no playing of deck, no playing of violin. (47) If they destroy that in fact our lives will continue to be there. (48) Mmmmm, my mother my mother, Akunye has said that, Kunye has said that, Asigiri told them there should be no funeral, yet they hide to do so, there shouldn't be wedding, yet they hide to do so, there shouldn't be meetings, yet they hide to do so, and Akunye arrived, and now told them the disease has no drug, it has no local treatment...

This ban is the most redundant in the song. It is the key to staying safe from COVID-19 and perfectly suits the situation since the call was made around the time the country was going into lock down. To send the message clearly to the ordinary person, the *googi* singer manages to craft this message and have it repeated severally to ensure that the people clearly understand it as one major preventive strategy against the virus.

4.1.2. Physical distances/ isolations

The protocol on physical distancing and isolation is encouraged even in the homes of the people. The line below advocates that people should manage to keep a distance from close relatives even in the house. The implication of this protocol is in the sense that if people are advised to keep a distance from their wives, husbands and even children, then they are rather strongly advised to keep a further distance from outsiders. The lines below also point to the fact that both physical distancing and frequent isolations are encouraged.

(4) *Du'adibaa ya womya be, ya ya'a yi beogon ya luaki ya pu'a zugoo, ka luaki ya biisa men yoo, ka len luakid buraa la meḡaa*

(4) Parents, have you heard? if you get up in the morning stay away from your wife, and also stay away from your children, and also stay away from the man himself.

It is important to add that physical distancing can be said to be one common practice in the traditional households of Kusaal speakers before the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. This is because a man stays in a separate room from his wife/wives. Thus, every wife has a room to herself. Boys have their rooms and the same applies to girls. Children, however, sleep in their mothers' rooms. Families have big compounds and local building materials are everywhere. The setting informs the emphasis the composer attaches to this protocol by asking members of the family to keep a distance by staying away from one another even at home.

4.1.3. Avoid handshake

Another important preventive strategy as outlined by WHO is the avoidance of handshake. On the contrary, handshake is one of the most common gestures employed during greetings among the Kusaas. Not extending one's hand during greetings, when it is expected, could be interpreted as a sign of arrogance. As a practice that has existed as part of the traditional culture and norms of the people, it is important to draw the attention of the audience to this protocol as it can subconsciously be violated. The lines below express the need to avoid handshake to prevent the spread of COVID-19:

(5) *So' da gban'e o tiraan nu'ugoo, wiim la yela la, ya womya be, ayoolung buol mam, kusaasi buol mam*

(5) 'No one should shake hands, because of the disease, have you heard? Ayoolung called me, Kusaasi called me.'

The protocol on the avoidance of handshake, unlike others, was obviously the most difficult to observe. Considering the cultural importance attached to the practice of handshake and the fact that it remains one of the commonest daily practices, some folks deliberately ignore the protocol whilst others subconsciously forget to avoid it. Very few people, mostly those with formal education, could be seen using the elbow instead of the handshake when greeting one another.

4.1.4. No cure for COVID-19

On the fact that no vaccine has yet been produced to combat the virus, the tune adequately captures this and goes beyond to emphasise that, it is not only the hospitals that do not have treatment for the disease, but also local and traditional medicines have no cure for the virus. This theme is expressed in the following lines:

(7) *Ye wiim la ka' dogta yel yee, bun la ka' nya'ari tukidaa, fu ya'a zan'as ka walibeε, banjim ka soobul ne pingaaseε, li ka' tiim yoo, ka o yel ya yoo, o ye o biis la yel la yee, m pu'ab la yela yee, ya maan wala beε, ka teη la maannaa.*

(7) 'The disease is not for the hospital, the thing has no local treatment, if you refuse and try, know that it is a shovel and a pickaxe, it has no medicine, and he said it, for the sake of the women, what are you doing, for the place to be good.'

The metaphor of the 'shovel and pickaxe', in line 7 above, alludes to burial. This means COVID-19 will take the recalcitrant to their graves if they refuse to listen. This line goes to ask questions on what measures people are taking to at least protect women and to make the land peaceful.

This message is repeated in (29) as well to emphasise the fact that there is no cure for COVID-19 yet. The *googi* singer points out the fact that the Europe and US are seriously battling the pandemic as it is a no respecter of persons and nations. All categories of persons are dying from COVID-19.

(29) *Akunye yel wala la, Ayooloη yel wala la, Aziidkum yel wala la, Azuung pu'ayua biig, Agiη pu'ayua biig, o kae yolugoo, ka mɔr ya'am sa'an naa, sa'alim dunia dim woo ne, ba luakim ban'a la, ka ban'a la ka' tiim maanna, ye ban'a la ka' dogta yelleε, li ka'a vɔl pala ka li baseε, ka bun la pu ke dogta meηaa, li daa paae ne na'asaateη la wusaa, ye gomma nam li pu keε ba, ka yaki yetne nidibaa*

(29) Akunye said so, Ayooloη said so, Azuung daughter's child, Agiη daughter's child, he has no cedi, but has wisdom to advice, advice all the world, they should avoid the disease, for the disease has no medication, the disease is not for a hospital, it is not to swallow Para for it to stop. The thing has not exempted the doctor himself, it got to all the whiteman's land, it has not exempted governors, how much more people.

4.1.5. Hand washing

The song advises everyone to frequently wash the hands clean. It encourages the people to wash their hands anytime they return home. This is expressed in lines (26–28) as below:

(26) *Koronavirus yelleε, ye biig womya be?* (27) *Ya piem nu'us nyainne, ya piem nu'us nyainne.* (28) *Ya ya'a yi beogon lebna, ya piem nu'us nyainne....*

(26) 'Because of Coronavirus, have the children heard? (27) Wash your hands clean, Wash your hands clean. (28) When you come back in the morning, wash your hands clean...'

4.1.6. Close all borders to prevent the importation of the virus

Getting to the end of the song, the composer 'appeals' to authorities to close borders to curb the importation of the virus into the country.

(39) *Ba da dɔl lɔr Ankara suoreε, Kumasi suore, zuorin suore, so'faan yoomaa, virus la yela ka o yel wala la.* (40) *Ya ya'a nyaηi mɔdigi ya yela ye, ya ya'a yɔ bɔda nam la, ti na nyε laafi, ya ya'a pu siake, ka ye ligidi yelleε, ligidi ti bene ka saalib leε kae, ka bɔɔ dittaa, sankan laa, ka Akunye ye yaa, o daa pɔn yeli ti, ti yoom bɔdaa, Sankaans da wa'ae ya, Kuakno'og da wa'ae ya, Bitu da wa'ae ya, ka yaki yeti Ankara teηa, Kumasi teηa ne zuorin teηa.*

(39) they shouldn't go with a lorry to Accra road, Kumasi road, hilltop road, they should all be closed, because of the virus he said so. (40) If you are able to wait, if you close the borders, we will have health, if you don't agree, and say because of money, money will continue to be there and people will not be there, and what will spend it, at that time, Akunye will say, he already told us, to close borders, shouldn't go to Sankasi, shouldn't go to Kuaknogo, shouldn't go to Bitu, how much more Accra, Kumasi and hilltop.

4.2. Linguistics and literary styles used in the Kusaal Covid-19 googi

A good *googi* performance entails an awareness of the power and distinctiveness of spoken words. *Googi* singers ensure their arts come out in ways which will sound easy on the ears of the listeners so that the listening span is not strained. Such easy-to-absorb and easy-to-analyse crafts are woven considering several factors like, diction, the clarity of complex sentences, the use of rhetorical devices all in the bid to make listening appealing to the audience. In this section, we intend to discuss the various rhetorical devices and style employed in the COVID -19 health musical communication under study. The literary devices and technique used by the composer includes: repetition/redundancy, imagery, metaphor, contrast, anaphora among others. Below is a discussion of each of these devices in addition to several other language and linguistics considerations.

4.2.1. Repetition with variation

This device is always employed in prominent speeches, poetry and other artistic work. It lays emphasis on the repetition of certain lines and phrases without the risk of sounding monotonous. The COVID -19 music carefully blends both repetition and repetition with variation where the latter entails full repetition of what is said previously and the former changes aspects/parts of what is repeated. The purpose of these techniques in any work of art is to enhance memorability and facilitate comprehension. The following are instances that show the use of repetition with or without variation in the music.

...Din yela ka ti bir taaba anwa la, zɔŋ ban'ad wabug biigi kaasee, **teŋ la dammidaa**, o teŋ la dammidaa. (2) **Bon la daa paae** Tamar teŋ la yoo, **bon la daa paae** Bolga teŋ la yoo, **bon la daa paae** Sabil teŋ la yoo. (3) Asigiri kaas, so' da maan kuoree, Amadu yel yaa, so' da la'asee, Kusa'al yel yaa, so' da maal mitinnee.

- (1) That's why we are grouped together like that, the son of the blind person riding on an elephant is crying that *the land is shaking*. *His land is shaking*. (2) The thing got to Tamale, the thing got to Bolga, the thing got to Zebilla

The initial lines of the recording, captured above, are demonstrations of repetition with variation. This technique helps to capture and sustain the attention of the audience. It helps emphasise the need for the awareness that the pandemic is fast approaching the district capital of the Kusaal speaking areas. Once some cases of COVID-19 are recorded in Zebilla, then the next town is Bawku. The singer manages to avoid all forms of monotony by varying the words in the repeated sentences. This kills boredom and appeals to the listening ability of the audience. The use of this device is an excellent technique such that it helps to attract and retain the interest of the audience in the performance.

Throughout the text, most of the themes of COVID-19 which are central to this song are repeated basically with the intention of sustaining the attention of the audience and to enhance memorability of the main message. Several sections are repetitions of the central themes of COVID-19 prevention. The message is repeated with variations in the diction though there are instances when similar words are also used. The theme on the ban on social gathering, for instance, is the most highlighted. Lines 3, 12–16, 21, 32, and 46–48 are all concentrated on this theme. The need for this cannot be overemphasized for two reasons: (i) the time around which this *googi* was sung was around the time Ghana was preparing to enforce the lockdown. The *googi* song aptly educates the people and prepares them for the task ahead. (ii) The fight against the spread of COVID-19 can be successful by avoiding large gatherings. Another theme that is also expressed using this technique is the theme on physical/social distancing. This is repeated in lines 4 and 20.

(4) *Du'adibaa ya womya bee, ya ya'a yi beogon ya luaki ya pu'a zugoo, ka luaki ya biisa men yoo,*

(4) 'Parents, have you heard? if you get up in the morning stay away from your wife, and also stay away from your children, and also stay away from the man himself.'

(20) *Akanye daa vees ka wom, one tum mam na, o ye m yeli ya, so' faan luakim, bora luakim, biig woo luakima.*

(20) Akanye heard it, he sent me that I should tell you, all should avoid it (stay indoors); man should avoid it; children should avoid it (stay indoors).

In both instances the word *luak* 'hide, isolate, stay away' is repeated in its emphatic form as *luaki* and imperative form *luakim* which is also inherently emphatic. The use of the emphatic forms of the verb also repeated severally is meant for focus and for facilitating memorability.

Equally important, in the song, is the message on no cure for COVID-19. This is also repeated in lines 7, and 29.

(7) *Ye wiim la ka' dogta yel yee, bon la ka' nya'ari tukidaa, fu ya'a zan'as ka walibee, bajim ka soobul ne pingaasee, li ka' tiim yoo, ka o yel ya yoo, o ye o biis la yel la yee, m pu'ab la yela yee, ya maan wala bee, ka teŋ la maannaa.*

(7) The disease is not for the hospital, the thing has no local treatment, if you refuse and try, know that it is a shovel and a pickaxe, it has no medicine, and he said it, for the sake of the women, what are you doing, for the place to be good.

(29) *Akanye yel wala la, Ayɔɔlɔɔ yel wala la, Aziidkum yel wala la, Azuung pu'ayua biig, Agiŋ pu'ayua biig, o kae yɔlɔgɔɔ, ka mɔr ya'am sa'an naa, sa'alim dunia dim woo ne, ba luakim ban'a la, ka ban'a la ka' tiim maanna, ye ban'a la ka' dogta yellee, li ka'a vɔl pala ka li basee, ka bun la pu ke dogta meŋaa, li daa paae ne na'asaateŋ la wusaa, ye gɔmma nam li pu kee ba, ka yaki yetne nidibaa.*

(29) Akanye said so, Ayɔɔlɔɔ said so, Azuung daughter's child, Agiŋ daughter's child, he has no cedi, but has wisdom to advice, advice all the world, they should avoid the disease, for the disease has no medication, the disease is not for a hospital, it is not to swallow Para for it to stop. The thing has not exempted the doctor himself, it got to all the whiteman's land, it has not exempted governors, how much more people.

In addition to the several items that are repeated within the individual lines, thus, 7 and 29, central to both are the expressions: *li ka' tiim* 'it has no cure' *ban'a la ka' tiim* 'the disease has no cure'. The composer repeats this important message in the middle of the entire song, thus lines 29, after she mentions the same in the initial parts of the song, line 7. This is meant to remind the audience of the dangers associated with contracting COVID-19 and to instill some degree of fear in them to observe the outlined safety protocols.

Additionally, the theme on handwashing is emphasised in lines 25 through to 28 as the composer repeats and amplifies the need to wash the hands clean. Also, she repeatedly posts rhetorical questions using the verb *womya* 'heard' and the question word *be* to ensure the audience pay heed to the instruction.

(25) *So' woo womya be?* (26) *Koronavirus yellee, ye biig womya be?* (27) *Ya piem nu'us nyainne, ya piem nu'us nyainne.* (28) *Ya ya'a yi beogon lebna, ya piem nu'us nyainne, so' da gban'e o tiraan nu'ug ya'as ya, dunia dim ya womya be?*

(25) **Has everybody heard?** (26) Because of Coronavirus, have **the children heard?** (27) **Wash your hands clean, Wash your hands clean.** (28) When you come back in the morning, **wash your hands clean**, no one should shake hands again, people of the world **have you heard?**

Furthermore, the composer expresses the need for border closure and strict ban on movement, both internally and externally. This is captured in lines 38–40. Several repetitions of words and expressions are used in the following lines to equally emphasise the need to implement the request and to attach the needed importance to it.

(38) *Ya baɓimi ya, abaa, m maa, Akunye ye yaa, Akunye la nye si'el ka yettaa, ba da ke ka sankaans len wa'ae yoo, ba me da ke ka bitu len wa'ae yoo. (39) Ba da dolɔr Ankara suore, Kumasi suore, zuorin suore, so' faan yɔɔmaa, virus la yela ka o yel wala la. (40) Ya ya'a nyaɓi mɔdigi ya yela ye, ya ya'a yɔ bɔda nam la, ti na nye laafi, ya ya'a pu siake, ka ye ligidi yelle, ligidi ti bene ka saalib lee kae, ka bɔɔ ditta, sankan laa, ka Akunye ye yaa, o daa pun yeli ti, ti yɔɔm bɔdaa, Sankaans da wa'ae ya, Kuakno'og da wa'ae ya, Bitu da wa'ae ya, ka yaki yeti Ankara teɓa, Kumasi teɓa ne zuorin teɓa.*

(38) You should beware, abaa, my mother, Akunye is saying, what Akunye has seen is what he is saying, **they shouldn't allow people to go to Sankasi again, they shouldn't allow people to also go to Bitu again.** (39) **they shouldn't go with a lorry to Accra road, Kumasi road, hilltop road,** they should all be closed, because of the virus he said so. (40) If you are able to wait, if you close the borders, we will have health, if you don't agree, and say because of money, money will continue to be there and people will not be there, and what will spend it, at that time, Akunye will say, he already told us, to close borders, **shouldn't go to Sankasi, shouldn't go to Kuaknogo, shouldn't go to Bitu, how much more Accra, Kumasi and hilltop.**

Generally, it is argued that the use of repetition (with variation) creates the atmosphere that leaves the audience with total awareness and full understanding of the central themes of COVID -19. The audience is able to memorise some of the lines that are repeated severally in the song which definitely enhances the fight against the virus.

4.2.2. Anaphora

Another frequently used technique purposely for emphasis is Anaphora. Anaphora is the repetition of words or phrases at the beginning of successive clauses to further drum home an important message to an audience. This device can be traced in several places in the music, the example below is taken from the final lines of the song for demonstration:

(48) *Mmmmm, M maa- m maa, Doɓta Kunye yel ye yaa, Doɓta Kunye yel ye yaa, Asigiri daa yel ye koor da maanna, ka ba su'a maale, awure da loɔda, ka ba su'adi loɔd, mitin da ditaa, ka ba su'adi dit, ka Akunye paae na, ka yu'on yeli ba, ban' la kae tiim, li kae nya'ari tukida...*

(48) Mmmmm, **my mother my mother, Dr. Kunye has said that, Dr. Kunye has said that,** Asigiri said there should be no funeral, yet they organise funeral secretary, they shouldn't hide to perform wedding and yet they hide to perform weddings, meetings should not be held but they hide and hold meetings, and Akunye arrived, and now told them the disease has no drug, it has no local treatment...

In the excerpt, line 48, a direct appeal is made to mothers who alongside children are considered the most vulnerable in the community. To get the maximum attention and put emphasis on what is being said, the singer repeats names and goes further to contrast whatever order is given by the chief with the defiant attitude of the people. One could argue that women patronize funerals, weddings and other social gatherings more than men hence the need to directly address them. Being a woman herself, the singer, perhaps feels obliged to appeal to her fellow women to abstain from breaking any of the COVID-19 safety protocols. One of the prominent senior nurses in the municipality is Mr. Akunye. His name is mentioned several times and at the end of the music, he is used as the authority who cautions the audience that COVID-19 has no cure at that moment in time.

4.2.3. Imagery

Any good piece of art work is characterised by its ability to appeal to the senses of the listener or reader. The use of imagery in combination with other figures of speech like similes, metaphors, personification, allusions, etc. help in no little amount to achieve this goal best. An important factor of a good piece of oral literary work is the use of imagery to enhance the memorability effect of the message in particular and the piece of work in general. It is observed that *googi* singers create imageries that help keep in mind their central themes noting very well that pictures always articulate issues louder than verbal expressions.

A very scary image is created of how deaths caused by COVID-19 can wipe away an entire family, tribe or nation. The lines after the restrictions on the performance of funerals, marriages etc. comes with the consequences that one may incur should there be any defiance. The singer then explains that the consequences of COVID-19 are the reasons why prominent community chiefs and leaders including Akunye, Ayɔɔloɓ, Aziidkum and Aba'ania'ad are all lamenting. This can be traced in the following lines from the songs:

(15) *Fu ya'a zan'as ka yii keɓe, fu ya'a mɔr yelaa paae naa, bɔn la ka' fu kɔn'ɔkɔn' kum yoo, fu na taas bura la meɓaa, ka taasi fu nintaas la wɔsaa; ka lebna taas biis la wɔsaa. (16) Li ya'a yi la ye li yadig teɓ la ne, li ya'a yadig teɓ la ya maan wala-wala be? (17) Din la ka Akunye fabinna, ka ayɔɔloɓ fabinna, ka aziidkum fabinna, ka aba'ania'ad fabinna,*

(15) If you refuse and go, if you bring the problem, the death is not yours alone, you will infect the man himself, and infect all your rivals, and also infect all the children. (16) When it attacks it covers the whole area, if it covers the whole area what will you then do? (17) That's why Akunye is lamenting, Ayɔɔloɓ is lamenting, Aziidkum is lamenting, Aba'ania'ad is lamenting,

The singer brings in a classical illusion of the horrible scene created in China by the pandemic. She skillfully localizes the situation to reflect the life of her audience by using context such as 'the road to the borehole' etc. which is typically part of the daily routines of women and children in the Kusaa speaking communities.

... ..ya ya'a zi' yaa, ya bu'osim China dima woo, ba ya'a yi beogunee, ye sa'ab pu ditaa, ku'om pu nuuda. (18) *Ba ya'a yi beogunee ba zi' kɔloɓ suore, ba zi' da' suore. (19) Ba yu'on mɔɔdi ba meɓ yelle.*

... ..if you don't know, ask the Chinese, if they get up in the morning, they don't eat, they don't drink. (18) In the morning they don't know the road to the borehole, they don't know the way to the market. (19) They are now struggling for themselves.

Another strong imagery is observed in the opening lines where the chieftaincy in the Kusaug traditional area is presented as one that is shrouded in mysticism. An image of the crying son of a blind man riding on an elephant is created. The blind man alludes to the father of the current chief. It is paradoxical to think of a blind man who in many instances, among the Kusaas, will be regarded as frail, weak and physically challenged riding on one of the biggest creatures in the world 'the elephant'. It beats common imagination and shows the wealth of power, grandeur and above all mystery that are associated with the skin of the Kusaug paramountcy. Ironically, the singer juxtaposes this grand power of the chief as something that is totally defeated by the thought of the possible havoc that can be caused by COVID-19. The chief who hails from the lineage of mighty ancestors who though blind, ride on horses is seen to be so weak and helpless 'crying that the land is trembling'. The mighty king is seeking shelter away from COVID -19.

(1)...*Din yela ka ti bir taaba anwa la, zɔŋ ban'ad wabug biigi kaasee, teŋ la dammidaa, o teŋ la dammidaa.*

(1) That's why we are grouped together like that, the son of the blind person riding on an elephant is crying that the land is shaking. His land is shaking.

There are instances where sounds are used to create picturesque scenes catching attention and appealing to the emotions of the audience. The onomatopoeic words are strong cautionary expressions in Kusaal. The sounds *wo*, *woo wooye*, *woo yee yei-yei*, and *yoo* in several parts of the song are intended to arouse the emotion of the audience to produce the desired effect. The lines below exemplify instances when onomatopoeic words are employed:

(6) *M ba' wo, woo wooye, o ye teŋ la yela ka on fabinnaa.*

(6) 'My father, woo, woo, wooye, he said because of the land he is lamenting.'

(8) *M ma woo yee yei-yei, dunia dima baaba,*

(8) 'My mother woo yee yei-yei people of the world, the place is about to, be destroyed.'

Our interaction with three middle-age women who listened to the song revealed how touching and emotional the piece is. They appeared so sober and well informed of the dangers posed by COVID-19 and how best they can stay protected. Prior to listening to the song, the women admitted that they have heard of a new disease that is spreading very fast but the deadly nature of the pandemic was not fully appreciated perhaps due to insufficient information. After playing the song, each of these women became very alarmed, scared in a way and educated on what to do to avoid contracting the virus. The advice to stay indoors and avoid all types of social gatherings become meaningful and the need to observe these protocols became apparent.

4.2.4. Contrast

The sharp contrast with its accompanying subtle exaggeration employed by the singer, to draw the mind of the audience to the dangers posed by COVID-19 is in no little amount commendable. To make her point clearer, stronger and more memorable, the singer through opposite and contrasting ideas draws a balance between states devastated by COVID-19 and others yet to get to the peak after being hit by the pandemic, for instance, Ghana and by extension the Kusaug traditional area. The sharp contrast is to create an image of the impossibility of a country like Ghana to contain the pandemic should the situation get out of hand. It is intended to heighten awareness, and surprise the audience of the inability of the countries that are assumed as superpowers to be brought to their toes by COVID-19. Lines 42–45 below are illustrations.

(42) *Ka' Asigir yelle. (43) Mmmmm, ya banjimi yaa aba, na'asaarnam banɛ mɔr tiim, amaa na'asaateŋ la nidib la naae ya yooi, China nidib naae ya yooi, Italy nidib naae ya yooi, USA nidib naae ya yooi, Spain nidib naae ya yooi. (44) Amaa na'ab Asigiree, o daa buol o Ba' ka bas ku'om ya, o ku'onwammɛ pibi la. (45) Akɔlpuak woo, Akɔldaug woo, o daa di'e ku'om ka yeɔ Amalis teŋin ya, kusa teŋin yaa, ba duon zi'enɛ, ka teŋ la kpen be...*

(42) It is not the fault of Asigiri. (43) Mmmmmm, you should be aware, the white men they have drugs, but in the White man's land the people are finished, Chinese are finished, Americans are finished, the Spaniards are finished. (44) But chief Asigiri, he called his father and poured libation, that is the calabash there. (45) Akolpuaka, Akoldaugo, he took water and told the Amalis vicinity and the Kusa vicinity that they should be proactive, for the area is still there...

Another aspect of the song where the singer employs contrast to emphasise her message is when she makes the point that the advice of Akunye on the safety protocols for COVID-19 is worth more than money and drugs that can even be used to cure the ailment.

(11) *I want to call them, if you've not heard the news, Doctor Akunye has called. He wants to tell Asigiri, if Akunye had a cedi, he would make the world better, he would have developed Bawku for na'aba Asigiri, and also develop Pusiga, he has no cedi, but his advice is a cedi, he has no money but his advice is money, he also has no drug but his advice is drugs.*

(11) *M ye m buoli ba yoo, fu ya'a pu wum labaaɛɛ aba, Dogta Akunye buol ya yoo, o ye o yeɔ Asigiree, Akunye ya'a mɔrin yolugɔɔ, o naan maalin dunia teŋ la yoo, o naan maali tisa bok na'ab Asigire, ka lebna maal Punsig teŋine, o kae yolugɔɔ, ka o sa'alug an yolug; o kae ligidii ka o sa'alug an ligidi, o mɛ kae tiim ka o sa'alug an tiim.*

The powerful blend of imagery, paradox, mysticism, allusion etc. in these lines send a strong signal to the audience that the message and the situation being presented cannot be taken lightly. The careful blend of these rhetorical devices aptly helps in creating mental pictures in the minds of the audience thereby enhancing deeper understanding and appreciation of the situation.

4.3. Language and linguistic features

In this section, we analyse the language and linguistic features of the *googi* musical tune which is the subject of this study. We consider salient grammatical features such as sentence constructions and types, and the use of conjunctions and rhetorical questions. We intend to analyse the impact of these features in the transmission of the message of the song.

4.3.1. Sentence variation

In both oral and written literature, a technique that has a strong tendency of enhancing free flow of the delivery in addition to making the listening easier for the audience is careful and balanced choice of sentence types. Sentence variation involves replacing one sentence structure and length with another structure and length to create a rhythm in oral and written literature. Sentence variation can be achieved by switching up sentences. Sentence variation involves the use of devices such as rhetorical questions, imperative sentences, sentence fragments, inverted order and the use of conjunctions.

In the *googi* music under study, the singer carefully blends her sentences choosing specific sentence types for specific sections with specific themes. For instance, in expressing the ban on social gathering, the negative imperative marker is employed. In the grammar of Kusaal, the imperative form is simply composed of the stem of the verb with the suffix -m; thus *di* 'eat' will be: *dim!* 'eat!', *kuos* 'sell' will be *kuosim!* 'sell' etc. On the contrary, the negative imperative uses an overt negative marker *da* 'do.not' followed by the stem of the verb.

Additionally, the final vowel in the stem is lengthened which is explained to be a realisation of prosodic focus marking in the imperative structure of the language (Abubakari, 2018). The verbs *di* 'to eat' and *kuos* 'to sell' in the negative imperative in Kusaal will be: *da di-i* 'do not eat' *da kuose-ε* 'do not sell' respectively. The following lines are used to express the ban on social gathering in the *googi* music:

(3) *Asigiri kaas, so' da maan kuoreε, Amadu yel yaa, so' da la'aseε, Kusa'al yel yaa, so' da maal mitinneε.* (4) *Du'adibaa ya womya beε, ya ya'a yi beogon ya luaki ya pu'a zugoo, ka luaki ya biisa men yoo, ka len luakid buraa la meηaa.* (5) *So' da gban'e o tiraan nu'ugoo, wiim la yela la, ya womya be?*

(3) *Asigiri is crying that no one should perform a funeral, Amadu has said, no one should gather, Akusa'al has said, no one should hold a meeting.* (4) *Parents, have you heard? if you get up in the morning stay away from your wife, and also stay away from your children, and also stay away from the man himself (this is to the woman).* (5) *No one should shake hands, because of the disease, have you heard?*

The use of declarative and other forms of exclamative sentences also abound in the song. As a didactic piece of composition, the song aims to inform, educate, as well as persuade the audience to adhere to the COVID-19 safety protocols by WHO and Ghana Health Service (GHS) channeled through the chiefs and elders of the community. To ensure the success of the goal, the singer uses simple, declarative sentences. These types of sentences are basically meant for relaying information and the presentation of facts and opinion on specific issues to a target audience. The verbs used are mostly in the imperative forms, others are in the simple present whilst others are in the past marked by using time depth particles such as *daa* 'used for marking an event that is more than two days but less than a year'.

(1) *...Din yela ka ti bir taaba anwa la, zoy ban'ad wabog biigi kaaseε, teη la dammidaa, o teη la dammidaa.* (2) *Bun la daa paaε Tamar teη la yoo. Bun la daa paaε Bolga teη la yoo. bun la daa paaε Sabil teη la yoo.*

(1) That's why we are grouped together like that, the son of the blind person riding on an elephant is crying that the land is shaking. His land is shaking.

4.3.2. Sentence structure

The song is a blend of all types of clauses or sentence structures for the effective transfer of the message intended for the audience. The careful blend of all these sentence structures also eschews any form of monotony which could potentially kill the interest of the audience. The singer combines: simple, complex, compound and also compound complex sentences. This obviously deviates from the style of most poetry to all kinds of prose-like pieces. This is because most oral performances are often poetry-like with short expressions and incomplete sentences (Taluah 2020). In the excerpt below, one can see constructions that are very simple: *Bun la daa paaε Tamar teη la yoo.* 'The thing got to Tamale town yoo.' to others that are complex: *Amadu yel yaa so' da la'aseε.* 'Amadu has said, no one should gather.'

(2) *Bun la daa paaε Tamar teη la yoo. Bun la daa paaε Bolga teη la yoo. Bun la daa paaε Sabil teη la yoo.* (3) *Asigiri kaas, so' da maan kuoreε. Amadu yel yaa so' da la'aseε. Kusa'al yel yaa so' da maal mitinneε.*

(2) The thing got to Tamale town yoo. The thing got to Bolga town yoo. The thing got to Zebilla town yoo. (3) Asigiri is crying that no one should perform a funeral. Amadu has said, no one should gather. Akusa'al has said, no one should hold a meeting.

For compound sentences, the lines below are illustrations.

(9) *O gbin'em ku'om bas tengban la yoo, o yel Tɔn'osugoo, ka yel Gbanwaa woo, li da paanaa, ka pu'ab zu'oe bedegoo, ka biis la zu'oe yoo*
 (9) He should pour libation to the shrine yoo, he should tell Tɔn'osugoo and tell Gbanwaa woo, it has arrived, and women are many, and children are many yoo.

An example of a compound-complex structure is also given below. Here the singer has two independent clauses sandwiching the dependent clause.

(5) *Sɔ' da gban'e o tiraan nu'ugoo, wiim la yela la, ya womya be?*
 (5) No one should shake hands, because of the disease, have you heard?

4.3.3. Conjunctions

Conjunctions are used in several instances to coordinate phrases and clauses. The singer weaves several simple sentences together into compound sentences. One specific instance involves the coordination of about seven simple sentences with the clausal coordinator *ka* when emphasizing the fact that COVID-19 kills all manner of persons: politicians, chiefs, pregnant women, children etc. The repetition of these clauses with variation are skillfully coordinated in such a manner that makes the song a masterpiece. The author emphasizes every clause in the compound structure by either using the morphological focus marker *nɛ*: *kpiid nɛ* or the prosodic focus marker realized by the use of the long form of the verb that ends with a vowel: *kpiid-a*.

(31) *Sɔ' woo kpiid nɛ, biis kpiid nɛ ka pu'apɔus kpiida, ka bilia kpiida, ka bɔraa woo kpiida, ka MP nam kpiida, ka gɔmma meŋ kpiid yoo, ya womya be.*
 (31) Everybody is dying, children are dying and pregnant women are dying, and babies are dying, and all men are dying and MPs are dying, and the governor himself is dying, have you heard.

4.3.4. Rhetorical questions

Prominent speeches and traditional oral performances use rhetorical questions to get the audience to draw a conclusion on important issues. The use of rhetorical questions engages the mind of the audience to think deeper and find possible answers to the questions posed to them though they are not required to voice out their answers. A rhetorical question is a prominent tool that is used to have the audience react in the desired manner as their brains interpret the questions with the need to find answers to them. The example in (16) leaves the audience with no option but to answer to themselves that 'we can do nothing to save ourselves hence the need to adhere to the safety protocols.

(16) *Li ya'a yi la ye li yadig teŋ la nɛ, li ya'a yadig teŋ la ya maan wala-wala be?*
 (16) When it attacks it covers the whole area, if it covers the whole area what will you then do?

The excerpt below constantly repeats the question ... have you heard?' the audience is definitely not expected to answer this, but they are expected to admit to themselves that they have heard all that has been said about COVID -19 and are willing to stay safe.

(22) *Amalisi yel wala la, m ye m bu'os ye Bugur bugna'ab fun womya be? (23) Alodibaŋ dabooŋon na'aba, ana'amu'ar na'aba, zukpar na'aba, koronavirus yel yee, ya woo womya be? Adogta Kunye yel ya, sɔ' faan luakima, ye biig luakima, bɔraa luakima, sɔ' da gban'e o tiraan nu'ugoo, ye teŋ la yel ka o kan'ad anwana la. (24) Akunye ye m yel Bugur na'abaa, Akunye kae yɔlugoo, o kae miliyon dittaa, amaa o mɔr sa'alug tittaa, biig ya'a kae yaa, na'am kae dittaa, pu'a ya'a kae dunia nii, na'am kae dittaa, din la ka o fabin koronavirus la yellee, ya womya be? (25) Sɔ' woo womya be? (26) Koronavirus yellee, ye biig womya be?*

(22) Amalisi said so, I want to ask whether Bugri chief has heard? (23) The late Alodibaŋ's chief, Ana'amu'ar chief, Zukpar chief, because of Coronavirus, have you all heard? Dr. Akunye has said, everybody should avoid it; children should avoid it; men should avoid it; no one should shake hands. It is because of the area that he is chanting like this. (24) Akunye says I should tell Bugri's chief, Akunye has no cedi, he doesn't have a million to spend, but he has advice to give, if there is no child, no chieftaincy, if there is no woman in this world, there is no chieftaincy, that's why he is lamenting because of the Coronavirus, have you heard? (25) Has everybody heard? (26) Because of Coronavirus, have the children heard?

The use of rhetorical questions in the COVID-19 song enhances mental alertness and engagement of the audience as they struggle to find answers to open questions that are thrown to them. Their inability to find concrete answers in some instances shows the helplessness of mankind in the hands of COVID-19. With the image of lack of hope, vulnerability, it can be argued that the use of this technique or device simply emphasizes the need to adhere to the safety protocols. It is, therefore, one of the techniques used by the singer to drum home her message.

5. Aspects of Kusaal traditional beliefs and culture expressed in the COVID-19 googi

The singer did not miss the opportunity to express aspects of the religious and cultural beliefs and practices of the Kusaas with regard to the belief in ancestral spirits as protectors of the living. Ancestral spirits are believed to have supernatural powers and serve as intermediaries between the living, the lesser gods and the Supreme Being. They are the first point of contact in times of sorrow and happiness. The Kusaas believe that everything that happens has a spiritual side to it. The birth, the sickness, as well as, the death of a person do not happen in vain and as such the soothsayer is consulted as soon as any of the above-mentioned situations as well as several others occur. This is intended to direct the living to offer sacrifices to curb

any unforeseen calamity or to enhance any fortunes that may come as a result of the situation. The outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic is a serious situation that calls for several sacrifices and consultations and interventions by the chiefs of the land. The singer tells us in lines (10–12) that the overlord of the land Asigiri impressed upon the Pusiga chief who hails from the ancestral lineage of the great warrior Gbewaa, to pour out libation in the shrine and to invoke the ancestral spirits: Tɔn'ɔsugɔɔ, and Gbanwaa for support.

(8) *M ma woo yee yei-yei, dunia dima baaba, ye teŋ la bɔɔd nwa'abɔ, ka na'ab Asigiri kat yela ya, ka tɔlisi buol Punsig na'abaa, tɔn'ɔsug biigaa, gbanwaa biigaa. (9) O gbin'em ku'om bas teŋban la yoo, o yel Tɔn'ɔsugɔɔ, ka yel Gbanwaa woo, li da paanaa, ka pu'ab zu'oe bɛdegɔɔ, ka biis la zu'oe yoo. (10) Ba maan wala-wala bɛɛ, dunia dimaa abɔbɛ wooi?*

(8) My mother woo yee yei-yei people of the world, the place is about to be destroyed, Chief Asigiri is pursuing the thing, and called the Pusiga chief, the child of Tɔn'ɔsug, the child of Gbanwaa. (9) He should pour libation to the shrine yoo, he should tell Tɔn'ɔsugɔɔ and tell Gbanwaa woo, it has arrived, and women are many, and children are many yoo. (10) What will they do, people of the world why?

In lines below, 44–55, the singer tells us the overlord of Kusaal traditional area poured libation to his father to intervene. This is after making the audience aware that the land of the Whiteman is virtually wiped away by the COVID-19 pandemic.

(44) *Amaa na'ab Asigiree, o daa buol o Ba' ka bas ku'om ya, o ku'onwammɛ pibi la. (45) Akɔlpuak woo, Akɔldaug woo, o daa di'e ku'om ka yel Amalis teŋin ya, kusaa teŋin yaa, ba duon zi'ene, ka teŋ la kpen be...*

(44) But chief Asigiri, he called his father and poured libation, that is the calabash there. (45) Akolpuaka, Akoldaugo, he took water and told the Amalis vicinity and the Kusaa vicinity that they should be proactive, for the area is still there...

6. Conclusion

This study set out to discuss the use of an indigenous language in health musical communication to educate the Kusaal speaking communities in the Upper East Region of Ghana on the COVID-19 safety protocols using a *googi* musical performance. A *googi* is an oral literary performance often used for entertainment and enjoyed by both the young and the old. It often serves a means through which the performer, usually, addresses important social, traditional, and all other matters that concern the lives of the target audience.

This study aimed at analyzing the various safety protocols expressed in the COVID-19 *googi* performance composed by Alembood Akidaug Akologo and the Winpang gooje team of Bawku. It also intended to examine the language, linguistic and literary techniques employed by the composer to achieve her goal. It is observed that as many as six (6) COVID-19 safety protocols are addressed in the song. These are: (i) ban on social gathering, (ii) physical distancing/ isolations, (iii) avoidance of handshake, (iv) no cure for COVID-19, (v) frequent hand washing, and (vi) closure of all borders to prevent the importation of the virus.

Employing several literary and artistic techniques, the singer carefully weaves her message to the admiration, love, acceptance and comprehension of all. Thus, the fact that the rural folks could easily identify with the song, enjoy listening to it with all the needed attention whilst the youth share it severally on WhatsApp serve as evidence of acceptance, love and admiration. The COVID-19 song under study was composed between March and April 2020 and is still trending in the Kusaal speaking communities and widely played on several radio stations as well. The song could be said to have contributed immensely in the education and subsequent curbing of the wide spread of the virus among the rural folks of the Kusaal traditional area. Statistics from the Ghana Health Service (2021) suggest that COVID-19 cases in the Upper East Region (577) is 0.0088 percent of the national total of (65,427) as at 30th January 2021.

Along with several others, some of the skillfully selected rhetorical devices used by the composer are: repetition (with variation), imagery, metaphor, contrast, anaphora among others. It is argued that these devices enhance the ability of the audience to follow, understand and memorise most, if not all, the pivotal messages or themes of the song which is believed to have contributed in curbing the spread of the virus. Additionally, the composer, through the song, highlights some of the traditional beliefs and customs of the Kusaas.

The belief in the ability of ancestral spirits to come to the aid of the living in times of plagues and other disasters is exhibited in the song. We are told the chiefs have made libations inviting great ancestors to come to their aid. The study further revealed that the word *googi* among the Kusaas is borrowed from Hausa *goje*. This type of oral tradition, among both the Kusaas of Northern Ghana and the Hausas of Northern Nigeria, is a form of praise song also used to extol good deeds and to condemn bad deeds in the society. Unlike among the Hausa where *goje* is not played at funeral grounds but rather at the palace and during ceremonies, the Kusaas play *googi* during all events including the funerals of elderly people. This study, being the first of its kind on this topic in the Mabia (Gur) literature contributes to current debate on COVID-19 and future debates on other unforeseen pandemics.

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