

**UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA**

**AESTHETIC ANALYSIS OF GONJA PROVERBS**



**MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY**

**UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA**

**AESTHETIC ANALYSIS OF GONJA PROVERBS**



**A Thesis in the Department of Gur-Gonja Education, College of Ghanaian Languages Education, submitted to the School of Graduate**

**in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of  
Master of Philosophy  
(Ghanaian Language-Gonja)  
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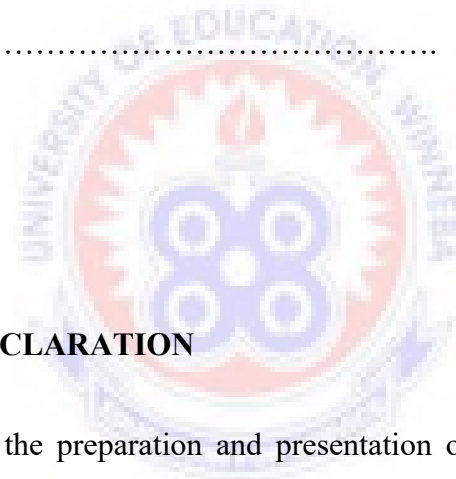
## DECLARATION

### STUDENT'S DECLARATION

I, Seidu Tanko, declare that this thesis, with the exception of quotations and references contained in published works, which have all been identified and duly acknowledged, is entirely my own original work, and it has not been submitted either in part or whole, for another degree elsewhere.

Signature: .....

Date: .....



### SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this work was supervised in accordance with the guidelines for supervision of thesis/dissertation/project as laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.

Supervisor: Mr. Henry K. Afari-Twako

Signature: .....

Date: .....

## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this work to my Uncle (Mr. Silas Natomah) who has contributed in diverse ways to bring me this far.



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I wish to express my gratitude to Mr. Henry K. Afari-Twako of the Department of Gur-Gonja Languages Education, College of Languages Education for being my guardian, mentor, lecturer and supervisor throughout my University Education and the writing of this research work.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

S	Subject
V	Verb
O	Object
A	Adjunct
C	Complement



## ABSTRACT

This study presents an aesthetic analysis of some Gonja proverbs with particular reference to the East Gonja District dialect of the Gonja language. It discusses the structure of the Gonja proverbs, themes and some literary devices as well as the aesthetic qualities embedded in the Gonja proverbs. Purposive sampling technique was adopted for the study and the design of the study was qualitative research because the analyses of the data was mainly descriptive. The sample size of the study was twelve (12) made up of the chief and his elders as well as a woman dirge singer, one local praise singer of the Kpembe traditional area and three sections of the language community namely Abrumase, Kigbatito and Slimuchu in the East Gonja District of the Savanna Region of Ghana and one lecturer of the Gonja language from the University of Education, Winneba. The instruments used in the study for the data collection were unstructured interview. The findings of this study confirmed that Gonja proverbs have structures in their compositions; themes and varied literary devices as well as their aesthetic qualities which have been clearly displayed in the analyses of the proverbs.



## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.0 Introduction

This section of the study discusses the introduction and background of the study, the statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research questions, objectives, limitations, delimitation, significance of the study and organization of the study. It also looks briefly at Gonja and its speakers and again discusses the geographical area where Gonja is spoken in Ghana. It also highlights the speakers and languages affiliated to Gonja.

#### 1.1 Background

In the Gonja tradition, many proverbial sayings and phraseologies are knotty statements which are viewed as vehicle for communicating belief systems, values, prescribed and proscribed attitudes and behaviours of people at personal, groups or societal levels. Proverbs are mostly crafted from human experiences and insights and have been viewed over the years as a repository of social norms and values as well as an embodiment of culture and tradition which are potentially applicable in various settings in society. The Gonja term form a proverb is “kejasa”. (Afari-Twako, 2001) and they are one of the oldest and most important genres of folktale, which form part of the Gonja culture. These wise sayings form a very important aspect of the way of life of the Gonja people. They are also capable of providing a variety of meanings depending on the way the speaker and listener or audience understand them. The effect of Gonja proverbs on the populace

depends on the aptness with which they are employed in a given situation. One proverb in Gonja can be used under different situations to solve some basic problems.

For example, this Gonja proverb

Eno kraa wo esoso, kebri maŋ daŋ choŋso. (Afari-Twako 2015, p. 44-45).

Literarily, it means- When the hand is still raised, the beating is still pending.

In one situation, it is bringing out the fact that, if there is danger or while the trouble is still on going, matters cannot be settled.

On the other hand, it also, states the fact that, once there is life, there is hope.

In another perspective, two or more Gonja proverbs that are similar in context can be used for the same situation at any given time or place. For example, these two proverbs can be used to bring out the same effect. *Emin maa choo ne katul bee mushe*- The hair will not be burning while the beard will be laughing. And *Anishi maa shu ne kamuna tase*-The eyes do not cry while the nose will be sitting down. (Afari-Twako 2015, p. 44).

Again, proverbs are capable of having a variety of meanings according to how and when they are used and the fact that a proverb can occur under a particular heading is not in itself a reason to limit the application of that proverb to that theme alone. Proverbs demand consideration on the part of those who use and hear them; and a judgment of whether a particular proverb has been used correctly and effectively; “it is this interactive effort involving sharp-witted analysis and judgment, which can make a proverb in the mouth of a skilled proverbist a verbal art of great fitness” (Ibekwe 1998, p.2). Therefore, considering the effective use of proverbs we believe that a situation may be appropriate for more than one proverb.

In many African societies the instinct for language, for imagery, and for expression of abstract ideas through concise and allusive phraseology can be seen particularly in proverbs.

Finnegan (1970, p.390). In this sense, *anasa* (proverbs) can be seen to have immense value to speakers and orators.

Abrahams (1973, p.117) defines proverb as “a short and witty traditional expression that arises as part of everyday discourse as well as in the more highly structured situations of education and judicial proceedings”. This implies that each proverb is a full statement of an approach to a recurrent problem. It presents a point of view and a strategy that is self sufficient, needing nothing more than an event of communication to bring into play. A proverb is such a saying popularly known to express simple and concrete truths based on common sense and the experience of people.

According to Bascom (1964, p.438) “proverbs which are the most important type of aphorism in Africa have a deeper meaning than is stated literally, a meaning which can be understood only through the analysis of the social situations to which they are appropriate.

A proverb is a communicating tool used to describe and express social, cultural, natural and other events or practices (Odebunmi, 2008). It is rare to communicate effectively in the African context without using proverbs, especially if the speaker is dealing with issues that border on the values, norms, institutions and on the whole gamut of the people’s experience. They are indispensable in African communication and are tied up to the philosophy, experience and cognitive abilities of people (Agyekum, 2012). This also implies that proverbs permeate in every communication process. The use of proverbs



makes a conversation very highly regarded. In his famous award winning book- “Things Fall Apart”, Achebe said: “Among the Ibo [ethnic group of Nigeria] the art of conversation is regarded very highly, and proverbs are the palm-oil with which words are eaten” (Achebe 1994, p.67). The metaphor “Proverbs are the palm-oil with which words are eaten” suggests that words are prepared by proverbs for consideration and digestion. Proverbs are the basis by which words/conversations are made. This is especially the case from the perspective of Gonja people. It is acknowledged that one’s ability to use proverbs appropriately in speech indicates one’s communicative competence (Agyekum, 2012). This is strengthened and supported by the use of appropriate proverbs. Social problems, personal difficulties and all social vices can be dealt with by conveniently using appropriate proverbs (Owu-Ewie, 2018). This presupposes that the functions of proverbs as a means of embellishing speech and performance, projecting business sense of people, portraying the image of a community and preserving the history and culture of a people can be aesthetically underscored among speakers and listeners. Aesthetically, a proverb may be used to show joy, to mourn, to praise, to indicate failure or to warn. So, apart from literal and linguistic contexts, the social context of any proverb determines its suitability of use in a particular situation (Bashir and Idris-Amali 2012, p.495). The meaning of a proverb, to a great extent, depends on the circumstance of use, the dexterity of the speaker (user), the iconic cultural and interpretative skills of the listener (audience), among other linguistic tropes which embody its aesthetics. Suru (2010, p. 171), affirms that aesthetics deals with those responses to natural objects (including proverbs) and the judgment as to whether they should be regarded as beautiful or ugly.

There is the need to bring to the fore some structures, themes, literary devices and the aesthetics qualities that are embedded in the Gonja proverbs.

## **1.2 The Gonja Language**

Gonja, known by the natives as Ngbanyato is a North Guang Language which belongs to a minor language family within the Niger Congo phylum that covers much of sub-Saharan Africa. The term Gonja is used to refer to both the people and the language spoken by them. Gonja is the northernmost of the Guang languages spoken in Ghana. (Deborah et al, 2016). Gonja occupies a large area that lies along the upper reaches of the Volta Lake and the White and Black rivers that pour into the Lake. Gonja is widely spoken by speakers of some other Gur languages. This special status is of course due to the expansion of the Gonja Empire in the eighteenth century. As a result, in much of Western Gonja the ruling clan in a town may speak Gonja as a first language, but many commoners speak Vagla, Hanga, Choruba or another Gur language such as Dagaare, Safalba, Dagbani etc as their first language and Gonja as a second language (Dakubu, 1988). This language is spoken mainly in the Savanna Region of Ghana and also in the Upper basin of Volta lake area. In Brong Ahafo Region, Gonja is spoken in Kintampo North District of Ghana (Ethnologue, 2016).

According to Afari-Twako (2005), Gonja has three dialects, East Gonja, West Gonja and Ndompo and is used in all domains and by people of all ages. Gonja is taught in basic, secondary schools as well as tertiary institutions in Ghana. Gonja is also spoken in a linguistically heterogeneous and highly multilingual context.

According to Dakubu (1988, p.76) Gonja is the Second largest Guang language in terms of speakers. The population and housing census 2010 gave the population of the Gonja as about four hundred and sixty nine thousand, four hundred and ninety (469,490) and the language is spoken over a large area stretching north to Tamale, the capital of Ghana's Northern Region. Its East-West extent is also considerable, reaching from Salaga in the East to Bole in the West. Considering the linguistic features, the language exhibits both voiced and voiceless consonants at each place of articulation. Gonja has been analyzed recently as having nine vowel systems though seven are used in its teaching and learning. Gonja predominantly exhibits CV, V, CVN and CVV syllable structure (Deborah et al, 2016).

The language is strictly subject-verb-object (SVO). The language also makes use of postposition and the noun occurs preceding the determiner in the structure of the language.

### **1.2.1 Review of works on Gonja Language**

Modest strides have been made in the past by language and oral literature teachers in the research of Gonja. Significant works have been done in the study and use of Gonja, but published articles and books in the language are very few, yet there is hope going forward. The Gonja language is recognized by the Ministry of Education for use in basic and secondary schools. It is also taught at some Colleges of Education like Bagabaga College of Education, Tamale College of Education and E. P. College of Education, Bimbila in the Northern Region of Ghana and again studied as a course in the University of Education, Winneba, College of Ghanaian Languages, Ajumako. In view of this,

agencies like Bureau of Ghanaian Languages, Ghana institute of Linguistics, Literacy and Bible Translation and Cyber systems publish articles in Gonja. This section, therefore, is to briefly discuss the relevant and readily available materials in Gonja related to this current study.

Afari-Twako (2001) provides a preliminary descriptive study of the grammar and use of Gonja language. The aim of the author was to present a comprehensive introductory study of phonetics and phonology, morphology, semantics and syntax in Gonja. The first two chapters provides a study of speech sounds, their form, substances and perception as well as the application of this study to better understanding and improvement of Gonja expression.

In this regard, knowing the phonetics, phonology, morphology, semantics and the syntax of a language, aids one to understand the various proverbs of the language, hence makes it easier to analyze them. The chief aim of the study lies in the fact that it brings researcher to the point where they can readily analyze proverbs structures and providing a meaningful explanation to them in Gonja. Sulemana (2001), provides a comprehensive readable prose entitled *Ndefoso* in the written literature of Gonja which treats proverbs through the characters and the use of proverbial names for characterization in the book. He wrote the book such that every character acts and behaves to portray his/her proverbial name. All proverbs in this prose were appropriately used in their real context and situation. Amidu (2011) compiled a number of proverbs in Gonja and their meanings in the same language. He only identifies the proverbs and their literal meanings. His work yielded a reasonable number of literature materials relevant for the teaching and learning of Gonja proverbs. Jindayu (2013) considers the morph-syntax of Gonja personal names.

His work on the morph-syntactic of Gonja personal names, also ventured into the proverbial aspect of the Gonja naming system. Attention was given to the structural composition of the personal names in the language. Apart from the circumcinal names, borrowed, names from deities, day names and month names, the most featured were the proverbial names which are of a keen interest to this current study of aesthetic analysis of some Gonja proverbs. In an empirical study on Gonja proverbs, Afari-Twako (2015) analyzed some Gonja proverbs to examine their educational significance for the contemporary generation. He acknowledged that Gonja proverbs are crucial in developing the social skills and emotional intelligence of the youth today. He again, noted encouragement of hard work and detest for laziness, love and co-operation, unity, self-reliance, support, warning against discrimination and communal life as some importance of the Gonja proverbs. In addition to the above work, Afari-Twako (2005) provides a comprehensive readable Gonja proverbs book titled “*anasa*” which indicates how proverbs in Gonja can be applied to other areas of study. Based on this assertion, the current study expands the frontiers of these studies by analyzing the aesthetics of some Gonja proverb with the aim of bringing out their structure, themes and some literary devices embedded in them.

Also, in the field of oral literature in Gonja, Amidu (2010) in his unpublished lecture notes explains that, the Gonja dirges are mostly versed with numerous proverbs. He further noted that the proverbs in the Gonja dirges are also to be understood by only mature minded people, due to their structural composition and the proverbs in the dirge makes it difficult to be understood by all, especially children.

Moreover, being able to understand and use the Gonja dirge, means one must be able to understand the proverbs of the Gonja language.

Afari-Twako (2001) explored the uses of Gonja proverbs in contemporary human resource principles and corporate values. He identified that Gonja proverbs portray themes like team work, retirement planning, training and development, risk-taking, collective responsibility and accountability, feedback seeking, collaboration in human resource and business planning.

He also laments that, when a proverb is translated from another language into the Gonja language, it does not bring out the right import and effect.

### **1.2.2 Languages affiliated to Gonja**

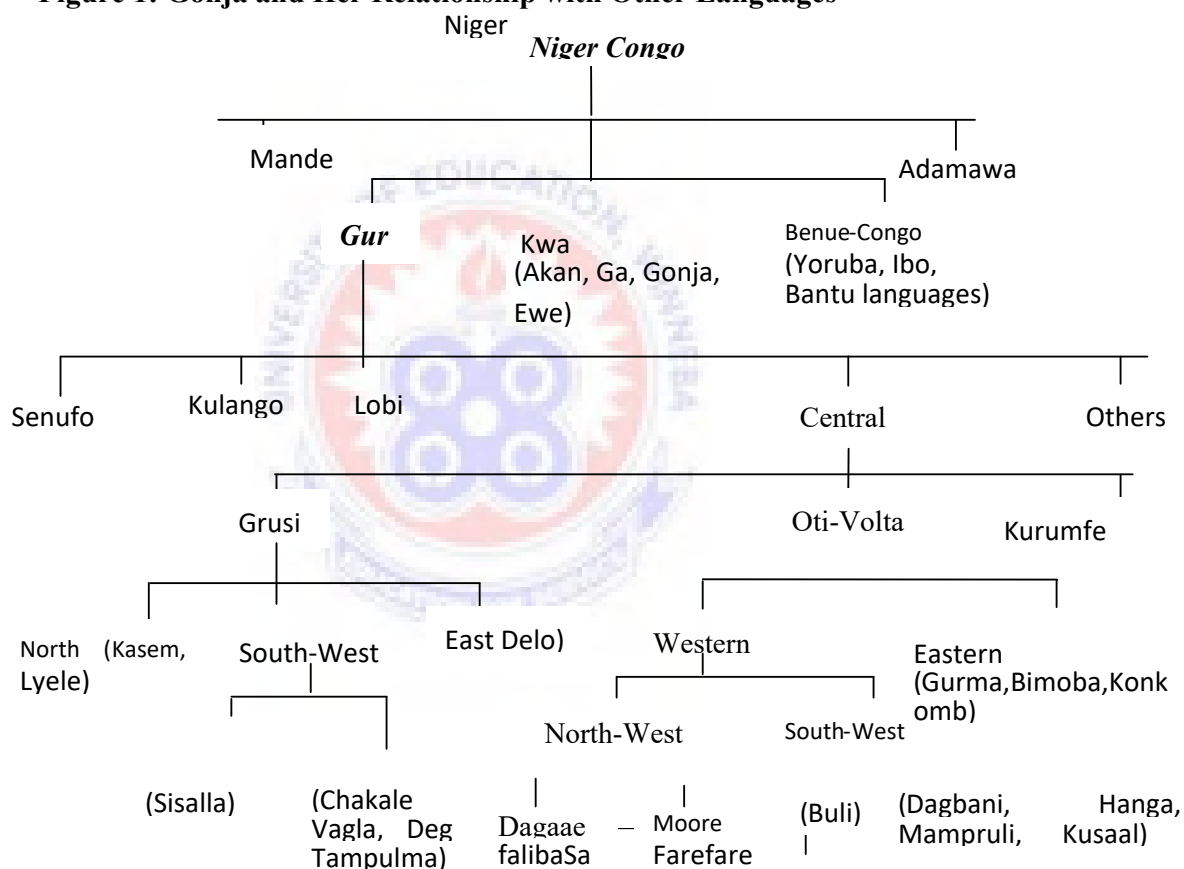
The North Guang language family comprises Chumburung, Foodu, Gichode, Krachi, Nawuri, Choruba, Gonja and Nkonya (Dakubu, 1988, p.76, Deborah et al, 2016, p.2 and Snider, 1990a). The schema (i) below indicates the position of Gonja and the North Guang group to which it belongs.

- i) Niger-Congo>Volta Congo>Kwa>Tano>Guang>North Guang>Gonja

According to Deborah et al (2016, p.1), Gonja the North Guang language has by far the largest population of speakers. The native speakers of Gonja currently number about 230,000. There is a considerable amount of mutual intelligibility among Yeji Chumburung, Prang Chumburung, and Krachi Chumburung but considerable less intelligibility between these forms and Gonja (Dakubu, 1988). All major ethnic groups in Ghana claim to have come to meet the Guangs already settled. The Guangs in Ghana can

be classified into five major groups spread throughout the country. The major groups include the Guangs, Chumburung, Nawuri, Gichode, Choruba, the Volta Guangs; Nkonya, Anum-Boso, the Eastern Guangs; Cherepong, Akropong, Larteh, the Brong Ahafo Guangs and the Central Guangs; Awutu. The Gonja people occupy six local government districts in the Savanna Region of Ghana, namely: Sawla-Tuna-Kalba, Bole - Bamboi, East Gonja, West Gonja, Central Gonja and North Gonja, the most recent.

**Figure 1: Gonja and Her Relationship with Other Languages**



Source: Adapted from Dakubu (2007, p.8)

### **1.3 Statement of the problem**

The Gonja proverbs have not received enough dumentation in the academic field.

Agyekum (2012), posits that proverbs are time tested beliefs and witty sayings, usually symbolic that express a truth or recognized observation about practical lines which are based on traditional experiences and have been transmitted from generation to generation and withstood the test of time. Yankah (2012), stipulates that proverbs are in the heart of real discourse interactions and they have rhetorical importance on the basis of indigenous aesthetics.

The study of proverbs is a relatively well researched area which has attracted many scholars to delve into the various aspects of the concept of proverbs of their various languages all over the world. Agyemang etal (2015) looked at the relevance of Ghanaians Akan proverbs to explanations of contemporary human resource principles and corporate values. Awedoba (1999) worked on an introduction to Kesena society and culture through their proverbs. Amidu (2011), did some work on Gonja proverbs by making a compilation of some proverbs and their meanings. Afari-Twako (2015), also did a compilation of Gonja proverbs and their literal meanings, part of which have been translated into English language. Mbemah (1975) and Sulemana (2001) also used a number of Gonja proverbs in their prose books. Apart from these, not much attention has been given to the aesthetic analysis of the Gonja proverbs with particular reference to the East Gonja dialect of the language. Though, Afari-Twako (2001, 2015), did some explanation on their proverbs in the East Gonja dialect. However, no research has been conducted on the structure, themes and literary devices embedded in the Gonja proverbs in the Gonja language.



The gap that this study therefore intends to bridge is to expose speakers and readers of Gonja to the aesthetics analysis of some Gonja proverbs, with focus on their structure, themes and literary devices embedded in them.

#### **1.4 Objectives of the study**

The objectives of the study are to:

1. discuss the structure of the Gonja proverbs
2. examine the themes embedded in some Gonja proverbs.
3. identify some literary devices in the Gonja proverbs and aesthetics qualities embedded in them.

#### **1.5 Research questions**

This research answered the following questions:

1. What are the structures of the Gonja proverbs?
2. Which themes are portrayed in the Gonja proverbs?
3. Which literary devices and aesthetic qualities are embedded in the Gonja proverbs?

#### **1.6 Purpose of the study**

The purpose of the study was to conduct a comprehensive descriptive analysis of aesthetics of proverbs particularly in the Gonja language. The study is an attempt to contribute to the general knowledge of the Gonja proverbs, using data from Gonja. The

study seeks to describe the structure of the Gonja proverbs, thematic analysis and literary devices in some of the proverbs as well as the aesthetic qualities in the Gonja proverbs.

### **1.7 The limitations of the study**

In the process of this investigation, the researcher encountered some potential weaknesses and challenges. The researcher encountered challenges like, lack of cooperation by some of the informants or interviewees, difficulty in getting respondents to give me the proverbs and their meanings, lack of electricity in my area to facilitate the typing, insufficient documented literature in Gonja and the researcher had to travel from his village to Tamale, Winneba and Ajumako to look for secondary data. This took much of his time and financial resources. Despite all these obstacles, the quality of the research was not comprised and so the findings can be generalized to cover the whole of Gonja speaking areas.

### **1.8 Delimitation of the study**

The scope of this research was restricted to “Aesthetic analysis of some Gonja proverbs”, in the East Gonja district particularly Kpembe traditional area themes. The subjects of the study were from Abrumase, Kegbatito, and Slimanchu which are typical remote Gonja settlements where the language is not diluted with interference of other languages. In addition, a lecturer and two fourth year students of the University of Education- Ajumako Campus and two radio presenters from Salaga were included in the study.

### **1.9 Significance of the study**

This study is on the aesthetic analysis of Gonja proverbs which constitute a portion of the Gonja oral literature. It will provide useful information on the structure, themes and identification of literary device in the Gonja proverbs. It will therefore serve as a reference material for the development of Gonja. The outcome of this study will throw more light on the subject matter and direct scholars for further development of the Gonja language. It will also be added to the already existing works on Gonja oral literature and contribute to the enhancement of the knowledge of Gonja cultural studies. Moreover, the study will serve as a reference material for both the native and non-native speakers of Gonja and those who want to acquire Gonja as a second language. In addition, syllabus designers and writers in the language will find this material useful as they will have an insight into the oral literature of the language which will help them design meaningful curriculum to guide the teaching and learning of Gonja in schools.

### **1.10 Organization of the study**

This study is organized into five chapters. Chapter one is general introduction while chapter two discusses the literature review. In chapter three, the types of research design used and the data collection procedure are discussed. Chapter four of the thesis discusses the analysis of some Gonja proverbs. The final chapter of this study discusses the summary, findings and recommendations.

### **1.11 Summary**

The chapter discussed the general introduction of the study which shows that Gonja proverbs have not received enough documentation and analysis. This has created a research gap which needs to be filled. The chapter also covers the objectives that will form the main focus of the study. In addition the significance of the study was highlighted to show that it will add to the little literature available for the study of the language. Finally the chapter gives an outline of some limitations to the study but those limitations did not affect the generalization of the study findings to the whole of the Gonja population.



## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.0 Introduction

This chapter looks at some related literature relevant to this current study of proverbs. It deals with the definition, characteristics and importance of proverbs as well as the review relates to the general cross-linguistic properties that have been found to characterize the proverb and its associated structure, theme and literary elements. The first part of this chapter discusses review works by scholars on proverbs that are true and relevant to the study so long as proverbs as an aspect of oral literature are concerned. The second part also looks at some empirical studies of works directly on Gonja literature.

#### 2.1 Conceptual framework

This study is underpinned by the pragmatic Approach (PA) to the use and interpretation of proverbs proposed by Sperber and Wilson in 1986 and revised in 1995. The pragmatic Approach deals with how thoughts are communicated from one person to another (Owu-Ewie, 2018). By the use of coding and encoding, speakers encode their thoughts; that is, the listener receives the message and interprets it to arrive at the intended meaning envisaged by the speaker. Also, a sub-strand of the Pragmatic Approach (PA) used in this study is the Relevance Theory (RT) which posits that receiving communication is a process of sifting through the available input to find the communication which is most relevant. In the fields of pragmatics and semantics, relevance theory holds the principle that the communication process involves not only encoding, transfer, and decoding of

messages but also numerous other elements including inference and context (Owu-Ewie 2018 citing Clark 2013).

They further proceeded by saying that, the core of the theory is the communicative principle of relevance, which states that the act of an utterance the speakers is conveying that what has been said is worth listening to.

In Relevance Theory (RT), implicit messages (eg. Proverbs) are relevant enough to the receiver. Wilson and Sperber (1986, p. 252) indicate as a rule that “other things being equal, the greater the positive cognitive effects achieved by processing an input, the greater the relevance of the input to the individual at that time”. This theory was used as an underpinning for this study because in analyzing proverbs of a particular language, it served as an aid to bring out the themes, structures and literary devices as well as their aesthetic qualities embedded.

## **2.2 The concept and importance of proverbs**

The concept proverb, which is also known as paremy has numerous definitions posited by different authors and scholars depending on their focus. According to Barajas (2010, p. 49), because of the non-unanimously acceptance of the definition of proverbs, determining when an utterance may be understood as a proverb has been elusive because structural variations bounds among proverbial utterances.

In the view of Villers (2016), many conflicting definitions exist, mainly because proverbs are the crossroads of several disciplines: folklore, semantics, stylistics, sociolinguistics, and narrative studies. According to Miedier (1989), there are more definition attempts of

proverb than there are proverbs. This has resulted in difficulty in making the definition of a proverb easier resulting in the proliferation of names given to utterances that are proverbial in nature; apothegm, aphorism, adage, maxi, saying and wellerism. Paramiology is the term used for the study of proverbs and one of the most popular paremiologists, Wolfgang Mieder conceptualized a proverb as “a short, generally known sentence of the folk which contains wisdom, truth, morals and traditional views in a metaphorical fixed and memorizable form and which is handed down from generation to generation” (Mieder 1993, p. 24). This implies, that proverbs could be seen as a heritage of values and cultural reflections handed down from generation to generation. A proverb is defined as ‘a short, generally known sentence of the folk which contains wisdom, truth, morals, and traditional views in a metaphorical, fixed, and memorizable form and which is handed down from generation to generation’ (Mieder 1993, p. 24). Siran (1993) says that a proverb is useful to the speaker as a way of backing off “from whatever may be aggressive in his words”. It also enables the person being talked about to “dodge, what, if it were said plainly, would be offensive”. However, it is possible that the proverb might not actually be understood by the hearer as what the speaker had in mind. Christensen (1958) wrote that West African proverbs “may be grouped into two general categories: the truism..., which has limited application because of its literal or definite assertion; and the ‘metaphorical proverb’, which...has wide applicability”.

Finnegan (1997, p. 393) affirms that a proverb is “....a saying in a more or less fixed form marked by shortness, sense and salt and distinguished by the popular acceptance of the truth tersely expressed in it”. Her statement contains some pointers to the analysis of proverbs. These include shortness, terseness, fixity and poetic (aesthetic) quality in style

and sense. Jegede (2008, p. 182) identifies “proverbs as a dynamic mode of discourse with unique identity.....” He further posits that proverbs form a pool of linguistic and thematic resources from which speakers and writers in rhetorics, politics, economics, jurisprudence, philosophy, history, religion, technology, etc draw inspiration (2011, p. 35). A proverb is a philosophical and moral exposition shrunk to a few words, and forms a mnemonic device in societies in which everything worth knowing and relevant to the day-to-day life has to be (Obiechina 1975).

In a slightly complicated way, “a proverb is a popular set phrase having no author known mostly in different languages, expressing in one sentence a principle, advice, a genuine or assumed truth in a general, concise form, its basic idea being of general validity, or at least its user considers it as such” Proverbs are the simple truths of life that contain the moral values of a society (Taylor 2003, p. 13). Aside the aesthetic and figurative value judgment pervasive in proverbs; it also presents a graphic statement that expresses a truth of experience. Its beauty and some delight is that what it says is readily perceived and accepted as an incontrovertible truth. The truth presented in the proverbs is not logical, a priori, or intuitive truth: it is often an empirical fact based upon and derived from the people’s experience of life, human relationship, and interaction with the world of nature (Yisa 1997, p. 120).

Moreover, scholars are agreed that traditional proverbs are the prismatic verbal expression of the essence of folk culture (Shimkin and Sanjuan 1953; Taylor 1981; Oladeji 1988; Yusuf 1997, Nicolaisen 1994, p. 197). This perception of proverbs is related to Seitel’s (1981, p. 124) definition of proverbs as “short, traditional statements used to further some social end” (Egbemogbe 1980; Meider 1989). Adeyemi (2005, p.



60) also noted that proverbs remain a very powerful and effective instrument for the transmission of culture, philosophy, social morality and values and the sensibility of the people. In essence, the values of proverbs do not lie only in what they reveal of the thoughts of the people, they are also models of compressed or forceful language that make people behave according to norms and mores of the land. Other than their powerful verbal expression, proverbs have proved to be of great relevance/benefit to modern man (Ademowo 2014; Oladeji 1998; Makamani 2012). This is due to the fact that users with gifts of creativity who are familiar with its techniques may create new ones to avoid hackneyed expression. This point of view explains, perhaps, Chomskyan view that all normal native speakers are capable of generating novel sentences that they have never generated before. Ademowo 2014). How could proverbs and proverbial expressions be of help in these situations? In their attempt to reading meanings to social control, manage conflicts and attain enduring peace, scholars on Africa have resolved to take a cursory look at the phenomenon of our language pattern with a view to see if certain elements of it could be exploited to achieve such laudable feat (Fasiku 2006; Ogunsiiji 2001). In this regard, Ademowo (2014, p. 4) opined that proverbs enable us to cultivate values and frame of mind that promote peace and heal emotional wounds. These values are found in qualities such as discernment, kindness, love and patience.

It is with this understanding that philosophers of language and ethno-linguist laid emphasis on the explorative and utilitarian use of language in achieving good interpersonal relationship resulting in social order, social control and development (Taylor 2003; Ogunsiiji 2001). The thrust of their argument for language use is that language is the key to the heart of a people. This means that to appreciate a people, one

must have to go through its language because it is that vehicle through which peoples' identity are viewed/appreciated, and also in boosting the self- confidence, motivation and innovation that drive not just development but also social control (Fasiku 2006; Ademowo 2012). Nagy (1979, p. 645) and Yusuf (1998) also perceive proverbs as a short repeated witty statement of experience which is used to further a social end. In the same line, Akporoboro (2008) sees a proverb as a short popular saying usually in the form of a moral advice or truth expressed in a concise form. Also from a face-saving perspective, proverbs are seen as cleverly constructed belief statements which are used to help users to say unpleasant things in an ameliorated way (Alimi, 2012). From a pragmatic perspective, proverbs are interesting pieces of popular wisdom and tradition belonging to any culture, which help us to foreground the values and shared beliefs held by a speech community (Ramirez, 2015, cited in Owu-Ewie, 2018). A proverb is a simple and concrete saying popularly known and repeated, which expresses the truth, based on common sense or the practical experience of humanity. They are often metaphorical. A proverb that describes a basic rule of conduct may also be known as a maxim (wikipedia). Proverb is a dynamic literary genre used in the African culture especially. Tala (1998, p.138) considers proverbs as 'fundamental ingredients in the intellectual traditions of Africans; they stem from everyday activities and embrace the philosophical and socio-cultural value systems of the people.' Proverbs therefore, are coined to reflect the world view which comes from the users' observation of the world. The tradition of the people recognises a particular set of images that existed originally in the tradition. Szabo in a document draws inspiration from the Great Chain of Being theory inspired by Lakoff and Turner's (1989) analysis of the Great Chain Metaphor to understand the

meanings of proverbs through the comprehension of human features and behaviours, and vice-versa, via analogy with animals and objects. Bradbury (2002, p. 262) quotes a formal definition from Honeck (1997, p. 18) which states that ‘a proverb can be regarded as a discourse deviant relatively concrete, present (nonpast) tense statement that uses characteristic linguistic markers to arouse cognitive ideals that serve to categorise topics in order to make a pragmatic point about them’. Bradbury (ibid, p. 263) goes on to argue that Honeck affirms that cultural contexts enrich the study of proverbs, but argues nevertheless that for theoretical purposes proverbs can be ‘abstracted away from their cultural specifics’ because ‘the mental structures and processes of Homo sapiens are explainable on the basis of the same theoretical principles’. This is in line with the assertion that proverbs vary because of their different cultural background but have definitive features. There is the possibility of using a theory to interpret the proverbs meanwhile the cultural background or the ‘socially acquired knowledge’ makes it possible to understand the proverbs as used in a particular context. The cultural background brings in the cultural elements that make the audience readily identify or interpret the text. Gibbs (1995) on his part views proverbs as familiar, fixed sentential expressions that express well known truths, social norms or moral concerns. According to Gibbs and Beitel (1995), most psychologists assume that understanding figurative meanings of proverbs requires various kinds of higher order cognitive abilities and they suggest that the ability to understand proverbs reveals the presence of metaphorical schemes that are ubiquitous in everyday thought. The cognitive view of proverb cognition is universal but the pragmatic perspective looks beyond the linguistic structure into the macro situational factors. Omoloso (2012) looks at the context-structure of

Yoruba proverbs in discourses, in which he brings out the situational and linguistic contexts of proverbs. He concludes that proverbs are culture-specific, hence understanding a people's culture is understanding such people's proverbs. He emphasizes in his study that the knowledge required in addition to linguistic knowledge, is to properly contextualize and decode the meaning of proverbs, includes that of sociological, social, psychological, cosmological and backgrounds of the users of a language. "Proverbs are wise sayings or compositions intended to give credence and intelligent support to assertions and discussions" (Na'Allah 1994, p. 104); they are often used to check the cultural excesses of a group; they aim to advice, rebuke or suggest. Proverbs relate to the day-day lives of the people who produce and use them; their aspiration, morality, religion, history, thinking, expectation; in short, everything about their world views. From the cognitive and pragmatic angle, Honeck and Temple (1994), posit that a proverb is a simple and concrete saying popularly known and repeated, which expresses the truth, based on common sense or the practical experience of humanity. In a related manner, Honeck (1994) states that "a proverb can be regarded as a discourse deviant relatively concrete, present (non past) tense statement that uses characteristic linguistic markers to arouse cognitive ideals that serve to categories topics in order to make a pragmatic point about them". A proverb is a dynamic literary genre used in the African culture especially as considered by Tala (1998, p. 138) as "fundamental ingredients in the intellectual traditions of Africans. They stem from everyday activities and embrace the philosophical and socio-cultural value system of the people". Proverbs therefore, are coined to reflect the world view which comes from the users' observation of the world. The tradition of the people recognizes a particular set of images that existed originally in

the tradition. Furthermore, proverbs have been commonly defined as “an adage, saying, maxim, precept, or any other synonym of such that expresses a conventional truth” (Ayeni 2011, p. 10 citing Adedimeji 2003, p. 55). Hence, proverbs are commonly considered as relatively short, well-known sentences expressing conventional or commonly held ideas or beliefs from a speech community. Finnegan (1970) describes proverb as a body of short statements that build up over the years, which reflects the thoughts and insights of a people. She further elaborates that, proverb is the repository of the wisdom of the people. Also, it is a short standard statement having an evident or implied general meaning related to a certain typical field of general human conditions, attitudes or actions where it is valid with implied limitation. It is known and often quoted in a period of time in a certain language community, sometimes in short form (the rest being implied). Annobil (1992) sees proverb as a mirror that portrays the history and the culture of a group of people. Besides these definitions, Agyekum (2012) defines proverb as time tested, belief and witty saying, usually symbolic, that expresses a truth or recognized observation about practical lines which is based on traditional experiences and have been transmitted from generation to generation and withstood the test of time. In a more concise way, a proverb is seen as a popular phrase, accredited by custom, accepted by the general opinion, and expressing a truth that has been proved genuine (Buatier, 1984, cited in Paczolay, 1997). From the above definitions, a proverb can be encapsulated to mean a time tested, short, witty and cultural oriented statement with moral underpinning which has been handed over from generation to generation in a particular culture with no particular author.

Taking a critical look at the various definitions of proverbs above, there are some characteristic features about them which make proverbs unique. In the first place, they are short wise sayings which are pithy and terse (Yankah, 1989). This means they communicate a lot of information in a few words. They are brief and to the point; a single statement that is infused in speech. Proverbs pertain to imagery and mnemonics which implies that the choice and arrangement of words in proverbs are carefully considered. In another development, proverbs are crystal of language and culture, loaded with accumulated wisdom and strong ethnic characteristics and distinct cultural implications (Aboh, 2013). Besides, proverbs are readily available in recurrent situations and are also available as performed utterances which meet the speakers need for formulating an original utterance of her/his own (Shariati & Tayebi, 2012). In addition to these characteristics, proverbs are also seen as inventorized units which signal group membership (Hain, 1951, cited in Norrick, 1985) and as quoted traditional material which reinforces that apartness from their context (Abraham, 1968a). Last but not the least, proverbs are also seen as indirect speech acts which do not make the speaker explicit (Searle, 1975a; Agyekum, 2012). This make proverbs invoke higher order thinking in their listener (Norrick, 1985, cited in Owu-Ewie, 2018). Awedoba (1999) says the meaning of a proverb is “the totality of its references and uses or its potential meaning”. However one proverb may have plenty of potential uses because it generalizes. Proverbs are used as forms of indirection, to comment on sensitive topics. They are used as innuendoes to lash or malign people without mentioning names to avoid being overly rude. Proverbs are used in the settlement of disputes as traditional philosophical allusions

to highlight on certain important topics and issues (see Agyekum 2006 on the language of arbitration).

Proverbs depict the wit, eloquence and communicative competence, persuasive language and good speech of the Ghanaian, and every good speaker of Akan should be able to use proverbs (see Yankah 1989 and Okpewho 1992). It must be emphasized that the mere acquisition and —knowing of the proverbs by heart is not oratory. Oratory involves the use of the appropriate proverbs in the appropriate speech contexts. One who randomly uses proverbs in the wrong context is as incompetent as the one who does not use them at all. The former even stands the disadvantage of being fined or putting himself into trouble. In an empirical study on Akan proverbs, Quan-Baffour (2011) analyzed some Akan proverbs to examine their educational importance for the contemporary generation. Quan-Baffour noted that Akan proverbs are crucial in developing the social skills and emotional intelligence of the youth. He also noted the encouragement of hard work and detest for laziness, self-reliance, unity, support, love and co-operation, warning against discrimination and communal life as aspects of the importance of proverbs. Agyemang, Asumeng, and Amponsah (2015) also explored the uses of Akan proverbs in contemporary human resource principles and corporate values. The authors identified that Akan proverbs portray themes like teamwork, training and development, retirement planning, organizational ethics and synergy and collaboration in contemporary human resource. Other themes identified were delegation of functions, risk-taking, collective responsibility and accountability, feedback seeking and business planning.

In Akan, âb â, \_proverbs are of many types and function differently; a single proverb can be used in different contexts, such as arbitration, dialogue, rites de passage, etc. The

proverbs may refer to short concise or quoted expressions; they could be anecdotes, parables, fables, folktales, or short and witty sayings from which a moral could be drawn. The proverbs may be semiotic and non-verbal represented by icons found on stool carvings, textiles, linguistic staff, and jewelleryes (see Agyekum 2002a on silence). Proverbs are also used as persuasive devices by which a competent speaker is able to manipulate and convince his audience. Yankah (2012), in his book, the proverb in the context of Akan rhetoric notes that just documenting African proverbs in general and Akan proverbs in particular is not enough. In his book, the author portrays the use of proverbs as dynamic communicative strategy in which form, meaning and logic are in constant interaction. He stipulates that proverbs are in the heart of real discourse interactions and that they have rhetorical importance based on indigenous aesthetics.

### **2.2.1. Importance/Role**

Proverbs play an important role in African societies in general and Ghana in particular as well as the Gonja society. The numerous importance of proverbs or proverbial sayings in the Gonja society is captured in this proverb, which is well-known to the Gonja people of Ghana; “*enyeshempo nawule e yi, ye gba ka la kamalga*”, means “only the wise, knows that I say too, is a full utterance”. The point is that a wise person does not always need a lengthy discourse in order to be convinced of the right way to go. This implies that a fitting proverb stimulates thinking, imparts understanding, and can motivate one to do what is right. In the words of Agyekum (2012:9), proverbs are an indispensable aspect of Ghanaian life and are tied up to the philosophy, experience and the cognitive abilities of



the people. They are one of the mechanisms for the education and socialization of their children.

According to Alimi (2012), proverbs are highly regarded in African traditional societies because they are used to portray certain actions or events in a picturesque manner. They make events come alive and vivid to the listener. In addition, proverbs are used as a means of transmitting the code of conduct, sense of humor and wisdom of people from one generation to another. For instance, the Gonja people have a proverb which says “*kakoshihi mone e bee ji a barga mo nio, mo ne sadari/kɔl bee pe*” (a chick that distances itself from the mother-hen during feeding, it is the one that the hawk picks). Moreover, proverbs are also seen as the repository of native intelligence, code of moral laws and philosophy of both life and social justice (Alimi, 2012, cited in Owu-Ewie, 2018). Proverbs are used to foreground the values and shared beliefs of a speech community. In the view of Wunderlich (1972, cited in Norrick, 1985), proverbs allow the speakers to disguise their feelings, to leave themselves an escape route to offer their hearers choices and to indicate real or imagined consensus. Finally, proverbs are used in communication to avoid personal commitment and refutation (Taylor, 1962, cited in Basgoz, 1993; Arewa & Dundes, 1964 and Barly, 1970).

### **2.3 Aesthetics of proverbs**

Aesthetics have been defined as “The study of beauty and taste, whether in the form of the comic, tragic or sublime.” Etymologically, aesthetics is from the Greek word *aisthetikos*, meaning ‘sense perception.’ This sense perception has been explained by Azasu and Smiles, (2008), who see aesthetics as, “A people’s sense of the forms, images and

experiences that evoke positive emotional responses from those who have been acculturated in the tradition.” (p.201).Aesthetics is the delight, interest and enjoyment experienced by human beings in response to objects, events and scenes. (Gyekye 1996, p.125).This scholar further states that, aesthetics hold the attentive eye and ear of the person and arouses his appreciation and enjoyment as he looks or listens.

Utilitarians are those who insist that the role of a literary work is aimed at the progress of society. This means that one should not only consider the beauty of a literary art but also its important role in the society. Some of the Utilitarian theorists as indicated in Geraldo (2001, p. 22) include Socrates, Plato, Schiller, Dostoievki, Tolstoi and Santayana. According to them, “No difference exists between what is beautiful and what is useful.”(Geraldo, *ibid*, p. 21). Socrates (470-39) says that beauty does not exist on its own without being associated with usefulness. He states that even ugly things could be beautiful if only they are useful to society. (Geraldo, *ibid*, p.22). This in actual fact is contrary to the purists like Theophile Gautier and Edgar Poe who are of the view that art’s goal is not the progress of humanity. They are cited by Geraldo (*ibid*, p. 23) that art is not for moral and political progress. Their view therefore suggests art for art sake, which to this research is unrealistic. Proverbs being an aspect of the Gonja oral genre transmitted from generation to generation really fits into the Utilitarian view of aesthetics because they form part of our communication for years through which the people’s emotions, sentiments and values are realised. Tolstoi in Geraldo (*ibid*:22), argues that art is simply the communication of emotions and that sentiments experienced thousand years before us, could still affect us today because of the way they are evoked.

One can say that the core of aesthetics is about a sense of taste, experience and the value an individual or a society places on natural or artificial objects. As far as proverbs are concerned, the focus of aesthetics is on useful art. A bad art can even deter people from unwanted behaviour or act in a society. For example, proverbs that ridicule laziness or immoral behaviour in a society will not only discourage people from being lazy or immoral but will also serve as a deterrent to others.

#### **2.4. Structure of proverbs**

There are other scholars in the field of literature like Stewart (1997) and Maidan (2009), who classified some proverbs under simple and complex structures.

The term structure can be explained as the arrangement of the various sounds and words that come together to form a complete proverb. The structures deductively have to do with their syntactic and lexical formations. One would therefore realize that the simple structure in proverbs composition have simple lexical and syntactic statements and the complex structures have a complex lexical and syntactic statements.

Proverbs are generally marked by terseness of expression and figurative expressions that abound in metaphor (Finnegan 2012, p. 388). Proverbs are composed in a variety of ways. The actual wording may take the form of a simple positive rhythmic balanced propositions in which the second portion is self-explanatory (Finnegan 2012, p. 389). Finnegan (2012, p. 389) gave an example of Swahili simple positive statement as ‘the goat-eater pays a cow’ which means; it sows the wind and reaps the whirlwind.

Yabang (1999, p. 1) argues that proverbs have several structures in the Dagaaba Oral Literature. According to him, simple positive statements of proverbs are stated in a very simple manner like *Noɔre la sɔɔ* “Mouth is a witch craft”.

Awedoba (1999, p. 45) posits that the kasena proverb usually takes the form of a statement, a declarative sentence that we can consider as a form of prose. He said, we find features like rhythm, repetition of syllabic patterns, a deliberate play on words and sounds or even a replication of structural patterns effected in such a way that it begins to look as though the aim was to complement or restore structural balance to the proverb utterance.

According him, the proverb utterance or sentence may be a simple clause or a more complex utterance. As a simple statement, the proverb usually has elements such as subject(s), verb or predicator (V), complement or object(C) and adjuncts or adverbials (A).

Crystal (1992) says that some proverbs are made of parallel parts. A complex sentence, and hence a proverb comprising only two clauses could have the clause related in a number of ways.

## **2.5 Themes in Gonja Proverbs**

Agyekum (2012, p. 150), states that theme refers to the major, central, or main ideas, or the moral precepts in a particular work. He said, ”sometimes, it is not possible for any two people to agree upon the wording of the theme or themes, because moral positions

and abstract principles are naturally, more difficult to express than concrete facts. Even when a theme is expressed, often the tendency is to simplify a complex idea.”

Finnegan (2012) observes that; “Some proverbs can refer to practically any situation; it would be impossible to give a comprehensive account of account of African proverbs.

Some themes that mostly manifest in the Gonja proverbs include; advice, hospitality, hardwork, truthfulness and unity.

## **2.6 Summary**

This chapter discussed the relevant related literature of proverbs across the field in general. It also considered works done in Gonja language and proverbs related to this current study. Other aspects of oral literature which have connection to this study was also captured in this same section. Different views by scholars concerning proverbs have been discussed here. From this one can conclude that scholars share different opinions and at one time share similarities on issues. However, what is of paramount interest to this research is that there is a relationship between the literature and the topic under investigation.

Secondly, one reason for studying proverbs is that, names are interesting for what they tell us about ourselves and about other people who share the world with us.

In other words they tell us about our origin, culture and history. The choice we make in proverbs usage reflects the things that are important to us.

Besides, the above studies show that this field of research has not received attention from the sociolinguistic perspective in gonja context.

## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODOLOGY

#### 3.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses the type of research design used, the population, sample and sampling technique and the rationale behind their selection. It also deals with the instrument used for data collection, data collection procedure and data analysis. Again, it deals with sources of data

#### 3.1 Research design

This study is qualitative in nature. It was selected because of its descriptive nature which enhances the researcher's understanding of meanings and symbols underlying every human activity. To understand the structural composition of Gonja proverbs, the researcher sees it appropriate to employ qualitative method which entails verbal descriptions of characteristics, cases and settings through the use of interviews and observations. Denzin and Lincoln (1994, p. 2), observe that qualitative research design involves the use of a myriad of tools such as case study, personal experience, interviews, observations, visual texts to gather empirical data about a specific phenomenon.

According to Kankam and Weiler (2010, p. 65) qualitative research approach tries to uncover complexities that help understand meaning. This study adopted the descriptive approach as its main study design because the nature of the topic requires a detailed description of the constituent elements embedded in the Gonja proverbs as well as the connectedness with their themes and literary devices. This is to give a description of

these structures of Gonja proverbs and their thematic analysis as well as the literary devices as they prevail in the language. Also, the researcher adopted qualitative research design because the data was gathered in words rather than in numerals. This method is preferred for its interpretive strength through observing, asking and analyzing which enables a comprehensive conclusion to be drawn by reflecting on practices that prevail, beliefs or attitudes that are held, processes that are on going and issues that are developing.

Also, qualitative research seeks to understand people's interpretation of phenomenon which is dynamic because reality changes with changes in people's perception and experience. The researcher also chose qualitative approach because it produces a "more in-depth" and comprehensive information. Again, it uses subjective information and participant observation to describe the context or natural setting of the variables under consideration as well as interactions of the different variables in the context. The purpose of descriptive research is to observe, describe and document phenomenon as it naturally occurs.

Newman (2012) posits that descriptive research helps to provide information accurately about a group or a phenomenon; provides new information about issues and also documents information that either counteracts or supports prior knowledge about a particular issue. The descriptive research design also has the advantage of giving the researcher the opportunity to describe semantic systems, relations or social events, background information about the issue in question as well as stimulating explanations (Sarantakos, 2000).

### **3.2 Population and sample**

The aim of this section of the study is to discuss how and why this researcher selected the participants used for the study. It discusses the sample and the background of the sampled population used in the course of collecting data for this study. The target population for the study was all fluent speakers of Gonja. However, the fact that the population area is wide, it limited the researcher to an accessible population of East Gonja where the researcher hails from. From the accessible population, the researcher used the purposive sampling technique to sample three villages- Abrugase, Kegbatito and Slimanchu. From these three villages the researcher again used the purposive sampling in selecting the subjects for the study.

The use of purposive sampling was necessary in this study because it provided this researcher with a non-probability sampling techniques which this researcher relied on to get the subjects from whom the data was collected for this study. In doing qualitative study like this, it is significant to determine which type of data would help answer the research questions. Having this as a motive, participants were selected based on the tacit knowledge and adequate understanding that they have about proverbs in context and can confidently discuss the constituent elements as well as the literal meanings of Gonja proverbs.

The sampled size that I selected and interacted with in the course of conducting the field work was twelve participants. They were made up of three chiefs, two chief's linguists, one local praise singer (Agoro), two women dirge singers and one lecturer of the Gur-Gonja Department of the College of Languages Education. Two panel members of a Gonja proverbs Time program on Kenyiti FM, Salaga in the East Gonja District, Savanna



Region of Ghana. In addition one Gonja literacy consultant was also involved in the study. These participants were between the ages of twenty five and ninety and some of them have studied Gonja at various levels of education.

The lecturer was also selected because he teaches oral literature in Gonja and has been in the field for over thirty years and it was imperative that I engaged the services of a high caliber Gonja professional with the requisite skills and competencies that could assist to understand the Gonja proverbs. They were meet at appropriate places which were agreed upon. During the conversations, diligent attention was given to the structure, themes and literary devices as well as the aesthetics of the Gonja proverbs. The two members of the radio station and the literacy consultant were also selected because they speak fluent Gonja and have adequate tacit knowledge of proverbs in Gonja which was required in answering the research questions. These participants were interviewed informally and their responses were recorded and later played back, transcribed and glossed in English as spontaneous data for the study.

Moreover, the participants were made to discuss and explain some of the proverbs and state the occasion of usage and the themes within the proverbs. This was because there were some proverbs that I did not understand and needed to be explained to me . Also, it helped me during the analysis.

Cornips and Polletto (2005, p. 942) postulate that “one cannot use spontaneous speech alone to study the distribution of linguistic phenomenon”. They further indicate that acceptability judgment tasks cannot entirely rely on explicit knowledge since native speakers are able to make value judgment about structures with no explicit knowledge

about them which has not been explicitly taught to them. With this assumption in mind, the researcher also selected four oral literature books in Gonja written by some scholars in the language. These books were sampled because they are considered as standard books and are used in the teaching and learning of Gonja. Some of the major factors that influenced the selection of this reasonable size and the selected books for the study were manageability, time and to crown it all, is financial constraints.

**Table 1:** Participants with their Towns/Locations and Ages

No.	Participant	Town / Location	Ages
1	Chief	Abrumase	81
2	Chief's linguist	Abrumase	75
3	Chief	Slimuchi	53
4	Dirge Singer	Kigbatito	46
5	Radio Presenter	Kenyiti FM	26
6	Agorowura	Kpembe	47
7	Lecturer	UEW	58
8	House wife	Abrumase	43
9	House wife	Kigbatito	41
10	Farmer	Slimuchu	55
11	Praise Singer	Salaga	52
12	Literacy Consultant (Gonja)	Kpembe	56

### 3.3 Data collection procedure

In order to obtain enough data for this research, the researcher travelled to the speech communities to hold interview sessions with the selected subjects. The researcher first went to Slimuchu, where he met an old lady, who directed him to meet the chief and his linguist. He then interviewed them on proverbs. With their permission, their responses were recorded. After that, the researcher went to have the same interaction with an elderly man and an old lady. On another occasion the researcher went to Kigbatito where there was a funeral and had interaction with the dirge singers and recorded some of their dirges. At Abrumase, there was a conflict resolution between two families at the chief's palace. Here the researcher observed and recorded some proverbs from the speeches, after which he interviewed some of them for explanation on some of the proverbs used in the proceedings.

Basically, the sources of data collection for this study were elicitation and unstructured interview. The Researcher used unstructured interview questions to solicit information from the selected participants for the study. The researcher had to listen attentively and record the proverbs and dirges with an Iphone. In other instances, he had to write down responses given by respondents when he asked for explanations to some follow up questions.

In addition to collecting data from the selected respondents, spontaneous data were also collected during durbars, family meetings, settling of disputes, funeral grounds where dirges sang and town-hall meetings. The researcher wrote down proverbs, which were used by native speakers in their natural context, as data for the study. In respect of the secondary data, a total of four creative writing books written by scholars of Gonja were

selected from the Ghanaian language library of the University of Education, Winneba and elicited some proverbs from them which helped this current study. These books were Afari-Twako (2005), Sulemana, (1980), Mbemah, (1975) was where I obtained some information which was relevant to the study.

In addition to this, data from the primary source was based on the researchers own native speakers intuition which were cross-checked with other native speakers to ensure validity.

### **3.4 Instrumentation**

The instrument used in gathering the data for this research is basically observation, interviews and the use of my mobile phone for recording of my informants. In some occasions, I requested for the dirge songs at a very convenient place, so that I could listen attentively and extract the proverbs that are embedded in them. In the process of observing, audio and video recordings were taking during my encounter with the performers on funeral grounds. Some of the informants included, a lecturer of UEW, two students and two radio presenters from Salaga.

### **3.5 Data analysis**

The data collected were recorded and some written down in a note pad. After all the data were gathered, the researcher had to play back all that were recorded and spent several days to write translate and transcribe them. After that, the researcher described the data qualitatively.

### **3.6 Summary**

This chapter discussed the research design and methodology of the study. The qualitative data collection method was discussed for selecting this particular research approach. The strategies implemented to ascertain validity, reliability and accuracy were outlined. The instrument used to collect the data was discussed in this section. The data analysis technique was pointed out. Also the theories underpinning the study have been touched on in this same section. The following chapter gives a comprehensive description of the data analysis, findings and realizations from the intuitive data, spontaneous texts as well as texts from the selected books.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### DATA PRESENTATION, DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

#### 4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the data collected on the analyses and main features of Gonja proverbs. The data is discussed based on the research questions posed earlier in the study. It presents a detailed discussion of the structural and syntactic analysis of the proverbs in Gonja with literary meaning and explanations in English language. With respect to the structure data was collected on both simple structure and complex structures of the Gonja proverbs. Again the chapter revolves around the analysis of the categorization of the proverbs under various themes in Gonja. In this analysis the major ideas which feature prominently in proverbs and the literary devices which bring out the aesthetic qualities embedded in the selected Gonja proverbs are brought to the fore.

#### 4.1 The structures of Gonja proverbs

This section of the study discussed the structures of the Gonja proverbs. The Gonja proverb usually takes the form of a statement. It could be a declarative sentence that we consider as a form of prose. Nevertheless, we find features like rhythm, repetition of syllabic patterns, a deliberate play on words and sounds or even a replication of a structural pattern effected in such a way that it begins to look as though the aim was to complement or restore structural balance to the proverb utterance (Afari -Twako, 2001).

There are other scholars in the field of literature like Stewart (1997) and Maiden (2009), classified some proverbs under simple and complex ones. These classifications of proverb structures deductively have to do with their lexical and syntactic formations. We would therefore, realize that the simple structure of a proverb is a simple lexical and syntactic statement. Also, the proverb may be a simple clause, two clauses or a more complex sentence. As a simple statement, the proverb usually has elements such as subject (S), verb (V) or predicator, complement or object (C) and adjuncts or adverbial (A). The presence of the subject and verb element is very significant in that they are usually found in the proverb structure. On the other hand, the complement and the adjunct or adverbial may or may not be present. The simple proverb is not too different from the typically simple one clause sentence in Gonja. A structural formula is deduced from the above definition of proverb structure as (S) (V) (C) (A), with the following examples in the Gonja language.

### **Example 1**

*Kenaabi maa mushe kenea muluŋ*

[Cow small does not mock or laugh at hornless cow.]

“The calf does not poke fun at the hornless cow”

[This proverb corresponds with the Subject, Verb, and Complement (SVC) structure.]

### Example 2

*Nwusheŋ pibi / bee dese/ nɛ e bɔɔ enɔ to//: SVA*

[Nwusheŋ child rests with arms close by. ]

“When the son of (I – have-experienced-trouble) takes his rest, his weapons are on hand”

### Example 3

*Kabia kuseso / maa tiŋ/ a kurwe//: SV*

[Baby hurrying not easy to born.]

“A baby in a hurry to be born is not easily born”

### Example 4

*Kashenteŋ akpa/ la / ketame nna//: SVC*

[Truth place is sore]

“The truth is like a sore, it is very painful”

Besides the earlier explanation of the structure of the Gonja proverbs, we can again explain the term structure as the arrangement of the various sounds and words that come together to form a complete proverb. Proverbs are generally marked by terseness of expression and different from an ordinary speech and figurative expressions that are abound in metaphor (Finnegan 2012, p. 388). Proverbs are, therefore composed in a variety of ways. The actual wording may take the form of a simple positive or negative proposition or of various types of simple rhythmic balanced propositions in which the



second portion is self-explanatory are also common among others (Finnegan 2012, p. 389).

Afari-Twako (2015), assert that the Gonja proverbs have simple compound and complex structures. In this research work, my classification of Gonja proverbs is therefore based on that of Afari-Twako's classification of proverbs. According to him, simple positive statements are statements of proverbs that are stated in a very simple manner such as "Ndibi damta ela kupo" Many trees make a forest'. Again, an example of a simple positive statement of a proverb as "*Kashinteŋ bee basa*" means; 'Truth is painful'. Here are such examples in Gonja.

1. *Kɔnɔ ela ashe*

(Mouth is trouble)

"Mouth is the root of our troubles or problems"

The literary meaning of this proverb is that, the mouth of the human sometimes makes some utterances which eventually lead him into trouble. They may sometimes not mean what the target of the conversation may decode. The positive part of the statement is *ela ashe* "is trouble".

Another example of the simple positive statement of a proverb is in example 2 below.

2. *Kɔlɔ ela edoŋ*

(Sickness is enemy)

"Sickness is the worst enemy to the human being"

This proverb means that with good health, one can carry out all his day-to-day activities and make progress but whenever one is sick or disabled, he finds it difficult to meet his dreams in life. The positive part of the statement is **ela edon** “is enemy”.

Example 3 is yet another positive statement of a simple proverb.

3. *Chulwi nchu kejembo so*

(Pour water stone on)

“Pouring water on a rock”

The literary meaning of this proverb is that, you are pouring or watering a rock which will never germinate or yield nothing. The positive part of the statement is **kejembo so** “on a rock”. This proverb is used on someone who ignores an advice that is given to him. It therefore means that you have not only wasted your time but also wasted your energy advising that person, since he or she does not pay attention to your pieces of an advice.

4. *Kɔnɔ ela kegba*

(Mouth is witchcraft)

“Mouth is a witch craft”

The literary meaning of this proverb is that, the mouth is a witchcraft. This implies that whatever comes out of the month of an elderly person is more powerful than witchcraft and for that matter if an elderly person rains curses or says something to you, it is surely going to happen. So, it is advisable to always pay heed to our elders’ advice because they are full of wisdom. The positive part of the statement is **ela kegba** “is witchcraft”.

5. *Keɲeldibi e ler kekpaɲɔ*

(Needle brought out the axe)

“A needle produces an axe”

The literary meaning of this proverb is when you forgo something small you gain something great in future. We sometimes give little assistance to people and they intend reward us with something great. The positive part of the statement is **ler kakpaɲɔ** “remove axe”. Again, some of the proverbs were stated directly and below are some examples.

6. *Saɲ kaɲ tɛga ma to bɔ yeshi mabe enɔ to*

(Do not near me is better than leave my hand)

“Do not get near me is better than leave my hand”

Literally, this proverb means prevention is better than cure. This proverb is telling us that it is better to prevent a problem from happening than to allow it happen and then begin to look for its solutions.

7. *Fo nɛ fee sha kamuu kike, fo e nɛ murwe n koso nɛ enɔ kɔɲkɔɲ*

(You who love collect all, bends and get up with hand empty)

“He who wants to collect all, always gets up with an empty hand”

This proverb means that one must learn how to be content and appreciate whatever he or she has rather than trying to amass wealth by all means. Some proverbs are imperative in nature. Examples of proverbs that fell under this structure are stated below.

8. *Fo ne fee ye kusɔ kama maan̄ too jaga, fo e naa too jaga*

(He who says nothing goes free, he goes free)

“He who insists that nothing goes to waste, goes to waste himself”

This proverb is used when somebody gets what he has already planned for but still wants to add more because of the availability of those items. Better still, when somebody eats food and becomes full but does not want to get up and leave the food because it is still in the bowl, will eventually get the effect of overfeeding.

9. *Yeshi esa jaga ne mobe kusɔ nawule*

(Leave person bad and his thing alone)

“Leave a bad person and his or her property alone”.

This proverb literally means do not envy someone with a bad wealth. This proverb is applicable when someone has something and others think that he or she does not deserve what he or she has as a result of jealousy. It is therefore used to create the awareness of unhealthy jealousy.

Similarly, in Gonja, we have another proverb as the above.

10. *Botipo e nyɛ mobe fura.*

(Leprosy person get his fura)

“A leper gets his fura (millet meal)”

Literally, the leper has no fingers to marsh **fura** (millet meal) for his or her consumption, so those with fingers think that they should rather have it because they think the leper may spoil the fura.

11. *Kusɔ kama nɛ ku pɔɔ mo barana so e min bumo.*

(Thing any that overpower other, swallows them)

“Whatever creature that can overpower others swallow them”

This proverb is used when food is prepared and some people complain that it is either not well cooked or that it is not delicious. It is therefore used to tell the people that those who can eat should eat the food and those who think that the meal is not delicious and well-cooked can also discard it. For instance, a toad or frog cannot swallow a python (snake), rather, it is a python that swallows a toad or frog, an animal is a practical example of this statement of a proverb. Some of the proverbs are stated in a negative structural form.

Finnegan (2012, p. 389), states that some proverbs have negative structural formation. She gave an example of a proverb as “He has no chest” which means he can’t keep secrets”. Examples of such proverbs in Gonja are stated below.

12. *Bu maa shuɔi kumunibi Ebɔrɛ so*

(They do not send orphan God on)

“An orphan is not supposed to be sent to heaven”.

The structure of this proverb is that if an orphan is asked to go to heaven for a mission, he or she may not return to the earth because he or she will meet the parents and will like to stay there. It is used when someone is sent to his or her hometown to do something and return immediately. Such a person may likely not to come back in time because of some family issues or problems. The negative part of this proverb statement is **Bu maa** “they do not”.

13. *Bu maa shuji ewulpo alunyɔ*

(They do not send fool twice)

“They do not give a task to a fool the second time”

Literally, this proverb means once bitten twice shy. This proverb is used in a situation where a task is given to someone and he or she able to do it and you want to give him another task. This implies that you should not delegate a fool the second time when he or she could not perform the first task. The negative part of this statement is **Bu maa** “They do not”.

14. *Bu maa china jaga a nya edankana*

(They do not sit idle and receive sympathy)

“You do not sit at one place and get into trouble”

This proverb literary means that it is when you go seeking for trouble that you get into it and people come to sympathize with you. Besides, before one can achieve his or her aim unless he or she moves a step ahead his or her usual position in life. No one can sit at an idle position and call for wishes from heaven to descend on him or her. The negative part of this proverb is **Bu maa china jaga** “they do no sit idle”.

15. *Bu maa puli ebuni a ka aya*

(They do not burry corpse leaving the legs)

“A corpse is not buried with the legs left behind”

Literarily, this proverb means a man must try to complete whatever he has started but not to start and leave it half-way. The negative part of this statement is **Bu maa puli** “They do not burry”.

16. *Bu maa ji elepo fane edon*

(They do not eat a beloved like an enemy)

“Friends should not be treated in the same way as enemies”

This proverb could be literarily explained as, “one does not take advantage of a beloved one as an enemy”. One must try to treat his beloved one in a special way than his enemy.

The negative part of this proverb is **Bu maa ji** “They do not eat.

17. *Bu maa churɔ gbanɛ kojwule be eshile*

(They do not praise horse one’s run)

“They do not praise the race of a single horse”.

Literary, it means there is the need to listen to both sides of a case or problem before passing judgment about it, if not you may blame the right person for the wrong doing or act. The negative part of this statement is **Bu maa churɔ** “They do not praise”.

18. *Bu maa churɔ efupo mo nio edankana*

(They do not greet fearer’s mother sympathy)

“The mother of a careful person does not receive condolence visits”

This proverb means that a person who is very careful about himself does not bring trouble home but a stubborn one may always bring problems home. The negative part of this statement of a proverb is **Bu maa churɔ** “They do not greet”.

19. *Kabulombutobi maa bir kabirto*

(Mouse small does not come out of emergency exit)

“A small mouse does not hit an escape hatch”

This proverb literary means that a child does not take the initiative to do things or say certain things in the midst of elders. This proverb is used in a situation where a child is so vocal and eloquent to the extent that he or she does not keep anything or secret to himself or herself and always want to show people that he or she knows everything even in the midst of elders. This proverb is used to caution such children who are so vocal to desist from that. Also, children are not advisable to lead into exposal of certain matters, especially, when the issue is for the whole community. The negative part of this proverb is **maa bir kabirto** “do not hit an escape hatch”.

20. *Anishinyɔrwura maa kɔɔ kibe to*

(A shy person does not defecate market in)

“A shy person does not defecate inside the market”

The clause in this simple structure of a proverb is a main clause and the verb is **kɔɔ** “attending natures call”.

21. *Kufu be eluanyɔ bee mɔɔ eboɔpo*

(Fear two times kill common man)

“Double fear kills the common man”

Literarily, it means excessive fear makes matters worse”. There is also a main clause in this simple structure of a proverb and the verb is **bee mɔɔ** “kills”.

22. *Edoɔachɛ maa shu mobe kusotogbulso so*

(Trouble shooter does not cry his fore head swelling)

“A trouble shooter does not worry about getting his fore head swollen



The literary meaning of this proverb could be explained to mean if your recklessness lands or leads you into any trouble, you have nobody to blame but yourself. The clause in this proverb is a main clause and the verb is **shu** “cry”.

23. *Kenalu dra maa paŋ eŋe*

(Kraal old does not lose sent)

“An old kraal does not lose the scent of cow dung”

The clause in this simple proverb structure is a main clause and the verb is **paŋ** “lose”

24. *Kebolpo wuso maa ŋana kasane*

(Sheep dead does not fear knife)

“A dead sheep does not fear the knife”

This proverb literarily means that a person who is already down fears no fall. The clause in this proverb is a main clause and the verb is **ŋana** “fear”.

25. *Edoŋ maan ye ma*

(Enemy does not praise me)

“Beware of the words of your enemies”

This structure of a proverb has a main clause in it and a verb as **ye** “praise”

#### 4.1.2 Two clause or compound sentence structured proverbs

Another type structure of Gonja proverbs is that which made up of two clauses in the form of a compound sentence. Some of the proverbs are also stated rhetorically or in a question form but demand no answer. Finnegan (2012, p. 380) gave an example of such a proverb from the Karanga as “The swallower of old cows, is he choked with the bone of a

calf? “Which means, a chief who settles big cases, can’t he overcome this small one?  
Examples of such proverbs in Gonja are again, stated below.

26. *Wane a daŋ lige aya be abɔr ashi nchu to?*

(Who has ever traced legs marks in water?)

“Who traces the footprints in water?”

This proverb literary means, who builds castles in the air? This proverb is used in a situation where someone is trying to do the impossible. It is used to caution us not to attempt an impossible.

27. *Wane a nyi kefuibi mone kefulɛ bee bure?*

(Who know a feather that egg will hatch?)

“Who knows the type (colour of feather) that an egg will hatch”.

28. *Ede ka bee chɔ efitir bumbuj, wulso a waso?*

(Fire is burning fresh grasses, dry grasses should do what?)

“If green grasses can burn, what happens to dry grasses?”

This proverb literarily means that never expect respect from someone who always beat and disrespect everybody in the community.

29. *Fo ye feeŋ cha ne kareche, fo bishi ekarma aa?*

(You say you will dance till daybreak, did you ask the drummer?)

“Do not boast of your capabilities if you have to depend on a benefactor”

This proverb literarily means that we should always consult our benefactors before boosting of certain initiatives. You may start and stop halfway which may not help your progress in life.

30. *Kebia ka nyi keshile, e nyi kepuwi aa?*

(Child says he knows running, he knows hiding?)

“If a child knows how to run, does he know how to hide?”

This proverb is used when a child is trying to create a lie and the elders are also interrogating him and the child finds himself guilty of the offence.

31. *Kenaa mo e ba, a maan luwe?*

(War which is come and not finish)

“What war comes and does not end?”

The literary meaning of this proverb is that, there is no trouble that lasts forever. Every trouble has a beginning and an end.

Similar type of these proverbs were used by Williams Shakespeare in his drama book entitled Macbeth. For example, “There is no art or sign to find the minds construction on the face. Among the Gonja such proverbs are understood contextually without the listener asking the speaker for an explanation or an answer from the listener.

Again, some structure of proverbs are identified as simple rhythmic balance proposition. These are statements of proverbs that have rhymes in their statement composition. Finnegan (2012, p. 389) gave an example from the Limba proverb as “in the house of

wrangling, beer becomes bitter”, where there is an exact balance in the two parts of the proverb. An example in Gonja is shown below.

32. *Bu maa ji alɔhɔrma be kudoe, a kule epo.*

(They do not eat food that has been requested for and ask for more soup)

“You should not take too much advantage of someone’s kindness”

Literarily, this proverb may explained as taking someone’s leniency to be his wick point.

The negative part of this proverb is **Bu maa ji** “They do not eat”.

33. *Bu maŋ daŋ mɔɔ diboe, pɔɛ n duu ayu*

(They have never kill partridge before they plant guinea corn)

“You never do away with all your obstacles in the world before undertaking a project”

This proverb means that one can never do away with his opponents before you can do your work efficiently with criticisms. The negative part of this proverb is **Bu maŋ daŋ** “They cannot”.

34. *Bu maa kpa a ta awuibi anyɔ, a wɔtɔ apɛto*

(They do not at once bones two put in month)

“They do not put two bones into the month at the same time”

Literarily, this proverb means that one thing should be done at a time to enhance, transparency and fairness. The negative part of this statement is **Bu maa** “they do not”.

35. Bu maa dii gbaŋɛ, a china kumobe ntato a wushi

(They do not ride horse sitting its back resting)

“They do not ride a horse and sit on its back to take a rest”

The literary meaning of this proverb is that we should not start resting while our hands are still on the work or job. The negative part of the statement is **Bu maa** “They do not”.

Some structures of the proverbs are referred to people as negative axiom statement which are without any questioning, explanation or argument. Finnegan (2012: 389) gave an example each of the Xhosa and the Zulu as “There is no elephant burdened with its own trunk” which means, a mother does not feel her baby’s weight, and “there is no sun that sets without its affairs” meaning, every day has its own troubles. Some examples of such proverbs in Gonja are not far fetched

36. *Kiyapuye maan nya, a cho kiyabien*

(Leg cannot be bigger than thigh)

“A leg cannot be bigger than a thigh”

Meaning of this proverb, literally is that a child can never claim superiority over an elderly person and that what an elderly person will see when lying down on stomach, a child can even climb the tallest tree but cannot see it. The negative part of this proverb is **maan nya a cho** “Cannot be bigger than”.

37. *Kagbini maan nye, a cho kudɔwura nten*

(Okro cannot be taller than the farm owner)

“An okro cannot be taller than the farmer”.

This proverb could be understood literally as, no matter how experience a child is, he can never play on the intelligence of an elderly person due to the wisdom of the aged. The negative part of this proverb is **maan a cho** “cannot be taller than”.

38. *Bu wu fo n ashia, bu dae nsa baa sa fo*

(When they see you with fermented guinea corn, they brew drink they will give you)

This proverb is literally understood as; if people see that you have wealth, then they will offer you some gifts with the hope that you will pay them back in some other form.

39. *Bana bee for jisa, ne jisa gba a for bana.*

(Left is wash right and right also wash left)

“The left washes the right and the right also washes the left”.

This proverb literary means that all human beings are social animals and that no man is an Island. The left hand washes the right hand “rhymes with “the right hand also washes the left hand”. This proverb is telling us that no man is an Island and for that matter no one should think because of his wealth God has blessed him with, he does not need any other person’s help but rather we should come together to support one another in economic, social and political as well as our linguistic development.

Some of the compound sentence structured proverbs are in the form of contrast proposition statement. This structure could be explained as a style of having a saying in two parts, one in the positive and the other in the negative. Finnegan (2012:389) terms this contrast proposition statement as double proposition. This structure of proverb is further dichotomized into direct parallels between two portions of a proverb and

identified as one of the structures of proverbs. These are statements of proverbs that are always in two parts where the two parts may be positive parts could be negative.“ (Here are some examples from Gonja.

40. *Kanaŋkama ne akoŋ kɔ fo gba, fo maa ji ne enɔ anyɔ.*

(No matter how hungry get you, you do not eat with hand two)

“No matter how hungry you are, you do not have to eat with your double hand”.

The point of parallelism in this proverb is **akoŋ kɔ** and **maa ji** “hungry” and “do not eat”.

41. *Fo sipoche wale kanakama, fo maan tiŋ n kil mo.*

(Your sister nice how much, you cannot marry her)

“No matter how beautiful your sister, you cannot marry her”.

Parallelism is seen here as **wale** “beautiful” and **maan tiŋ** “cannot”

42. *Kubuibi maŋ shi gba, bu maa we mo ne atefuri.*

(Bird is small anyhow, they do not chew it with feathers)

“No matter how small a bird is, we do not eat it with the feathers”

There is parallelism derived here ifrom **maŋ shi** “small and **bu maa we** “they do not”

43. *Ayu beeŋ bel, ku maa ler kebia be kɔnɔ*

(Guinea corn will mature, it does not come out of a child’s mouth)

“If guinea corn will ripe, it does not come out of the mouth of a child”.

The point of parallelism is beeŋ **bel** “will mature” and **ku maa** “it does not”.

44. *Kuchoŋi so be ayu, bobote be kɔnɔ maŋ tii amoso.*

(Roof top guinea corn, featherless fowls has no mouth in it)

“Guinea corn on top of a roof, the featherless fowl has nothing to do with it”

Parallelism here is **kuchoŋi so** “roof top” and **maŋ tii** “not part”

Cross parallelism was also manifested as one of the structure of proverbs. This structure of a proverb is not different from that of the negative axiom.

Finnegan (2012: 389) again gave an example of the Lamba as “one morsel of food does not break a company, what breaks a company is the mouth”.

Complex structure of a proverb is the type of proverb that has two or more clauses in its composition. The complex structure in proverbs composition on the other hand comes with subordinate clauses in their formation as seen in the following examples.

45. *Nɛ fee pel nɛ kajɔnɔbi, e bee dinti fobe kɔnɔ*

(If you are playing with dog small, it will leak your mouth).

“If you are fond of playing with a puppy, it will surely leak your mouth”.

Literary, this proverb means that if you play with a fool all the time he will surely disgrace you one day. There are two clauses in this structure of a proverb. One is a main clause and the other is a subordinate clause. If you are playing with a small dog is the subordinate clause and “it will leak your mouth” is the main clause. This proverb is telling us that we should not take things for granted. For instance, if you are fond of playing with a fool, he or she will disgrace you one day. It is therefore important to note that proverb is either positive or negative in its composition and it can either be short or long.



46. *Kachipurso be bɔre bri fo, pulo maa ɲana fo.*

(Morning's rain beat you, toad does not fear you)

“If the early morning's rain beats you, the toad does not fear you”.

This proverb literary means that if you are born poor, you will never be respected. This structure of a proverb also has both a main clause and a subordinate clause” The toad does not fear you’ is the main clause while “if the early morning rain beats you” as the subordinate clause.

47. *Fo kaɲ bɔ bootibo enɔ to, e beɲ sha ne fo bare mo.*

(You if shake leper hand in, he will love you embrace him)

“If you give the leper a hand shake, he will want you to embrace him”

Again, there are two clauses in this complex structure of a proverb. Thus, a main clause and a subordinate clause, with “he will want you to embrace him” as the main clause while “if you give a leper a hand shake” is the subordinate clause.

48. *Eche baa kurwe, e maa ɲana mobe kifii.*

(Woman giving birth, she does not hide her vagina).

“A woman who is in labour and does not want people to see her womanhood (Vagina) will not be able to deliver safely”.

This proverb is an example of a complex structured proverb. Though the wording may look so short in the Gonja language, nevertheless it is still one of the complex structures in proverbs.

49. *Kadibi ne ku bee sha ketere, kumo e naa yili kebee so.*

(Tree that like name, it is that which stands mountain on).

“A tree which desires a name, is the one which stands on a mountain”.

This complex structure of a proverb has both the main clause and a subordinate clause.

“A tree which desires a name” as the subordinate clause while “is the one which stands on a mountain” is the main clause.

50. *Kawie maŋ kpia n yɔ kufɔ, bu maa baa kumo a yɔ kufɔ.*

(Calabash not tear go far, they do not sow it going far).

“If the breaking of the calabash does not go far, its mending does not go far”.

This proverb is yet another type with a complex structure with “its mending does not go far” is the main clause and “if the breaking of a calabash does not go far” is the subordinate clause.

51. *Kache ne fo tama feɛŋ wu na, kumobe kache ne fee pite.*

(The day you think you will die, is the day you will survive).

“When you think all is lost, something great might save you”.

This complex structure of a proverb also has two clauses in it. “That is the day you will survive” is the main clause and “the day you think you will die” is the subordinate clause.

There are also some complex structure of proverbs that we can consider as a form of prose. This structure sometimes narrates a folktale in a metaphorical manner but it is still a proverb. See an example below.

52. *Kelekele ye e bee yili kiya koɲwule so ne mo barkasa bishi mo:*

*“Mane nna ne fee yili kiya koɲwule so?” Ne e kaɲe fanɛ ewura ko beɛɲ kaɲ baa ji kuwura n kaɲe bu ta kiya koɲwule n saa nite, kumo so ne e wule n fara a yili kiya koɲwule so.*

(The “**kelekele**” bird was standing on one leg and his companion asked him.

“Why do you stand on one leg?” He says: one day a chief will get power and say we should walk with one leg that is why I am practicing).

“It is good to plan ahead”.

Relative clause structures are also in evidence in the Gonja complex structure of proverbs. Afari-Twako (2015) identifies some relative clauses in the language as **mone**, **loɲso**, **loɲ**, **ne** etc. here are some examples.

53. *Kusɔbɔɔya mone a bee barga e nite, mo ne wakpaɲ bee pe.*

(Animal that separate itself from others, is that which hyena will catch)

“An animal that isolates itself from others, is caught by the hyena

54. *Kusɔ mone kaboe ta n wɔɔ baane, loɲ ne baane wɔɔ kaboe.*

(What goat take do thorny-leaf that is what thorny-leaf too do goat)

“What you sow, is what you will reap”.

55. *Esa mone e bee sha kacha, mo ne baa sulɔ kakure.*

(Person whoever loves dance, he that they carry drum).

“He who is interested in a dance carries the drum”.

56. *Kakoshiɓi monɛ e bee chuwo mo nio so, mo e naa ji kulonte be ebieɲ.*

(Fowl small that follow it mother, it is that eats grasshopper's thighs)

“A chick that always follows its mother always eats grasshopper's thighs”.

More proverbs with complex structures can involve two or more clauses, one or more of which may be a principal or independent clause on which the rest depend. It is also possible to have compound sentences where two or more principal independent clauses are linked overtly or covertly. One favorite clause structure is the conditional which exhibits the maker “**nɛ**” in the dependent or subordinate clause that usually precedes. Preferably proverbs with this type of complex structure can be paraphrased by introducing the future tense marker ‘**baaɲ**’ in the major or main clause as seen below.

57. *Nɛ alaɲchaɲ woɾɔ kishi kepa to, baaɲ pɛ abar a min.*

(If crocodiles do plenty pond inside, would catch each other swallow)

“When the crocodile's population in a pond explodes crocodiles will prey on their own kind”.

Another complex structure of proverbs may contain a reporting clause with subject and the reporting verb **yɛ** (says) followed by the statement which is reported. Quite often, the subject is an animal or bird of which scholars into proverb studies termed wellerism. Even though the subject of this type may sometimes include person. This type of complex structure of proverbs are common in Gonja as illustrated below.

58. *Joɲɔ ye mo nyempe so nɛ boɾɛ bee bri mo.*

(Dog says it is because of its master that it is beaten by rain).

“You may be suffering because of someone you are devoted to”.

59. *Kaboe ye e bee cha ga, amoso ne mobe amuli so kpra.*

(Goat says it dances much that is why its knees are destroyed).

“The goat says it can dance but that is what has destroyed its knees”.

(When you overdo certain things you get disgraced).

60. *Kabuibi ye e bee shu nna ne kupo e nu, manne kupo e so mo.*

(Bird says it is crying for forest to hear, not forest to collect it).

“A bird says that it cries for the forest to hear, (and) not for the forest to save it”

61. *Bobote ye “fo chɔ ma afuibi, ma alɛ chɔ fo eblaŋ”*

(Featherless fowl says, “You have more feathers than me but I have more meat than you”). “We are compensated for our shortcomings”

62. *Jibalaŋ ye “tɔr ne n tɔr ela epel, manne eko e baa yilase”*

(Cat says, “fall and I fall is play but not one stand up”).

“The cat says, “When we both fall down to play makes it interesting”.

63. *Lɔŋe ye mo ere bee shu mobe ekaapo nna manne mobe emɔɔpo.*

(The rabbit says, it is crying (afraid) more about the man who stirs it from hiding place, than the man who (eventually) will kill it).

“The person who starts trouble is the one to blame for the consequences”.

64. *Koshi ye “kakpa ne keji wɔ, ndon ne luwu gba wɔ”.*

(Fowl says, “place eating there, is there death too is”)

“The fowl says that where there is food, there is death also”

65. *Kuntuŋ ye “kefiti gba bee chε enite so”*

(Hyena says, stumbling enhances walk)

“The hyena says stumbling helps walking”

66. *Katuntulombi ye “mobe etaŋ bee kukwe mobe eche nna”*

(The ant says its slap suffices its wife)

“Everyone feels a weight according to his stature”.

67. *Lakasa ye jɔnɔ be anyi so ne e maa sha jɔnɔ be epel.*

(Monkey says, dog’s teeth that it does not love dog’s play).

“The monkey says that it is because of the dog’s teeth that it does not like to play with it” (Play with your equals).

68. *Lubi ye sulɔ ade nkaŋ pega ako so, ne e chala amo kike n sulɔ*

(The bush pig says, carry these and hang these is why he carries all).

“It is better to do a thing all at once, rather than bit by bit.

69. *Lor ye e maŋ nya ekumpo so, ne e yɔ kufɔ.*

(The river says it had nobody to stop it that is why it has gone far).

“Anybody without an advisor goes to extremes and is blamed for that”.

70. *Tante ye “Anishi e wɔtɔ ne kuwor wɔtɔ”*

(The monitor lizard says that there are eyes, (therefore) there is mercy).

“We have pity for the things we see, not for the suffering we do not know”.

There is also the type of proverb with a complex structure which exhibits two juxtaposed clause mediated by the particle “ne”. This type of complex structure proverb exemplifies a contrasting of comparable ideas. Below is an example in Gonja.

71. *Kuntuŋ ye “e maa sha enite fuloŋ so ne e maa nite a fin kusɔbɔaya buni jafɔ manne ekpa tenten so”.*

(Hyena says it does not like to walk useless that is why he will not walk find carcass but not because road long).

“The hyena says it is worried by failure to find carrion and not by the distance it has to travel to get it”.

In this complex structured proverb, “**e maa sha enite fuloŋ**” is compared to “**e maa ŋana ekpa tenten**”. Which “it fears failure” is compared to “it fears long journey”, two clauses that are otherwise structurally comparable.

At times, Gonja proverbs have a structure in which clauses may also be linked by means of other structural devices to form compound structures. The examples below account for

such structures in Gonja. With the first example there is no overt linker while in the second example “**nɛ**” is the element linking the two clauses.

72. *Deŋken be kubɔ julweso e bra baasa be kebaa che mo eful kubɔ to.*

(Gourd’s neck long it brings people to tie it rope neck in).

“It is because the gourd has developed a long neck that is why people are able to tie a rope around it.

73. *Bu maa da kribi kajunkpar n shi naa bishi mobe nten*

(They do not push shorty in front and then ask of his height)

“You do not elect a short man to lead the way and then complain about his pace”

Serial construction is yet another important feature that manifest in the Gonja syntax and also occurs in proverb syntax as complex structure of a proverb. Below is an example of such a proverb in Gonja.

74. *Etirpo bee bri aya ase nna a fin mobe eche a kil.*

(Poor man is hit legs down looking his wife to marry).

“The pauper depends on his feet in his search for a wife”.

In this example above the auxiliary verb “**bee**” (utilitative) and the verbs “**bri**” (hit), “**kil**” (to marry a wife) are linked by the sharing of a common subject, Etirpo “poor man” in a serialization not of verbs as such but of a higher level structures that includes a verbal item and other potential components. Kotochi (2017) exclaimed that, not only are the verbs associated, they share the same aspect which is usually signaled by the shape of the secondary pronoun subjects which refer back to the initial subject. He proceeds that the



secondary pronouns should in this case bear a low tone, as in the above utterance where the aspect is imperfective, or mid tone where the aspect is perfective. In Gonja, these are some of the standard features of serialization.

Besides, in the language, imperative structures usually function in the situational context as commands. The proverb utterance may have imperative structures such as in the proverb below where the sentential function is not really that of a command but as a statement.

75. *Kanyiŋi so nɛ baa kurwe bibi*

(Is because of remembrance that is why we give we give birth to children).

“The antidote to death is having off-springs”

In the above example of a proverb, the hypothetical listener is not being condemned to death or compelled to give birth, although the expression is imperative but rather he or she is being told words of encouragement.

Another structure of a complex proverb could be interrogative and this structure exists in the Gonja proverb as exemplified below.

76. *Ewura ka ye fo cha nɛ fo ale ye fobe alento maa yeshi fo.*

(Chief says you dance and you too say your hips do not allow you).

“The chief commands you to dance and you say your groin aches.”

## 4.2 Themes portrayed in the Gonja Proverbs

Difficulties abound in the categorization of proverbs according to themes. Finnegan (1970, p. 404) observes that: “some proverbs can refer to practically any situation, it would be impossible to give a comprehensive account of the content of African Proverbs. “This assertion is absolutely true for there are many aspect of life for which Gonja proverbs provide appropriate remark. In examining the themes of Gonja proverbs therefore, we shall limit our discussion to the major ones that are frequently used. In all, ten themes will be considered. The procedure here is to firstly discuss each theme and secondly, list some examples that are relevant to the point being made under each theme. Thirdly, the applicable proverbs are quoted in the original texts, followed fourthly by their translations which are rendered as literally as possible in the process of translation. The literal translation will make the subject matter readable and whoever is reading the work may find a certain touch of ‘local colour’. That is the aesthetics of the proverbs.

### 4.2.1 Conflict resolution

Gonja proverbs are used in setting minor and major disputes among villages, towns, clans and even among family members. The ability of the speaker to utilize the appropriate proverb that refers to the subject matter in question, gives peace a chance to prevail. For example, in settling disputes between people, the speaker can utter the following proverbs:

1. *Anishi maa shu ne kamuna tase.*

(Eyes do not cry and nose sit).

“The nose does not stop running when tears are flowing from the eyes”.

This proverb literally means that your neighbor's problem is equally your problem. This proverb is applicable in a situation where one cannot ignore the problem of his or her neighbor as a result of solidarity. This is why you always see phlegm running through the nose any time tears are flowing from the eyes. This implies that when your brother or neighbor has a problem, it is equally your problem because you cannot sit on the fence at that particular period. The nose and the eyes are very close neighbours as well as the human head is concerned. In settling a dispute at the chief's palace, this proverb is used to caution the parties involved so that they live and embrace peace.

49. *Kananɛ bu to kusɔl nɛ e tɔr, loŋ nɛ baa bɛ mo*

(The way they shot an elephant and it fell that is the way they butcher it).

“The way an elephant falls so will it be butchered”.

The literary meaning of this proverb is that the nature of problem or case suggests its solution. The elephant is regarded as the biggest possible animal which has been so far identified in the Mole game reserve of the Gonja people. Hunting, it was a collective enterprise for them involving ritual observances like abstention from sex from the duration of the hunt and the period running to it. Rituals were also conducted to purify and cleanse those who were involved in sexual misdemeanors prior to embarking on the hunting of such a dangerous animals. Bows and arrows were not often enough to kill the beast immediately. It seemed arrow poison was not powerful enough to result in instant death. A mortally wounded elephant died after taking many shots and where it fell was often far from the place where it was first shot. Because of its size and also because it

took collective effort to kill it in the first place every member of the society was undeniably entitled to cut as much of the meat as they needed. The proverb remarks that the size of the slain elephant makes it impossible to turn it over in the way that smaller animal would be turned over to allow it to be dissected or skinned before the meat would be cut up. Thus, the butchering of an elephant begins from the exposed side according to how it fell after the shooting. It is after much of the accessible flesh has been removed that the meat on the floor on which the dead animal fell can be cut up.

This proverb is often used as a social control mechanism to warn that though there are rules for solving problems, yet there are other peculiar problems that demand the resource to unorthodox method, suggested by the peculiarity of the circumstances. In the Gonja society a case or problem was not haphazardly approached or solved. That is to say that the nature of a problem suggests its solution.

2. *Anaabin be ede maa cho manan.*

(Cow-dung's fire does not burn fast).

“The fire on the cow dung glows slowly”.

The literary meaning of this proverb is that a problem left un-solved for a long term has very long term effects on the parties involved. The cow dung, unlike the fire wood or grasses is not highly inflammable, so we do not easily recognize whenever the cow dung catches fire. There can be a serious problem between members of a community that will make them hate each other without any explicit knowledge of the rest of the community members. Therefore, this proverb will be used to caution them.

3. *Nklay wɔ epunto nɛ baa kwie mbonto.*

(Blood is inside the stomach and they vomit cold water).

“There is blood inside the stomach but we vomit cold water”.

We all know that the stomach contains both water and blood but if one vomits, we usually see water mixed with food substances. Even though some people do vomit blood whenever they are seriously sick but this is unusual to normal vomiting. This proverb is to tell us that a problem between brothers or members of a community is not supposed to be treated like that of outsiders, so they should bury their differences and give peace a chance.

4. *Anyi nɛ kudunduloŋ gba bee bile n sa loŋɛ a china.*

(Teeth and tongue also fight and again sit).

“The teeth and the tongue do fight but still leave together”.

This proverb literarily means that, one should not discard or isolate him or herself from the family merely because of a small misunderstanding. Also, the proverb has to do with couples that call for a divorce because of some petty family issues. The chief can use this proverb as an example to tell them how the teeth always bites the tongue in the mouth but they still live in the mouth together. So we should learn to forgive and forget because, to err is human.

5. *Deŋi-nchuso maa duŋ, adumburase e naa duŋ.*

(Top-on water does not bit, deep in water bites).

“Those floating on water do not bit, rather the in-depth ones bite”.

This proverb literarily means that the crocodiles that are seen on top of water bodies are never the dangerous ones but rather those underneath are the dangerous ones. This

implies that, the youth of today are always used as instruments of war to satisfy the selfish ambition of some chiefs and some political demagogues. In solving the agitation or demonstration situation of these youths, the leader or the chief must first of all be identified as the route of the matter or problem which is usually the “top men” in power or authorities. Chiefs and political leaders usually mobilize the youth to fight without they themselves taking part in it. The use the above of proverb will let those involved to know that everyone is aware of them as the troubleshooters” of the communities’ un-rest.

6. *Sha fo barkasa fane fobe kumu.*

(Love your peer as your head).

“Love your neighbour as yourself”

It is without doubt that for you to do justice and to live in peace with your neighbours you must learn to love, respect, and help all. Think of them the way you think of yourself.

Conflicts do arise as a result when some people think others are inferior and think of themselves as superior over them. This is the best proverb that can combat such a situation.

#### **4.2.2 Hospitality**

Hospitality could be explained as a friendly behaviour towards our guests when never they call on us. The Gonjas are well known for their hospitality. Some examples of proverbs based on this theme are stated and elaborated below.

7. *Kesaŋe kenishito n ŋini efo cho fo kaa nase mo kalaŋ deseso.*

(Loose face and show stranger is better than you spread him a sleeping mat).

“A smiling face is a better welcome to a stranger than the offer of a mat”

The literary meaning of this proverb is that, a stranger cherishes a warmly welcome to your home than offering him or her water, food and even a bed to sleep on. This implies that when a stranger or a guest comes to his or her host to meet a frowned face; it may mean the home has some family disputes or there is no peace in that house. The stranger may be take aback and turn home without delivering his or her mission for coming. Therefore, for a stranger to feel at home in one's house, there is the need for the host to provide a peaceful environment for his guest despite all the family problems of the host.

8. *Sa efo nchu n sa nu abɔaya.*

(Give stranger water and hear message).

“Serve a stranger with water and he will tell you the news”

This proverb accounts for the procedures involved in receiving a stranger or guest among the Gonja culture. After you have welcomed a stranger and a seat is offered to him or her, the next thing is to give him or her water. But this “water” could be the natural drinking water, drinks (alcoholic) or colanut. Without this, the stranger will not be ready to give you all the necessary information. Therefore, this proverb gives the importance of a guest, meaning that, if a guest or stranger is well taken care of he will give all the information needed and may return to you anytime the need arises with more information.

*Efo la nefa nna n sa nyeygbasa kama.*

(Stranger is blessing to every person).

“A guest is a blessing to everybody”

This proverb draws our attention to the benefit of receiving a guest or stranger adding that welcoming a guest is such a blessing to the host.

During some occasions like festivals, people from all walks of life come to witness such events without specifically knowing the town or village of the festival. Initially, there were no guest houses or hotels for strangers but the people of the village or town will try all means to accommodate all the strangers and take very good care of them until the occasion is over. Besides, a passerby or a traveler could also get stranded in the middle or half-way through his journey and he may also be given this hospitality by the people. Also, Gonja people often think that taking good care of a stranger is more rewarding than going to the highest mountain to fast and pray because the Almighty God can decide to send an angel to you, who may not appear as an angel but rather appear as a normal human being like a stranger to test you.

9. *Efo be epun e naa jaje mobe kowurnyen be ketere.*

(Stranger's stomach spoils his landlord's name).

“The stranger's stomach spoils the name of his host”.

The literary meaning of this proverb is that if a stranger is not properly looked after, he will speak badly of his host after his return and this may intend have a boomerang effect on the whole community. A stranger needs to be loved so that on his or her return he or she will project or speak highly of his or her host and the community of their hospitality. A very bad treatment of a stranger or a guest by one host may end up having an endless problem between the guest community and the host community as well as their respective ethnic groups. The proverb cautions us against letting or allowing our strangers or guest go hungry. They should be well fed.



10. *Efo e wo keba, manne mo e wo keya.*

(A stranger has his coming but not his going).

“A visitor forces his way in but does not force his way out”

The literary meaning or explanation of this proverb is that, visitors to the Gonja community do not need to give prior warning before they come for a visit.

In line with this attitude, a visitor or a guest is never hurried nor asked what his or her mission might be, as we find it common among the Ghanaian Akan people because the Gonja people perceive a visitor's mission as a log-tree on his head and shall be dropped by the visitor with time. He or she can present his mission for coming or visit in his own time and this can only be done after the formal welcoming and greeting rituals.

This proverb is purposely meant for a visitor or guest who is insistent on leaving sooner than his or her hosts has had time to provide some form of entertainment (eating and drinking). The Gonja people's view is that a visitor or a guest is under the jurisdiction of his or her hosts and can be restrained from leaving and to be in their custody for some more time to have some kind of entertainment. The consent or permission of the members of the household is necessary before the guest or visitor can leave. A visitor can be detained where it has been decided that a meal should be prepared for that visitor. A visitor does not always give prior information of his or her coming before visiting his host. People are not required to warn their hosts about impending visit, except where the visit is a formal one, neither can a visitor be turned away under any circumstance. The Gonja society, have the belief that it is almighty God and the ancestors who bring visitors. Because the Gonja people think and believe that visitors do come as a result of the intervention of the almighty God and the ancestors, that has been one of the reasons

that accounts for the special treatments of visitors by their hosts. It is also believed that whatever they do to the visitors or guests is indirectly going to the ancestors and almighty God, hence blessings from God and the ancestors shall pour onto them.

*11. Efo be enishi mirwe nna moale maa wu ase.*

(Stranger's eyes pop-out, he too cannot see much).

“A stranger stares but she or he does not see much”.

This proverb is often considered an insult to describe a person's eyes by the idiom “mirwe” or to qualify him or her with adjectives such as *mirweso*, *gbulso* or *luso*. In either case reference is being made to the appearance of the eyes, which in this case seem to pop-out. The “efo” is a stranger from another area or village. The reference here is to the new comer who is confronted with novelty and finds it difficult or hard to conceal his or her curiosity about events, things, happenings or people and their relationships.

The proverb remarks that a stranger may appear to observe or show a keen interest in everything that goes on in the host's community however, he or she may not always comprehend the significance and decode meaning of the events and happenings that transpire in that community. It is only through a prolonged residence in a new community and education about that community, its norms, and its past history among others that a new comer eventually gets an insight into things in the community. A stranger may therefore be forgiven for not showing adequate appreciation of the host culture. Also, a stranger is always pardoned for any breach of the laws or customary laws of the host community because his or her offences are always classified as unintended offences. This proverb is often cited as an excuse for a stranger's lapses and failure to observe certain

events, protocol and behaviours considered as inappropriate. It is used when a stranger falls foul to an otherwise obvious traditional practice.

#### 4.2.3 Truthfulness and falsehood

Truthfulness is among some of the virtues which are most cherished by the Gonja people of Ghana. Some of the proverbs associated with such themes include:

12. *Kashenteɲ beta la afe kpra nna.*

(Truth half is big lie).

“Half a truth is a whole lie”.

Among the Gonja society, if one is ready to speak the truth or to be sincere it is demanded of him or her to do it in full and straight forward but not to beat about the bush or trying to cover a victim of an offence due to favoritism and nepotism. In saying the truth, also, one needs to present it in its original context. Thus, one needs not to exaggerate matters or add flesh to it. Therefore, this proverb cautions us to say the truth to the fullest and stop when the truth ends. On the other hand, when it is stated or said half-way, it is no more a truth but lies.

13. *Kashenteɲ akpa du fanε ketame nna.*

(Truth place is like a sore).

“Where truth is located is a sore spot”.

The Gonja word “kashenteɲ” means truth or to be right. On the other hand “afe” is the direct opposite which means lies. The way a sore is painful, is the same way that the truth is said to be more painful than the sore. Thus, it can be painful to those it goes against

and even those who have a duty and responsibility to say the truth do not always find it an easy task to do because the victim of the offence may turn to hate you for having said the truth against him or her. Besides, people are often unwilling to accept the painful truth. Also, those who are not influential may be denied a claim to right and truth. Among the Gonja people, some personal names portray the existence of truth, such as *Gbeadese* which means “the truth is buried”, *kashenteŋabase* means “the truth is painful”, *kashenteŋluwe* means “the truth is finished”.

This proverb is purposely meant for those who react adversely when told the unpleasant truth. The proverb implies, that people perceive the truth but they are afraid or unable to bear the pain that stems from the unpleasant truth.

14. *Esa be ketere e naa buse mobe kudɔ to*

(Person’s name that weeds his farm).

“Good name is better than riches”.

This proverb is often considered as example of a proverb under the theme, truthfulness. The literary meaning of this proverb is that if one is always saying the truth in his life even during his absence, people still speak well of him in all regards. On the other hand, when one always deceives people or tells lies, he or she will never be respected for anything. If a person always stands by the truth and happens to travel for a while, people from the community can organize a communal labour on his behalf and work on his farm because they are sure that he will come back to settle any debt that they incur and never complain of a missing item on his farm yard. However, the liar or the one who always tell lies will never pay for the labour on his farm and will again accuse the people of stealing

him on his farm. Therefore, priority is always given to a truthful person than the one who tell lies or untruthful person.

*15. Bu maa ji alɔɔɔma a ta a sulɔ, baa gbea kumo nna ne kubor bee dese.*

(They do not eat favour and carry it, they drag it to create a traceable path).

“They do not carry something obtained through favour on the head, it is dragged so that everybody sees the path”

This proverb depicts truthfulness of those who sometimes receive favour from others and try to show the fact that it was through somebody that they obtained that favour. The literary meaning of this proverb is that, they do not do a favour to you in order that you hide it but you broadcast and acknowledge the source of the favour so that everybody will know the truth. Among the Gonjas, it is too awkward to become rich or amass wealth in a day, they believe that success comes through hard work within a certain period of time. Therefore, curiosity is bound to arise by the community members as where and when you come by such a favour, hence the need to be truthful and sincere to them so that they will not classify you under those come by their wealth through other vices.

*16. Esa monɛ e maŋ wɔto, mobe kaboe e naa kurwe kabaelote.*

(A person who is not there, his goat gives birth to a he-goat).

“The goat belonging to the absentee produces only males”.

The literary meaning of this proverb is that one cannot be away home and still enjoys a fair share of his entitlement unless it is done through fairness and faithfulness. Sometimes, people do leave livestock with their relatives and friends to breed and care

for on their behalf. The absentee owner might show up several years later and seek an account for his or her investment. There are several reasons for this practice, including the opportunity to have a better breed of males cross one's she-goat, ewe or cows in expectation that the resultant breed would make and improve the herd. For his labour in caring and breeding the livestock, the care-taker may dispose of whatever milk is produced, in the case of cattle, as well as meat of the livestock that dies, so long as the skin and the tail of the dead animal have been preserved to be exhibited to the owner. The owner of the herd that has come into being might reward the care-taker provided he was pleased with the result.

The proverb observes that human beings being what they are sometimes, the care-taker out of greedy or envy or preempting a raw deal from the herd owner might keep some of the herd for himself with the false explanation that the animals left in his care had not been productive as might have been supposed. He might again add explanation that the animals left in his care again not been productive as might have been supposed. He might again add explanation such as the litter have tended to die or the mother goat, cow or ewe (female sheep) left in his care produced mainly male issues.

This proverb is to affirm that truth and sincerity are never achieved by one when he or she is absent.

*17. Bu nyi lakasa ka kɔ kubo nkashine baa chɛ mo efol kasher to.*

(They know monkey has neck but they tie his waist with rope).

“They know that the black monkey has a neck but they still tie rope around its waist”.

The literary meaning of this proverb is that, we sometimes know the causes of a trouble or where the truth of a matter is found yet we try to bury the truth and put the blame on something elsewhere. Truth as it is, is very difficult to come by, thus both parties who are involved in the case as well as the one in-charge of the final judgments of the truth find it difficult to assign the truth to the one who deserves it. For instance, when an elderly person has a problem with a young person in the community, the elderly person always has the truth because it has been a custom that, a case between an elderly person and a young one, the latter is always wrong and the former is right.

This proverb is used to tell people to always put the blame on where it belongs and frankly speak the truth. It is too awkward to see an animal tied by the waist, we mostly see them tied by their necks but monkeys in particular are the only animals always tied with a rope around their waist.

18. *Kusɔ fuful maa wie adunɔdumbi to.*

(Something white does not mix in charcoal).

“There is no white object among charcoal”.

The literary meaning of this proverb is that we should not add any amount of lies in narrating a true story or event. Charcoal is very black and anything black which is known in Gonja as *kalembir* or *kanyɔsɔ* is often assigned to sadness, grief, evil, lies and among others while anything white *kafuful* depicts happiness, joy, truthfulness. The three primary colours in Gonja perception of colours are black, red and white. This does not mean that the Gonja has no other colours in the language but those colours are of the use of similes which are used to describe more accurately to shades. However, the three

colours do not necessarily constitute a trait; rather it would appear that black articulates with red to form one set of dyadic colour terms and with white to form another dyadic set. Each of the three colours covers a range of colour hues. The white colour describes light colours and pigment shades and red *kapeper* might cover brown, red, yellow, orange etc. due to their associations and connotations, these cannot necessarily be classified in terms of positive and negative regardless of the situation and context. White on the other hand, connotes positive attributes when applied to the emotions, in contradistinction with black. For instance, happiness is “heart white” *kagbenetofuli* and frankly speaking person is “white person” *kagbenetofuliwura* while *kagbentonyɔɔwura* is a liar or a wicked person.

This proverb is of the message that truth and lies are parallel and that things that are different do not mix and should not be mixed together, if confusion is to be avoided. Therefore, truth and sincerity are incompatible with lies.

#### 4.2.4 Knowledge and power

Knowledge and power are separate themes in the discussion of proverbs but they are also intrinsically interwoven in the studying of proverbs in the Gonja language, especially when classifying them under themes. Examples include;

19. *Bu maa ɲini kɔɔkɔɔ kijembu.*

(They do not show a hoe where a stone is located).

“The hoe knows that it cannot cut a stone”.

The literary meaning of this proverb is that if one has a tacit knowledge about something, one needs not to rehearse before doing it. This hoe easily detects where a stone is located



by a very strange sound to indicate there is a stone. On the other hand, where there is no stone, it weeds smoothly without such a strange sound. The ability of a hoe to detect a stone beneath the earth without a prior warning, indicates that knowledge is power and very important to everybody to succeed in life.

The message of this proverb is that an educated person can recognize certain things by merely seeing those things. Also, a native of a village or town has the ability to locate his or her house during the night.

*20. Enimu be kabre maa tij a kiito manan.*

(An elderly person's hand does not turn easily).

“The elder's arm cannot be twisted easily”.

This proverb is using physical strength as its metaphor to show that maturity goes with age. In some respects an older person's mature bones are stronger than those of a younger person. This can account for the capacity to resist the twisting of an elder's arm by a younger adversary.

The message of this proverb is that an elder may have grown frail with age but he or she still retains power and knowledge.

*21. Nchu be kela ela fo ka tij n lara fobe kumu.*

(Water swimming when is you are able to remove yourself).

“The ability to swim is preservation of your life”.

The literary meaning of this proverb is that, the greater our knowledge, the greater our chances to succeed in what we want to achieve in life.

The ability to swim is very important to the Gonja because most of them have to cross about streams before they can get to their farms. Some of them cross rivers before getting to the next village. Without canoes or bridges, these people have to swim across these rivers and streams which poses some danger to them especially during the rainy season. Sometimes drowning occurs in the wet season when torrential rains cause flooding.

The point of this proverb is a warning to both children and adults who have no knowledge of swimming.

22. *Kenyinshen maŋ la kewurapɔl nna n sa kɔr benimu nawule be amu to.*

(Knowledge is not a chief's apple that grows elders only heads on).

“Knowledge is not like the royal apple growing inside only on elders.

This literary meaning of this proverb is that knowledge does not rest only on elders, young people also do have it. Knowledge and wisdom can therefore be for both the old and the young.

23. *Kusɔ ne enimu bee dese kasawule n sa wu, hali kebia dii kadibi tenten gba e maan bir kumobe efe to.*

(Something that an elder is lying ground and see, even a child climb a tree tall, he will not cross its smell).

“What an elderly man sees while lying down, a young man will not even smell it when he will not come across its smell”

This proverb could be understood literarily as the knowledge of an elderly person due to his life experiences is above that of the young man. Many at times, young people do think

that they are smarter than the elderly people. So, they try their best show the elderly that they are knowledgeable than them and there will no need for any consultation from the elderly people. But sometimes, there are some problems which are very technical to extend that the young folk can never solve it alone, unless, with the help of the elders before the problem could be solved. The proverb used warn those young men who will not like to seek knowledge from elders when there is the need for that.

#### 4.2.5 Patience

Patience is a major theme and most cherished in Gonja proverbs. Examples of proverbs associated with this theme include the following;

24. *Kanyiti ela durnya be kebawɔtɔ be kudur.*

(Patience is the world's life medicine).

“Patience is a universal remedy to life”.

The literary meaning of this proverb is that we must be patience and not despair in our lives. This proverb could be used to silence a person who is bitterly complaining about the harsh conditions of life. Patience is a universal remedy because it is often used to measure ones faith, in the sense that when a lady is waiting for child birth for a very long time after marriage, she may be tempted to involve herself in some spiritual ways to get a child, but with patience, she may be rewarded. Sometimes, young men are never patient enough to wait for riches in its own time through hard work but they are rather impatient and get themselves involved in the get rich syndrome which may lead them into some vices.

The message of this proverb is that when one is patient enough, all the impossible things in his or her life will surely be possible.

25. *Kurkur maa shir epe to.*

(Noise made by an animal) does not remain hole in).

“*kurkur* does not remain in the hole”

Literary, this proverb could be explained as when a stone is thrown into the air, it will surely come down. Thus, when one is destined to succeed in life, with patience he or she will surely achieve it. The idiophone, “*kurkur*” is a true onomatopoeia in that it echoes sound made by animals when they are disturbed in a hole. It is presumed that to be curious is natural and those who notice the *kurkur* sound would wish to know what is in the hole. Dangerous animals and reptiles are enemies and may be hiding in the hole and it might be that the sound *kurkur* is precursor to an attack. On the other hand, the sound could be caused by game, such as grasscutters packed in that hole.

The statement of the proverb implies that when the strange sound *kurkur* is heard it suggests that the animals in that hole have been stirred and must be about to leave its hole. The next thing to do then would be to exercise patience and wait for the outcome.

However, the impatient individual, especially a naïve or narrow minded child might be inclined to thrust his hand into the hole to find out what is there, it would also be foolish to assume that the creature in the hole causing the strange sound *kurkur* is a harmless rat or other mammal since the creature could just as well be a dangerous snake like the python or reptile in which case it would be unwise to thrust ones hand into the hole in the hope of catching the creature.

This proverb is used to warn us against impatience and rushing over things that are yet to happen. Thus, there is no hurry in life.

26. *Enyitipo e naa wɔɔ waje deŋken to.*

(The man with patience is the one who puts a cloth into a gourd).

“Patience can make you overcome the impossible”.

The literary meaning of this proverb is that patience overcomes all obstacles in this world. Among the Gonja people, the gourd has two names to differentiate the gourd type. That is, according to their shape and structure.

The gourd with a very long neck is *deŋken* and the round gourd, one which is usually splatted into calabashes is also the *lɔŋkɔŋ*. Due to the narrow neck of the *deŋken*, it makes it very difficult for one to easily put a cloth into it. Therefore, there is the need to exercise a lot of patience before one can gradually push a long cloth into the *deŋken* type of gourd because the impatient man may try to forcefully push the cloth which may cause the *deŋken* to break.

The point of this proverb is that patience is the key to success in life and if a person is patient enough he or she will succeed in all his or her endeavors.

27. *Katuntulombi be kawol maŋ shi ama kanyitiwurana beey tiŋ n china kumo so.*

(Ant’s skin is not big but patient person can sit on it).

“The skin of the ant is very small but patient people can sit on it”.

The literary meaning of this proverb is that people who are patient can always manage very difficult situations. When people learn to be patient with each other, they seem to make a family and however serious a matter is, they will be able to bring it under control. If the ant’s skin is even considered as a mat no human being can sit on it but it is

metaphorically used here in this proverb to show how patient persons can be. The skin of the elephant, on the other hand, is the biggest skin among animals but two impatient individuals cannot sit on it comfortably without being pressed up. For instance, some people may live in the same compound house with separate rooms or apartments but without patience, they will still have troubles among themselves. However, on the other hand, there may live ten people in the same room but because of patience they still live in harmony with one another.

*28. Enyitipo e naa dɔɔ nɛ kapa bee fo.*

(Patient person weeds till afternoon reaches).

“It is the patient man who hoes till noon”.

The literary meaning of this proverb is that it is only the one with patience who can withstand a problem or harsh condition until matters become worst without giving up. The use of the hoe to clear weeds and pile up earth around the crop or raise mounds, is an arduous task that consume much energy, especially when the sun gets hotter and hotter. The job involves bending for long stretches of time and farmers often complain of waist pains as a result. The Gonja practice quite often is to start the task of hoeing very early in the day. The work may be discontinued at about noon time when the weather is too hot to continue and the workers are themselves tired.

The point of this proverb is that it takes endurance and a lot of patience for a person to work continuously, hoeing till it is noon. This is true not only for farm work but also for any task for which rewarding results are expected.

29. *Kakpa mone gbaŋe bee ya, kurma gba been fo ndoŋ.*

(Place that horse is going, donkey too will get there).

“Where the horse is going, the donkey too will get there eventually”.

The literary meaning of this proverb is that patience and endurance can overcome all life obstacles. The donkey as used in this proverb is some people’s means of transport. The donkey is not as fast as the horse since it walks and does not trot like the horse. Moreover, the donkey is stubborn and can on occasions refuse to respond to its master’s bidding to move. However, with patience the donkey can eventually arrive at its destination to meet the horse as well.

The proverb suggests that not so much the manner of doing but it is the result that matters in the long run. This is a proverb that can be quoted to confirm a situation where a person acknowledges his comparative disadvantage but remains satisfied that the disadvantages notwithstanding the objectives can be achieved through patience and perseverance.

30. *Enyitipo e naa nya kenaakurwebi be kenyepo a nyaŋ.*

( Patient person gets the udder of a young cow to milk).

“It is the patient person who milks a heifer”.

The literary meaning of this proverb is that patience moves mountains and that life obstacles are surmountable. Cow milk is special item for the Gonja who do not keep many herds of cattle and for that matter, it is worth waiting for. It seems contradictory to expect a young cow or a heifer that cannot bear young to lactate. However, some cows,

just like human beings, reproduce late. This makes it really difficult to be sure that a person or a cow is really barren, it is time that will tell. It is thus a wise precaution to be patient and wait rather than to get rid of the seemingly barren heifer or a young cow too soon. With this proverb we are made to that patience plays a vital role in our lives.

31. *Kena shiles0 maa koo ebin lela.*

(A running cow has no cow dung).

“A rolling stone gathers no moss”.

The literary meaning of this proverb is that one can never achieve good things by rushing over them. The Gonja people use cow dung for many things. When a cow is running and defecating, it will be very difficult to get the dung to use.

However, when the cow fails to be stable and keep on running whilst defecating, the cow dung may spread all over making it very difficult to collect and use. This is similar to the English version which says a rolling stone gathers no moss.

The message of the proverb is that patience brings about success and that we must learn to keep on to one work or job at a time because jumping from one job to the other would not solve our problems.

#### **4.2.6 Gender discrimination against women**

There are so many Gonja proverbs that are woven around the role and character deeds of women in the Gonja society that is how they are perceived by the society, the men folk and how they also perceive the man. Examples of such proverbs include:



32. *Kechina kegbawɔ bɔ eche lubi be kakil.*

(Living on your own is better than living with a wicked woman).

“Being a bachelor is better than living with a wicked woman.”

The literary meaning of this proverb is that in certain situations, one needs to be speechless rather than to say something or bring out one’s opinion and later face the consequences. A woman, in the Gonja culture is supposed to be lovely, harmless, respectful, and obedient and to crown it all, committed to her husband’s household as well as act or take directives from her husband. However, a woman who fails to identify herself by these characteristics must be avoided at all course. This proverb explains that some men would rather live alone than to marry a wicked woman. In real situation, when there is a family meeting and is time for various opinion from the floor, a suggestion by one of the members may end up leading him or her into a very big trouble. Therefore, one may be preferred to be speechless in a meeting rather than to put him or herself in trouble by saying something else.

33. *Eche monɛ e bee shule kejeja ela enyɛn be chance.*

(A woman that is responding sorry is a man’s dearest).

“A woman who say I am sorry will always be the best wife.”

The literary meaning of this proverb could be the common saying; the beauty of a woman may send her but her character will surely return her. A man must always demand an explanation from his wife whenever something goes wrong and it is expected of the woman to give an accurate explanation to that. But when the man is not convinced after a

long explanation, the woman should not haste to say I am sorry by going down on her knees and by so doing the man in his normal sense will forgive her despite all the offence that provoke him, tempers are bound to calm. On the contrary, a woman that always challenge her husband whenever she goes wrong, may be tempted to push the husband to wall which may lead to marriage divorce by the couple. This proverb is used to caution people especially women and children to always learn to say I am sorry even though it might not be always that they are guilty of the offence. Besides, women and children are often seen as arrogant and disrespectful because they try to fight and defend their right which is very alien to our society. Moreover, some women are ‘strong-headed’ while some are not. Therefore, this proverb posit that those who ask for forgiveness when they make any mistake do not lack husbands.

*34. Eche be kefii been tiŋ a tushi ama mobe kɔnɔ maa tushi.*

(Woman’s buttock can be hot but her mouth does not be hot).

“A woman’s buttock may be warm but her mouth is not warm.”

The literary meaning of this proverb is that a woman is well cherished for her reproductive sense of responsibility but not for her being vocative and articulate in matters that concern a whole community or family. A warm mouth is one which is quick to speak out and speak out of turn (challenges). This unexpected attitude of a woman has never been seen as a compliment by the Gonja people. A hot buttock on the other hand is seen to be one that is productive in the reproductive sense. The traditional counsel of the Gonja society is exclusively owned by the men folk, though they did not always exclude women from their meetings, they did willingly discuss weighty or important matters

concerning the lineage in their wives' presence. Old women were questioned. The motive or wisdom of excluding wives from such discussions and secrets is illustrated and reinforced through folktales such as the folktale about the hunter and his new wife or girlfriend. The latter was a beautiful young woman only in appearance but in reality a buffalo seeking for a revenge on a hunter who had killed its mother when it was only a young calf.

The loyalties of non-agnatic women in the past were suspect given the fact that marriages were unstable and women not only divorced frequently they also remarried men from rival clans. An estranged or separated wife could not be married by a man from her former or late husband's clan-settlement nor could any other man whose lineage maintains clanship ties with the erstwhile husband's lineage. Should that eventually arise the former husband's lineage in question and the new husband would be told to let the woman go away. The message of this proverb is that if women happened to be around when men held their discussions they were expected to remain silent. Wives could not volunteer comments and suggestions until called upon to make a contribution. Women or wives were considered strangers and less experienced than their men folks in the wrongly matters since they did not venture out as often as men. Those women who may disrespectfully and unwisely commented on issues that were before their menfolk were usually silenced by quoting this proverb at them as a caution.

35. *Eche kaa kurwe eche, kabawɔtɔ koŋwule nna.*

(Woman has given birth to woman, there is no change).

“Nothing has been done when a woman gave birth to a woman.”

This Gonja proverb makes clear the point that in the Gonja society, male children are preferred to female children. The female children are said to have been less industrious as their only office is the kitchen. These female children also ends up destroying or collapsing their father's house by moving out to marry outside the clan. Therefore, certain secret about their agnate clan could be revealed to other rival clans as a result of their marriage. The vocative nature of women or female children makes the society exclude them from certain rituals and secret. Views and suggestions of women or female children are less considered during family meetings.

The menfolk or male children grow up to be very useful to the society by getting married to the outside community to fill the vacancies of their sisters who have also joined different communities as a result of their marriage. Levies or taxes and communal labors for town development are responsibilities of the menfolk because they exclusively own the local traditional counsel of the society. This proverb posit that male children are more cherished than their female counterpart. However, it does not mean that female children are inferior to the male children but we consider them as belonging to other rival clans after marriage, female children or women with their offspring belong to their husband.

#### **4.2.7 Hardwork**

The Gonja proverbs are very useful in encouraging people to be hardworking. They are used to maintain conformity to the accepted patterns of the society. Afari-Twako (2015, p. 2). Some examples associated with this theme include the following Gonja proverbs.

36. *Kusɔ mone fo duu, kumo ne fee teni.*

(Something that you sow is what you harvest).

“What you sow is what you reap.”

The literary meaning of this proverb is whatever you request is what you will be served. Practically, there is nobody who will sow or plant cashew or yam seed and expect to harvest or reap cocoa. Everyone must learn to expect whatever result he or she will receive after the harvest season. Lazy people in our society usually receive bad treatment and hardworking people on the other hand, perceive good treatment.

This proverb is used to counsel someone who is lazy to be up and doing. Therefore, whatever product someone receives in life that person must accept the consequences of his hardworking or through his laziness, he must be ready to accept it in good fate.

37. *Kiya be kalaber bɔ kepirbi peye.*

(The dust of the leg is better than that of the buttocks).

“The dusty foot is better than the buttock.”

This proverb could be explained as to be up and doing is better than to sit at one place. The phrase “*Kiya be kalaber*” refers to a foot that has become dusty as a result of walking in the dust. Until recently many people walked barefooted and as a result their feet were always dusty. But lazy people will sit at one place and their clothes will collect dust. Here, dusty feet symbolize travel or work while dusty buttocks symbolize sedentary idleness.

The message of this proverb is that it is better to be mobile or move out than being static. Personal needs for example can best be met when a person bestirs himself. The person

who moves out or a mobile person is abreast with current events and gets socialized and is well prepared to take advantage of new situations. In a nutshell, the proverb advises that it is better to be up and doing than to remain idle.

39. *Kenaabi maa mushe kenamulun*

(Cow small does not laugh cow-hornless).

“The calf does not poke fun at the hornless cow”.

The literary meaning of this proverb is that the future is not entirely predictable. The horns are good for a cow since they are its means of self-assertion against other bovine creatures. The calf has no horns and these should develop with time; however until horns have appeared a calf remains a hornless beast. In this regard, the calf should not laugh at the hornless cow over its inability to have horns.

The proverb warns that it would be childish or foolhardy to laugh at the hornless cow on the account of handicap since a calf cannot be sure that it will ever grow horns in the near future. After all, when the hornless cow was a calf it might probably never on earth imagined that someday to come it would not be able to grow horn like other members of its kind in the kraal. This proverb seems an idiomatic expression available to the Gonja. Nevertheless, it is mostly used in the proverb stock of Gonja. This is to say that, a person particularly a child or subordinate, “has now developed horns” (e kur alambi) is to imply that that person or child has become assertive to the point of being unruly or uncontrollably.

This proverb also seems to be making the point that no condition is permanent. The future is unpredictable. It again warns the now lucky ones who for a moment forget that

their accomplishments could be due to good fortune. They should therefore have sympathy on the unlucky ones who through no fault of their own find themselves in a predicament. Worse still, it is foolhardy to preempt one's future for no one can tell what the future or tomorrow might bring.

Moreover, the proverb appears to be directed especially firstly at the arrogant youth who do not know any better and secondly, at those who have the tendency to poke fun at the handicapped. More generally, it is a rebuke aimed at the well-off and fortunate in society who happen not to sympathize with those who fall short of society "expectation". In a more or less egalitarian or equalization society of Gonja people, it is unwise to boast.

Folktales and stories are told of how people who were once proud of their looks and had laughed at or showed disrespect and to others not so fortunate, especially the sick, the poor and the physically challenged or deformed as well as the handicapped. Eventually, such people have paid the price for their folly or foolhardy when they too developed similar disfigurement. In the Gonja society people do not ridicule the sick or the handicapped. It is more or less a taboo to do so, nevertheless people out of ignorance, make insulting references to the physical handicap and disabilities of those they fight or quarrel with. This proverb is used as a social control tool to measure such profaned attitude of some ignorant members of the Gonja societies.

*40. Kesheɲ fariso kama la kesheɲ luweso nna.*

(Something beginning is something ending).

“Everything that has a beginning has an end”.

This proverb is self-explanatory, meaning that whatever the situation or problem might be it will never last forever. It will definitely have an end. Many at times, people in our societies do abandon some opportunities, simply because of the time or duration they will use to complete such a task.

Sometimes, when you see someone starting a farm, you will think of the time he will use to complete such a work but before we realize he has finished and harvesting his farm products. On the other hand, the lazy one in the society will always sit idly to measure the suffering involved and get himself discouraged from the farm work.

This proverb is used to encourage members of the community to undertake long time projects is again, used to warn those who always scare other people from venturing into hard works but rather ask them to go for green pasture

41. *Anishinyɔr maa mɔɔ, ama ku bee bu kubɔ*

(Disgrace does not kill but it breaks the neck).

“Shame may not kill but it leads to the hiding of the face”

From this proverb we see that whenever you are disgraced, you cannot lift up your head. Disgrace is bad, because it leads to loss of face. It makes the one shamed to feel shy. Consequently, he or she would try to avoid the company of those who have knowledge of the shameful thing he did. In order to prevent one from this shameful situation, there is the need for everyone in the community to rise and work for a living rather than sticking to stealing and other vices which will end them into very bad situation at the long run.

Logically, this proverb here seems to be that sight provokes popular recollection of the shame that is attached to a person. Therefore, we must work hard to avoid it because to



be embarrassed as well as face losing is never among one of the virtues in the Gonja society.

However, everyone is therefore advised to get some work to do, so that you will not embarrass yourself by stealing. But hardworking people in the society do not involve themselves in this shameful situations, is only the lazy ones.

Logically, this proverb here seems to be that sight provokes popular recollection of the shame that is attached to a person. To be embarrassed or disgraced as well as face losing is of cultural lack in the Gonja society.

*42. Mbuna bee keni abar ama a maa ji abar be mpite.*

(Doors are looking at each other but they do not eat each other property).

“Gates may face each other but they do not inherit from each other”.

The literary meaning of this proverb is that when people are close neighbours, they may seem related but they may not inherit from each other.

Among the three major type of settlements, that is, linear, nucleated and dispersed or scattered settlement, the nucleated settlement is the most preferred by the Gonja people due to their family ties. Members of a community who are related by blood and share the same cultural background build very close to one another or may live together in a very big compound house. Nevertheless, other members of the same community may also build very close to them who have different heritage.

The message of this proverb is that no two individuals are the same despite their similarities between them. The proverb is also used as a mechanism to control those

people who will not like to work hard to succeed in life but they will rather like to forcefully inherit from a different clan or family from which they have no right to disease from that.

#### 4.2.8 Generosity

Generosity could be explained as the willing to give somebody money, gifts, time or kindness freely. This theme is mostly used by the Gonjas through their proverbs.

Examples are;

47. *Suwe ma to ne sul4 ma gba w4.*

(It is inside help me to off load that help me to carry my load is).

“It is amity that accounts for generosity”.

The literary meaning of this proverb is one good turn deserves another. As another Gonja proverb reiterates, “Those who are inclined to share what they have, share things with similar minded people”, that is generosity begets generosity. The proverb, as a sentence, is ambivalent. It can mean in another context as when food happens to be tasty then that people request for more of it. In the same vein when personal relations are good people are generous and considerate to one another. Nevertheless, the scenario of this proverb is that in the past days, people used to carry loads which were very heavy on their heads. It is also quite unusual to see one carrying his or her heavy load from one destination to the other without taking a break on the way to rest, which is mostly done seeking for the assistance of another traveler who may be met on his or her way. However, one might not get this help from others if one does not always help others to carry or uncarry their head

loads. The point this proverb is trying to elaborate is that generosity can be explained and accounted for. It also premised on good relations rather than on compulsion. Therefore those who wish to benefit from the kindness of others must themselves exhibit kindness to their neighbors. The proverb could also be understood as “harmonious relations accounts for generosity”.

51. *Enɔ maŋ daŋ nya n sa mɔn kɔnɔ.*

*Hand does not get and deny mouth.*

“Hand does not refuse the mouth.”

“The literary meaning of this proverb is that if the hand has food it will not refuse to supply the mouth. The hand and the mouth, though different members of the body nevertheless collaborate and give mutual support to one another. The hand, if it has the means will surely not fail to provide for the mouth since its failure to give to the mouth results in starvation for the mouth, the hand itself and the rest of the body as a whole.

The point of this proverb is that where people are associated intimately as in the case of close kinship relations, mutual support is a guarantee. For instance, a parent will not refuse the needy offspring. It is for this reason that Gonja people say that if your mother is in the compound house where the final funeral rites are been held you will not fail to eat the funeral T.Z. This is what Durkheim (1947) has described as mechanical solidarity and the division of Labour putting together members of the society.

48. *Bu maŋ daŋ baŋ k4n4 ko so n saŋ sa k4n4 ko.*

(They have never pass mouth to give another mouth).

“One does not pass one mouth to give to another mouth”.

The proverb is used as a social control mechanism to warn us against nepotism, favoritism as well as preferential treatment in our societies. This is where there are several expectant mouths one should not bypass any mouth to give to another. In the Gonja society, water is constantly served in one large calabash for a considerably small group of visitors rather than in several calabashes. thus, it is a rule that when water is served in this way the person nearest the server drinks first before passing the calabash onto the next person, in which case seniority might not necessarily count.

The point of this proverb is that where several persons are longing for something or position that they are all equally entitled to have, one must not consider favorites without good cause or better reason. Depending on the situation, the nearest should have priority.

As it is said in English Language, the nearest is thus the dearest.

#### **4.2.9 Advice**

Advice is basically an opinion or suggestion about what somebody should do in a particular situation. It is another major theme in the Gonja proverbs. Examples of proverbs associated with this theme include the following;

52. *Kamuna nyanyaṣowura maan̄ tij n̄ ji kanaṣ be laṣ to.*

(The sour nose person cannot live in a family house).

“The person with a bad character cannot live in a compound house”.

The literary meaning of this proverb is that the person who cannot tolerate others cannot associate himself or herself with them. The Gonja compound house, *kanaṣ be laṣ*, is a term which also stands for the lineage that dwells or lives within the clan. The typical compound house is inhabited by many agnates and their wives and children. Nevertheless, living in such a large compound house has its problems; it requires too much tolerance before one can comfortably stay or live in such a house. For instance, if the household head is difficult and lacks diplomacy in his dealings with subordinates, he may well find that his kin will leave to put up their own houses within the clan-settlement.

This proverb is used as an advice to call for tolerance for one another and neighborliness, essential ingredients to communal living.

50. *Kenyin̄i so n̄ baa kurwe ebi.*

(Remembrance accounts for child-birth).

“The antidote to death is the bearing of off-spring”.

The literary meaning of this proverb is that one will always be remembered after his or her death if and only one has living off-springs. Death to the Gonja people means that a physical removal from the world of the living. Socially, the dead retain some role in the world of the living which they may play out vicariously through their living descendants. A dead husband for instance retains his rights to the widows until the

performance of the final funeral rites, after which the widows can choose to remarry or stay single.

However, death does not triumph completely over the kin-group so long as its members remain alive to keep the lineage in existence. The point of this proverb then is that though death is inevitable, human beings in their wisdom mitigate the results by ensuring that they have kin, particularly close family or immediate family members. This is also one of the typical consolation proverbs told to the bereaved when a parent or anybody dies leaving behind orphans or children. It is again, advising everybody try and give birth before joining the ancestors.

38. *Fo baa kur kulubi be kemaŋ, kur kumo n kukwe.*

(If you are digging wicked's hole, dig it reasonably).

“If you are going to dig a hole of wickedness, be reasonable.”

The literary meaning of this proverb is that if one is going to do something very bad, he should not overdo it. A hole of wickedness as used in this proverb is a special hole which is dug at a vantage point purposely for a human being to fall inside or as a trap for animals. If that wicked hole is meant purposely for animals then it is considered as a good one but when it is meant for one's so-called enemies then it is advisable for him or her to dig a shallow one because it could be that the enemy might not even pass by it, rather his beloved one may be the one to fall inside.

The point this proverb is making is that if a person has to lay a trap for his or her enemies or for other people, he is advised not to overdo it because he or other consanguinity relations may mistakenly pass by and fall into it. This proverb is used to warn against

wickedness in our society because wickedness is one of the bad behaviours the Gonja people detest.

43. *Kebia nyi keshile ama e maŋ nyi kepuwi.*

(Child knows running but not how to hide).

“A child knows how to run but not how to take cover”.

This proverb could be explained literally as adults should share part of the blame when their wards through in experiences get into certain kinds of trouble. It takes a lot of time to equip a person especially a child to cope with life and its exigencies. The proverb demonstrates this with a scenario taken from predatory behavior. Escaping from the pursuit of an enemy requires quick motion but if the enemy tends to be faster then, other strategies are called for if the quarry is to outwit the pursuit of an enemy as ability to take cover use deception and other subtle strategies of defense. Children, on the other hand, just because they are younger may be physically capable and should be responsible for adopting those physical behaviours that would get them out of harm's way or trouble.

However, children lack knowledge and stratagem which spring from experiences which in turn is perceived as a function of age. As juvenility accounts, thus handicapped it becomes the duty of parents and mature adults to supplement their efforts and to equip them adequately with the means of survival. To escape from harm's way or trouble requires the capability to get away from the danger and where this is enough to apply the mental faculties.

Children cannot therefore be blamed if their lack of experience and training makes them falter and fall prey.

The proverb remarks that adults should be ready to share part of the blame when children get into certain trouble through their in experience of life.

44. *Kusol pibi maa kuse ndaŋ so.*

(Elephant child does not hurried growth).

“The baby elephant does not pray for obesity, it only prays for long life”.

The literary meaning of this proverb is that what a person is already ordained by nature and heredity to be, will soon come to pass given time and long life. Obesity was something that traditionally Gonja seemed to appreciate in a person as they saw it as a sign of good-living or well-being as well as prosperity. Even nowadays, people are often worried when a person seems to lose weight. They usually suspect that he or she has fallen on hard times; that is to say food may not have been available. Better still, he or she might have been worried or troubled, trauma or else the person has been ill or in a poor health. Given the life style of the average Gonja person of the Northern Ghana, obesity was uncommon, nevertheless some cases of obesity existed and it was believed some prominent members of the Gonja community and some chiefs cultivated obesity as a status symbol, while for others it might be due to a heredity trait. The elephant which is noted for its huge size is in a special position to advise its young ones not to worry that they have attained the gigantic and portly appearance of its parent since this will surely happen as a matter of course.

Also, among the traditional Gonja society, divination was of a very keen interest, especially when a newly baby was born to the society. This was done to foretell the child’s destiny and the reincarnation. However, if a child grows up to hear what his or her



mission in his world is, he or she might try all means to fore fill that mission without waiting for the right time. For instance, in William Shakespeare's drama, entitled Macbeth, the hero Macbeth was prophesied by the three witches who appeared to them on their way home, told Macbeth that he will be king hereafter. Macbeth was overwhelmed by over ambition to meet his target which brought about Macbeths downfall.

The proverb's advice is to the baby elephant and to mankind is that what a person is ordained by nature and heredity to be, will soon come to pass given time. Long life, *efuti tenten*, (long breath) however is important and this is what people should pray for since not all people attain long life with prosperity. To crown it all, in its good time and so long as there is life there is hope. The case of the meek baby elephant that cannot imagine that someday it too would develop like its adult parents is bears comparison with the calf that, in its arrogance, is scornful of the cow that has not been fortunate to develop horns.

45. *Epelto be kijembu e naa pante kumu.*

(Joking stone is the one that breaks the head).

“It is the stone cast in play that breaks the skull”.

The literary meaning of this proverb is that some jokes are very expensive. Children sometimes like to play by casting stones at one another. This kind of dangerous play sometimes takes place during the moon light. Expertise at stone throwing is valued in the culture since the stone casting also serves as a ready tool under the occupation of hunting. This is very dangerous play however, as accidents happen resulting in the children themselves or others in the vicinity getting hurt. Children are thus advised to desist from

such a dangerous practice. The proverb makes the point that harm results from dangerous behaviors. Potentially dangerous behavior can degenerate into something sinister unless seriously checked. Nevertheless, the proverb does not always have to refer to dangerous activity alone, it may also apply to behavior, acts, utterances that begin as a joke but end up as something serious. A joke can develop into serious fight. An utterance that was initially meant to be only a joke can cause a serious offense and precipitate a quarrel or fight. For instance, children at their tender ages may start a love affair that as meant to be platonic but might develop into a full blown relation that is forbidden. Moreover, when things take a turn for the worst in such circumstances, it is the Satan that is blamed.

The message of this proverb is that people must be careful about the things that they do for a joke, they should not take things for granted and rather they should guard their behavior and watch their mouth (utterance) very carefully.

46. *Mannε kachε koɲwule nε baa ta n sa pɔr laɲ a kulti.*

(It is not day one that they take to build a house round).

“A house is not built to completion in a day”.

The literary meaning of this proverb is that it takes time and energy to accomplish every task or venture. A compound house begins when the founder and his senior wife leave their previous compound and pitching a shelter screen in a plot allotted to them and ritually prepared for the new homestead. Building of the first huts then begins. More and more huts are added as time goes by and the membership of the family increases as children grow and get married. As old huts falls off in the rainy season, newer additions are made in the dry season. A compound should continue to grow until it reaches its

maximum size. This can take a century or more and then it begins to decline as former members find it necessary to leave. Moreover, the state of relations between compound members and the carrying capacity of the land around which serves as the farmland are important factors. This proverb is literary true as far as building a compound house in the Gonja way is concerned. It is however used to advise that it takes time to accomplished things. Its analogue in English would be the proverb which states that Rome was not built in a day.

53. *Kenyinji so ne baa kurwe ebi ama ne fo maŋ kurwe ebi kumo ere kur ketiribu.*

(We give birth because of remembrance, but if you do not, dig a well).

“Remembrance accounts for child birth but if you have no child then dig a well”

The literary meaning of this proverb is that good deeds are important social investment almost comparable to having children. Among the Gonja people, childlessness is a great misfortune. There are several arguments for the importance attached to children: in one respect children are seen as an investment against the future. They will maintain the aged parent but people do not wait to age before they depend on their children. There were also in traditional times a division of labour by sexual age. Thus children were always seen as producers even from tender ages when they helped parents to drive away poultry or birds' pest from the crops and they tendered the livestock during the cropping season. It is very prestigious to have children or offspring. Moreover, one of the basic reasons for having offsprings is that they perpetuate the family name. It suffices to say that children are the insurance of the parents.

The proverb offers consolation to the childless, because it says that good deeds to society ensures that society treasures its benefactor. On the other hand, a well is a considerable endowment in this savanna ecology where water is often very hard to come by, much especially in the lean or dry seasons. Water becomes tantamount to life, a fact confirmed by the traditional history of the people of East Gonja in the Savanna Region shows how the slave wells were reserved for purpose of tourism or tourist attraction. The slave masters though, had carried our ancestors away as a result of the slave trade but had left behind wells for their memory. Reference was also made to Malam Alhassan Mole's (A Dagomba cleric) view of a priority of fruitful expenditure of resources in an interview Ferguson (1972, p. 347) where making a well comes second only to building a mosque in Al-Hasaan Mole's view, the well will retain the memory of the builder until it is closed by God. This may be the Islamic view of charitable deeds but its similarity to local perceptions is obvious. This proverb is used to advise members of the society to do something memorable before joining the ancestral world.

54. *Kadetobia maa kɔɔ ketiribu to.*

(A member of a town does not shit well inside).

“A native does not defecate inside a well”.

The literary meaning of this proverb is that a native of a land is not in any circumstance expected to breach the customarily laws of the land and flee away to a different or a neighboring land. Well water is considered as one of the hygienic source of water in the Savanna ecology where water is often very difficult to come by, especially where the streams are dry up, in the dry season. It would have been very bad on ones part to pollute this source of water by defecating inside it. Also, if one defecate inside a well, he or she

will surely come back to his or her hometown and may be likely to drink that same well water. That is to say the evil that men do leads after them. The proverb is often used as a word of caution to those who think they can commit any crime and go scout free with it. It also means that every citizen must try his or her possible means to protect and obey the laws of his or her hometown or country.

55. *Kalorbi monɛ fee fɛl kumo alɛ e naa ji fo.*

(River small that you disrespect it is the one that will eat you).

“The pond you underestimate is it that will get you drown”.

The literary meaning of this proverb is that appearances can be deceptive or it can be very dangerous to underestimate an opportunity or an opponent on superficial evidence without objective grounds for doing such. Our elders do say water has no leader to be used by a drowning person to bring him or herself out of the water or to save his or her life. They also remark often that it is impossible to know by site how deep a pool of water is likely to be or how shallow. Some in the society will like to cross a river from one bank to the other without bearing in mind that they could get drown by it. It is therefore naive or unwise as the proverb advices to conclude from the surface size of a pool of water or stream that it must be fordable. For one to make such an assumption, it is fool hardy or he is been cursed by the gods of river to die in water. Also, we note the literal belief that a pool or stream is the dwelling place of some gods in our societies. Moreover the size of the water body which is the abode of these gods is irrelevant to the accurate assessment and evaluation of the gods' potential and power. Nevertheless, it is a serious taboo and also considered dangerous for one to contest the power of the river god or any other god for that matter. There is also a myth or story by the Gonja people of how some of the

river gods have trapped and killed people from water kept in some special pots. The proverb is used to advise people to always take things very serious in life. For instance, when a job opportunity is given to someone he or she must take it very serious regardless of the wage or salary involved or the nature of the job should not count as a factor.

56. *Bu maa teɲi enɔ bana e ɲini eniope.*

(They do not point left hand to show mother home).

“One does not point to the mother’s home with the left hand”.

The literary meaning of this proverb is that one should not show up too much interest to his or her current situation in the expense of the old one and thereby having some kind of disrespect and ingratitude to the former. The left hand is the inferior hand in the dual symbolic opposition between left and right. This hand is often used to perform defactory acts such as cleaning the anus or holding the penis to urinate (excretion). All things being equal, things must not therefore be given or received with the left hand. For instance, food cannot be eaten with the left; in fact it is a serious taboo in our society to hold a calabash with the left while drinking from it. This act is considered as a sign of disrespect, if not an outright insult, to use the left hand to point to a person or an object of some importance and in the case of the mother’s clan-settlement, it would constitute gross disrespect and ingratitude to use the left to point to it.

Therefore, a mother’s clan-settlement is often equated to one’s mother herself to whom people’s way of inheritance (paternal inheritance), a person does not usually live in the mother’s parents’ (maternal) village but in times of difficulties like exile or any breach of the customary laws or taboo which may demand, one is entitled to seek refuge there, at the nonagnate home. A typical example was what Okwonkwo did in Chinua Achebe’s

Things Fall Apart. The mother's natal family are usually more indulgent than one's agnates and are expected to come to a person's assistance in times of crisis or trouble.

The proverb is often used as a word of caution to those who usually think because they are not entitled to inherit anything from the mother's clan-settlement due to our paternal way of inheritance and for that matter will have less or no respect and gratitude to the mother's lineage. Such people with this attitude are naïve or foolhardy. They should also remember that mother is Supreme. This is because the first item of property that a person receives in life is from the mother's father or mother's brothers. This is usually a chicken given with their blessings and the expectation that it would someday generate wealth and prosperity for the sister's child.

57. *Kpara monε e maa nu kafoli mobe kanuna to ne nkalaη bee ler.*

(Squirrel that does not hear whistling, it is it that blood flows from its nose).

“A squirrel which does not hear whistling always has a bleeding nose”.

The literary meaning of this proverb is that those who do not pay heed to elders' advice always go astray or wayward. A squirrel is considered as one of the stubborn rodents among arboreal category. It also causes destruction on the farmland especially during the early planting season. The farmer on the other hand, derives these rodents on his farm by making a shrill sound which echoes through a very long distance. This was expected of every rodent or pest on the farm or crops to get scared and flee or move away from the farm yard. However, the pest or rodent which fails to save itself from the harm's way will surely be killed by the farmer. The dogs of a hunter are geared towards an animal by

whistling to them. Therefore, every animal which hears this strange sound have to take on its heels to save itself from the pending dangers.

The message of this proverb is that he who pays heed to advice will never be faced with life obstacles and therefore will make progress in life. It is also used to advice the youth to always take pieces of advice from the experienced older generation.

58. *Kapirigi bɔni kama bɔ enɔshilbi fulon.*

(Castanets bad anyhow is better than fingers empty).

“However ugly the castanets may be, they are still better than empty fingers”.

This proverb could be explained as a bad implement is better than having none to work with. The castanet is an instrument which is kept around the thumb and one of the other fingers to click against each other to make a pattern rhythm with other drums. On the other hand, having these instruments in hand is better than having none at hand. Another way to put this same proverb is that “to have a little is better than not to have anything at all”; thus *“fo maɲ paɲ cheche fo maa pin gberɛ kaa bɔ”*. The sound of a castanet is far better than clicking one’s fingers together. The point of this proverb is that having something doing is far better than sitting idle. It is often used when a job or position given or offered to someone and he or she turns to underrate such opportunity.

The proverb is clear as it stands. A little portion is better than nothing. “Half a loaf is better than none” is a common saying in English that has its analogues in many other African.



#### 4.2.10 Unity

Unity is perceived as the state of being in agreement and working together. Among the virtues most cherished by the Gonja people is unity. Some of the proverbs associated with this theme include the following:

59. *Kusɔɔɔɔɔɔɔɔ mone e bee barga e ji mo ne waɲkpaɲ bee pɛ.*

(The animal that separate itself to eat, is it that the hyena catches).

“The animal that isolates itself, is caught by the hyena”.

The literary meaning of this proverb is that, unity serves as security. The hyena is classified as one of the wild beast animals with several names like *kuntuɲ*, *bɔkanya*, *waɲkpaɲ* and among others. It is also a carnivorous animal. Whenever it sees an animal or human being moving alone, this hyena will quickly catch and eat the fresh without excluding the bones. However, it sometimes fears to go for an animal or human being to eat, whenever they are moving in a trop. It will only catch animal which always move only during grazing.

The point of this proverb is that any person who usually isolate himself or herself from others in the community is always faced by dangers and calamities. It is therefore advised for one to get united with the community members and move along with them in all their endeavors.

60. *Bumo e naa ba bɔ bu yɛ mo e naa ba.*

(They are coming is better than they say he or she is coming).

“Moving together is better than moving alone”.

The literary meaning of this proverb is that it is good to move in line with the majority than to always take things into one's hand and act accordingly. In the Gonja society, when one is always moving alone, it means he or she has a very bad behavior or mind. On the other hand, when one is seen always sharing with others, it also means that he or she is of a very good character and such as such behaves well. Moreover, our custom does not allow a chief to walk without his linguist and some other subjects or subordinates. Again, when one is invited to the chief's palace, he or she was not expected to come there alone but rather come with some of his or her kin members in the society.

The message of this proverb is that unity accounts for itself respect and experience as one move with others and learn from them.

### **4.3 Literary devices and their aesthetic qualities are embedded in the Gonja proverbs**

This section of the study identified and analyzed the literary devices of some selected Gonja proverbs and the aesthetic qualities that are embedded in them. The study again identified six literary devices and their aesthetic qualities.

#### **4.3.1 Paradox**

Paradox is a term in rhetoric for a situation or statement that seems self-contradictory and even absurd, but may contain an insight into life. (Agyekum, 2012). This literary device has been identified in the Gonja proverbs. Below are some examples of paradoxical statements in Gonja;

1. *Enyitipo e naa nya kanaakurwebi.*

(Patience person milks a female young cow).

“It is patience which milks a heifer”.

This proverb literary means that patience moves mountains. It is applicable to a situation where someone thinks that all is lost in trying to achieve something and for that matter can no longer restrain any patience and wants to throw in the white towel or give up. It is therefore believed by the Gonja people that no matter how difficult or impossible a problem may be, patience mixed with perseverance is the antidote to such a problem. Gonja people also have a similar proverb as “patience cooks stones”. This implies that with patience one can perform any task that is assigned to him or her, no matter the nature or difficulty of the task and without patience too, one cannot carry it out.

The literary device in this proverb is a paradox because the milking of a heifer sounds so absurd to the hypothetical listener or an ordinary person. Rationally, a heifer can never produce milk until it gives birth to a calf. However, it makes sense proverbially upon a second thought. The proverb creates an imagery of the intensity of the patience one has to exhibit in doing something through perseverance.

The aesthetics quality of the proverb forms part of the literary device that emerges from it. The ability of patience to milk a heifer or to move a mountain is a paradoxical statement. It is not just the milking of a heifer or moving of a mountain per se but rather the perseverance effort one makes in achieving a difficult task. Naturally, a heifer has no milk unless it gives birth to a calf. Milking a heifer therefore is not an easy task which needs a lot of patience before it can be accomplished.

2. *Bu kurwe fo, fo kurwe fobe kumu.*

(They give birth to you, you give birth to your head).

“When you are born, you still need to give birth to yourself”

Literary, it means that one must seek knowledge because it is not acquired through heredity. Also, there are some things that one has to learn through his or her parents or teachers but there are other extra-curricula one must learn from his or her own experience in life.

The statement of the proverb is paradoxically stated because it is normal for one to be born by his or her parents but on the other hand, it looks so absurd to the hypothetical listener or ordinary man to hear someone giving birth to his or her own self. But proverbially, it is right and normal for one to say he or she has to give birth to him or herself. However this type of “born again” is not the Biblical way of repenting but rather one learning from his or her past experience.

The aesthetic quality of this proverb is part of the whole statement of the proverb itself. Thus, the ability of one to say something that might look absurd at the initial but with an intensive look at the same statement will appear normal through the use of a proverb.

3. *Kebia nyiashempo daŋ mo tutokar.*

(Child wise is older than his father junior).

“A wise child is older than his uncle”

The literary meaning of this proverb is knowledge is power. The statement of this proverb indicates that a child which is knowledgeable and for that matter can memorize certain history and narrate it accurately in the midst of elders is said to have been older

than his own age. When someone calls himself an uncle in the society and cannot even give a common history about their family is on the other hand considered a child or of no age.

The literary device used in this proverb is a paradox because it looks absurd to say a child is older than his uncle because of the child's eloquence or long memory but the proverb gives priority to the ability of one to give a detailed explanation of some past histories about the community and their totems or beliefs. The aesthetic quality of the proverb is seen between *kabia nyiashempo* "wise child" having the tacit knowledge about the society and his uncle "*etutokar*" having no knowledge about the same community which brings about the controversies in their ages. However, no matter how small on uncle is, he is considered an elder. A child is never older than his or her uncle according to our custom and tradition.

4. *Fo kurwe kuwo, fee ta nna n saa cha akanto.*

(You give birth to snake, you take it and tie your rips).

"If you give birth to a snake, you have to wrap it around your rips".

The literary meaning of this proverb is that you cannot disown your own child no matter how bad he or she is. The statement of this proverb seems abnormal to the ordinary person listening to it but proverbially, its context sounds so good and pleasant to the deep-minded person. This is because human beings are never destined to give birth to reptiles but rather we give birth to our fellow human species. Paradoxically, giving birth to a snake by a human being means giving birth to a criminal or bad child of which you still need to take up his or her responsibilities as a parent.

The aesthetic quality of this proverb forms part of the literary device used. Thus, the ability of the persona to construct an absurd sentence which has a meaning proverbially.

5. *Kakpa ne ejɔɔ maŋ wɔ, mboe ne bu kɔ aji kekpaŋ.*

(Place that dogs are not there, goats are what they hunt with).

“Where there are no dogs, the goats are used for hunting”

Literary, this proverb means there is the need to improvise when the right material or tools are not available to undertake a task. The literary device used in this proverb is a paradox because it is absurd to say a domestic animal like a goat could be used for hunting but a dog on the other hand is well known by the Gonja society for its hunting ability. Though, both the goat and the dog are all domestic animals but the former is a herbivorous animal which makes it difficult to hunt other animals.

The aesthetic quality of this proverb forms part of the literary device that emerges from it. This ability of a goat to substitute a dog for hunting other wild animals is a paradoxical statement. However, it is not just using a goat for hunting but rather the absent of a member in a group should not break a company.

6. *Baa kur ebi koŋkoŋ be nchaŋ nna ne mobe nawuraana tase kumo ase.*

(They are digging a child single's grave and his parents sit by it).

“The parents of the only child sit by as his grave is dug”

Generally, the loss of a young or youth is painful for the immediate family as well as the community. For the parents, it is a devastating blow and if it happens to be an only child who has died, the sense of tragedy is almost complete. Under these circumstances it is not

unusual for the bereaved to be heard lamenting how unjust fate has been; they would however, wish that death had seized them instead of the youth. The death of the only child caries nullifies the hopes of the parents. There is a feeling that their security in old age and expectation of immortality that only the survival of offspring can guarantee have disappeared.

Paradoxically, the death of an only child is associated with feeling of guilt in the community as it begins to be suspected that the parents have themselves had a hand in the death of the youth through their involvement in witchcraft dealings. Though, it is culturally absurd for a parent to take part in both the digging of a grave and the burial processes.

The aesthetic quality of this proverb forms part of the literary device which is a paradox. It could also be seen at where the proverb follows the cultural demands of the Gonja society.

*7. Esepo be enɔ du shimbi ne esɔpo be enɔ du tentɛ.*

(Giver's hand is short and the collectors hand is long).

The giver's hand is short but the recipient's hand is long".

The literary meaning of this proverb is that the hand that doles out is a stiff hand that does so reluctantly while the receiving arm receives eagerly. The concept of wealth is expressed in idioms involving the hand. A wealthy persons hand has things while a poor person is one whose hand has not. The short hand therefore is that hand which does not stretch far enough to allow others to receive from it.

The literary device used in this proverb is a paradox because it is absurd to say everyone with a short hand is expected to be a giver while those with long hands are also supposed to be recipients but rather the proverb is a reflection of human behavior. People are only too ready to receive presents but they are on the other hand, unwilling to give gifts to others except where that gift is seen as a kind of investment against the future.

The aesthetic quality of this proverb also forms part of the literary device that is used. Thus, the ability of the proverb to paradoxically describe the givers hand to be short and that of the recipient as being long.

8. *Jebote be ewɔpo ela kakirembi.*

(Elephant is owned by the puny frog).

“It is the puny frog that begets the elephant”

The literary meaning of this proverb is great things have small beginnings. The *kakirembi* is a puny frog which contrasts with the great size of the elephant. It would therefore be a miracle for the tiny frog to beget the elephant nor do the Gonja society really believe that this is physically possible. Nevertheless miracles do happen. The point being articulated by this proverb is that the laws of nature are inscrutable.

Paradox as a literary device is part of experience and the unexpected can sometimes happen. In the case of human reproductivity, children are not always expected to resemble their parents, particularly the father, since paternity is sometimes ascribed to the mother's legal husband and not necessarily to the man who is biologically responsible for the birth of the child.



The aesthetic quality of this proverb is that a puny parent may have children who are much bigger physically, just as the poor apparently inconsequential parent may beget children who may achieve great things in this traditionally egalitarian Gonja society.

#### 4.3.2 Synecdoche

The act of using a part of a thing to represent the whole is also peculiar to the Gonja proverbs. Examples of such proverbs under the literary device include the following:

9. *Anishi maa shu ne kamuna tase.*

(The eye does not cry and the nose is sitting).

“The nose does not stop running when tears are flowing from the eyes”.

This proverb literary means your neighbour’s problem is equally your problem. It is applicable in a situation where one cannot ignore the problem of his or her neighbor as a result of solidarity. This is the reason why we always see phlegm running through the nose anytime tears is flowing from the eyes. This implies that when your neighbor is in trouble, it is equally your trouble or problem because you cannot sit on the fence at that particular period of time. The nose and the eyes are closed neighbours as far as the human head is concerned.

The literary device in this proverb is synecdoche where *kamuna* “nose” and *kinishi* “eye” represent the whole human being. The beauty or the aesthetic quality of this proverb forms part of the literary device which has a symbolic representation in nature. *Kanishi* “eye” and *kamuna* “nose” represent a human being in term of their behavior.

Thus, *kinishi* symbolizes the artist of the proverb and *kamuna* “nose” also represents the neighbor who cannot overlook the problem.

10. *Anishi anyɔ bee wu abar a duɲ.*

(Eyes two see each other and quench).

“When two eyes meet each other, they die off”.

The literary meaning of this proverb is that when you meet somebody face to face, you fear each other regardless of your initial emotions about that person. Thus, you feel shy to say the whole truth to the other person. The literary device used in this proverb is synecdoche because the human eye has been used to represent a whole body and for that matter, the two individuals involved in the proverb.

The aesthetic quality of this proverb is the ability of the eyes to represent a whole person leaving the rest of the body parts of equal importance.

#### 4.3.3 Smile

The figure of speech where two imaginative things are compared and the connective words are *duli* “as” and *fane* “like” is also peculiar in the Gonja proverbs. Proverbs that mostly feature in these proverbs are as follows:

11. *Kanaɲ duli kipo.*

(Family is like forest)

The meaning of this proverb is that appearance may be deceptive. When one stands from a far, one might perceive that the thickness of a forest will not create room for him or her to pass through it but as one draws nearer it he or she will see that each tree of the forest

stands individually on its own thereby creating space for passage. The family on the other hand, is a group of human beings related by blood or consanguinity. Though, these members of the family are related by blood with the same heritage, they however, have different characters and independent of their own.

Simile is the literary device used because both the family and the forest are all from different category. Thus, the forest is a group of tree and the family is a group of people related by blood. The point of this figure of speech is that there is some kind of resemblance between the two categories used in the proverb.

The beauty of the proverb is part of the literary device used and the feasibility studies conducted between the family and the forest.

12. *Dimedi be da du nna fanε kidampo.*

(Human character is like a pregnancy).

“The character of a human being is like a pregnancy”.

Literally this proverb means that the human attitude cannot be hidden from other people. The human character is something that one usually finds it very difficult to control because it is emotional. This internal behaviour of a person does not show up easily but with time, it comes out involuntarily. Likewise, the pregnancy, it seems to be hidden at the initial stage and gradually pumps out at the latter stage.

The literally device used in this proverb is simile because the emotional behaviour of the human being has been juxtaposed with the physical pregnancy.

The aesthetic quality of this proverb is the relation between the pregnancy and the human character. Thus, the character does not show up easily, likewise the pregnancy also takes time before delivery.

13. *Ejɔɲe duli kakɔ.*

(Squatting is like shitting)

The literary of this proverb is that in every rumors, there is an amount of truth in it. Traditionally, shitting is done by squatting before the stool could come out freely. Therefore, it is perceived that when one is even squatting without defecating, it looks as if he is defecating unless one get nearer him before one can judge.

The literal device in this proverb is simile because there is a comparism between squatting and shitting through there is an amount of resemblance between squatting and defecating.

The experience through observation and ability of the native speakers to put this into proverbs usage accounts for the aesthetic quality or beauty.

#### **4.3.4 Metaphor**

There are also some unusual association or the attribution of characters to things that could not by any stretch of the Gonja people imagination have had such attributes. Examples of such metaphoric associations are not farfetched.

14. *Bu maa kur kasawule kaluakorɔwule n sa nyɛ shisher peper.*

(They do not dig the ground once and get red sand).

“The red layer of the soil is not found at the topmost of the ground”.

Literally, this proverb means, Rome was not built in a day. This proverb is used in a situation where some people think they can use less time than the expected time to achieve a task. The explanation of this proverb is that; do not expect to achieve an important task within a short period of time. For instance; “The red sand or soil” is the soil which requires the effort of persistent “digging” and as a result, one’s patience is stretched.

The literary device used in this proverb is a metaphor. It means that one has to be digging the ground persistently until one gets to the red sand. The persistent digging of the red sand is directly related or compared to the extent of the patience and perseverance one has to exhibit before achieving a task.

The aesthetic quality in this proverb forms part of the literary device which is metaphorically expressed with a symbolic representation for the persistent digging of the red soil and the extent of the perseverance one has to restrain as a result of patience in order to achieve a difficult task. However, it is not just the persistent digging of the soil per se but it is rather the extent of the patience one has to continue to exhibit through perseverance to achieve a tedious task or goal.

15. *Jasakpa ela ma maa du jagajaga*

(I am gabon viper, I do not bite carelessly).

“I am the gabon viper, who does not bite without provocation”.

The literary meaning of this proverb is that there is no smoke without fire. It is applicable to a much renounced patient person who suddenly becomes insolent or furious, the proverb is also stated metaphorically that, in every action, there is a cause.

The aesthetic quality of this proverb is part of the literary device used, which is a metaphor. Thus, it relates or equates the behavior of a patient person to that of the wild gaboon viper which is as a patient as anything. Also, there is no physical link between a man and a reptile but in metaphorical language, it is possible to create a relationship between these unlike things.

16. *Kelan la ekplapo nna ne kaputi bee saa adare.*

(Mat is a soothsayer and the pillow gives dream).

“The mat is the best soothsayer and the pillow also gives dreams”.

The proverb is thus advising against hasty decisions where much is at stake and where execution of the wrong decision can result in future regrets. Therefore, the lapse of time and the opportunity of second thought are here being upheld. In the above proverb mat and the pillow refer to sleep and peaceful repose and the enriched cogitation that takes place when the mind is not distracted by day-to-day activities or by extraneous events.

What we see here the application of metaphor and imagery as ingredients in proverb making when the sleeping mat is described as a soothsayer. For instance, as a giver of dreams also allows you to dream about your problems and through this you discover the solutions to your problems.

The aesthetic quality of this proverb forms part of the literary device which is the identification of two unlike things or the substitution for a mat to a soothsayer and the

pillow as a giver of dreams. Thus, people get the necessary quietude and peace of mind at night to think things over and take rational decisions when they are in bed resting. They also dream about their affairs and thus gain better insights to things that affect their lives. Gonja, like many African people believe in dreams and have standard explications for their dreams. However, they accept that not every day's dream are true prognosis of events to come but certain people's dreams are valid indicators of future events.

17. *Kejombu to be Keyir ela ma, maa gbungbuŋ.*

(Stone in peg is me, I do not shake).

“I am a peg in stone I do not shake”.

The literal meaning of this proverb is that my stand is firm or I am permanent. Therefore, it is very difficult to uproot so shake a peg which is surrounded by a stone by a single shake or trial. The description of person who has a firm stand in all his or her endeavor as a peg in a stone is metaphorically stated because there is an indirect comparison of two unlike things in the proverb.

The aesthetic quality of this proverb forms part of the literary device, metaphor. Thus, the identification of two things or the substitution for one thing to another by the proverb above, clearly create beauty of the proverb.

#### **4.3.5 Personification**

Personification has also been identified as one of the literary devices which is mostly featured in the Gonja proverbs. This refers to the giving of human attribute to an

inanimate object in order to give a natural colour or beautify the language. Here are some examples.

18. *Enɔshilbi bee keni kumobe Kapɔrto nna n sa puji e ler nchu.*

(Finger looks at its structure before it swells with water).

“A finger contains pus according to its size”.

Literary, this proverb means cut your coat according to your cloth. The literary device in this proverb is personification because the *enɔshilbi* “finger” has been personified and behaves like a human being on its own, talking about the extent to which it can contain pus as far as its size is concerned. We all know that the size of a finger determines the extent to which it can contain pus when it gets swollen.

The aesthetic quality of the proverb lies in its literary device which has a symbolic representation. The *enɔshilbi* “finger” symbolizes the quality of the contribution. The *enɔshilbi* “finger” represent the contributions of the individual in the society and the “containing of pus by the finger according to its size represents the contributions of the individuals. This means that *kenɔshilbigboɲ* “big finger” will contain more pus than a small finger “*enɔshilbi*” where the “small finger” and the “big finger” or the thumb represent the poor and the rich respectively in the society. This means that you should not expect the poor and the rich to contribute equally when it comes to contributions.

However, what do we always see in our communities when it comes to contributions? The poor people are expected to contribute as much as the rich. This is what the proverb is against and that our society is not fair to the poor, and all these bring about the beauty



of the proverb. Thus, the poor should also be appreciated no matter how small their contribution may be.

19. *Ebu e naa ye, ne kowu bee nu.*

(Room will say and the outside will hear).

“The room (family) is the one which says (things) and the outside (world) hears”. The literary meaning of this proverb is that, it is the same people with whom you share your secrets, they are the same people that reveals them to others. Personification is used in this proverb because both the room and the outside have been personified to speak and hear like the human being respectively.

The aesthetic quality of the proverb is part of the literary device used. Thus, the ability of a room which is an inanimate object to say things to the outside to also hear, clearly states the beauty of the proverb. Contextually, the room represents the family or close friends with whom you discuss matters of importance and the outside on the other hand, is the rest of the world who will then hear this secret.

20. *Wane e daŋ wu nase ka bee di jebote?*

(Who no see spider ridding elephant?)

“Who has not seen spider ridding an elephant?”

This proverb literary means, give praises where it is due. This proverb is used in a situation where someone tries to do something but fails. It is therefore used to appreciate the effort the person made by trying to do something but does not succeed. The literary device in the proverb is a personification in the sense that the *nase* “spider” has been

personified. The *nase* “spider” has turned into a human being and now ridding an elephant.

The aesthetic quality of the proverb forms part of the literary device as the beauty and admiration of a spider ridding an elephant which does not have any direct relation to its meaning as the appreciation of the effort made but fails to achieve a task. In the Gonja culture, an elephant is noted to be a very huge animal and the spider, on the other hand, is a very small animal or insect but very tricky in most of our folktales. Therefore, it is not easy for a spider to have a ride with an elephant. Even if it succeeds in ridding an elephant, its feet will never touch the ground and needs to be praised for the efforts it makes to ride an elephant and only that the feet do not reach the ground.

21. *Chinchare gbaŋe maŋ wul kudoe, nɛ e kuu n sa bɔipo.*

(A horse will not stir “Tuo Zafi” and cut some for the blacksmith).

“It is a true saying that a horse will not stir “TZ” and serve the blacksmith.

The literary meaning of this proverb is that one must not expect thankfulness from a person you have harmed. The literal device used in this proverb is personification because the *chinchare gbaŋe* “horse” has been personified with the ability to cook and serve as well. Stirring of “*Tuo Zafi*” or TZ and serving are all attributed to a human being.

The aesthetic quality of this proverb is part of the literary device used. The horse always take the blacksmith as an enemy because it is the blacksmith who made the hook of the “reins” to enable the horseman to ride on it and again, he made the knife for the horse-knacker to slaughter the horse.

22. *Nyɛmpetale e naa pɛ kulete e saa dikirke nɛ e bee min.*

(God catches grasshopper to chameleon to swallow).

“It is God who gives grasshopper to the chameleon to swallow”.

The literary meaning of this proverb is, it is God who helps the needy or handicap. This proverb is usually applied when someone has a problem and has been discouraged and lost hope of solving it and eventually had a remedy to it. The literary device in this proverb is personification where God and the chameleon have been personified. The aesthetic quality of this proverb forms part of the literary device used. The chameleon is noted to be an animal that cannot move fast nor run after an insect but the grasshopper, on the other hand, is an insect that can fly very fast. It is therefore surprising for a chameleon to get a grasshopper to swallow. It therefore means that if not for God's mercy, it can never fly nor run after grasshopper and get it to swallow. All these form part of the aesthetics of the Gonja proverbs.

#### **4.3.6 Parallelism**

Shipley (1960, p. 297) refers to parallelism as “balanced return of structure”. Lowth identified synonymous, antithetic and synthetic or constructive parallelism for Hebrew poetry. Synonymous parallelism expresses “the same sense in different but equivalent terms”, that is a proposition is repeated either wholly or partially, the expression being varied but the sense entirely or nearly the same. In antithetic parallelism, the correspondence of lines is by means of “an apposition...sometimes in expressions, sometimes in sense only”. Synthetic construction (Jacobson 1966, p. 400). These modes

of parallelism occur in varying degrees in the Gonja proverbs. The following examples of Gonja proverbs respectively illustrate synonymous and antithetic parallelism:

Kusɔ nɛ feɛŋ nya ma kutɔ bɔ shuwa nɛ gbititi lela. Ekpa niŋi so, nɛ kebaaji asheŋ nɛ amobe ekpa so be ekpa nɛ m bɔ. Mee sa bumo nɛ baa sha ma kedamaya nna n saa shinne asɔ lela bee bɔlɔ bumobe nwu.

*What you get from me is better than the finest gold, better than the purest silver. I walk in the way of righteousness; I follow the paths of justice, giving wealth to those who love me, filling their houses with treasures.*

Etirpo maŋ kɔ elopo ama damawuraana bre kɔ beteri damta nna.

*No one, not even his neighbor, likes a poor man, but the rich have many friends.*

23. Eƒɔ e wɔ kaba ama e maa wɔ keyɔ.

(Visitor has a come but he has no going).

“A visitor forces his way in but does not force his way out”.

The literary meaning of this proverb is that a visitor or stranger is in the jurisdiction of his host or landlord and cannot in anyway force his or her way out without a prior concern of his host. In the situational analysis, this proverb is usually applied to visitors who insist on leaving sooner than the hosts have had time to provide some reception for them. The view of the Gonja is that a visitor is in the jurisdiction of his host and cannot decide when to leave, if all things being equal. A visitor is therefore has to exercise patience and wait until his or her host provides whatever reception he or she has for him or her before he or she leaves.

The literary device used in this proverb is a synthetic parallelism because it involves structural identity between the two sections of the proverb: *Efɔ e wɔ keba* “a visitor forces his way in” and *ama maa ne mo e wɔ keyɔ* “but he does not force his way out”. The aesthetic quality of this proverb forms part of the literary device that forms part of the beauty. Each section of the text contains the same classes of phrases and words which bear similar grammatical and thematic relations to the predicator and a sense of emphases respectively.

24. (a) *Fo baan wu tanpo feen wu mobe kekpabɛ gba.*

(When you see the blind man, you must also see his walking stick).

(b) *Fo baan wu kufol, feen wu nyɛnwulinji.*

(When you see the moon, you must also see the big star guiding it).

These proverbs are equivalent to the English “Birds of the same feathers flock together”. Thus the blind person is never seen walking alone but with the walking stick that guides him or her to where he or she must go just like the moon is guided by the big star known as *nyɛnwulinji* that illuminate its path. The synonymous parallelism is used in the above proverbs because they are expressed in the same sense in different but equivalent terms.

The aesthetic quality of these proverbs form part of the literary device. Thus, using two different proverbs to carry the same sense. A preposition is repeated partially, the expression being varied but the sense is nearly the same. Both proverbs are used to emphasis the closeness of two things or people.

25. (a) *Sha loŋ nyɛ be kumu lela ela yawajipo be eche kaa kurwe kurma.*

(What is sought for has been gotten, for the itinerant trader's wife has given birth to a donkey).

(b) *Sha loŋ nyɛ be kumu lela ela chakanta be eche ka kurwe eyu.*

(What is sought for has been gotten; the policeman's wife has given birth to a thief).

These proverbs are used when one is looking for something which he or she considers very important in his life and out of the blues that thing is given free then one is saved the trouble of going out or leaving his or her surrounding's to find that thing. Just as the itinerant trader seeks for the donkey so also the policeman's wife can put to bed a thief, what else would they be looking outside for when they have it right there in their homes. Just as the context suggests, these proverbs could be used to congratulate someone who unexpectedly gets what he or she has been seeking for long.

The literary device used here is synonymous parallelism in the sense that both proverbs expressed in the same sense in different but equivalent terms. Thus, a preposition is repeated partially with the expression being varied but the sense entirely the same.

The ability of two proverbs to have the same sense contextually create the beauty of the Gonja proverbs.

26. (a) *Masa bɔni Kanakama, ku kra bɔ kanaabin bre.*

(No matter how stale or bad the fried corn cake (masa) is, it is worth more than the cow dung).

(b) *Kapushɛ fimbi kama kra bɔ kijembu gboŋgboŋi kama.*

(A tiny piece of kola is still better off than a very big stone).

Both proverbs suggest that the worthlessness of lost glory is still better than the assumed glory of a worthless object. One cannot just compare some things with others no matter how big that thing may be. Thus, their glories are still upheld with dignity.

The two proverbs in lines (26a and 26b) taken together however are another example of synonymous parallelism, for both lines convey similar meanings in the semantic point of view.

The aesthetic quality of these proverbs forms part of the literary device used. Thus, both proverbs could be used to clearly indicate differences in social status and could also be used to suggest that whatever is yours could be dependent on than what is not.

27. (a) *Kɔlu bee kuu ama mpuye dra bre maa luwe.*

(A fight comes to an end but old insults do not get finished)

(b) *Nyɔma kɔ mobe lalaluwe ama mobe ebin bre maa luwe.*

(A camel comes to an end but its dropping/dung do not get finished)

These parallel proverbs are used to emphasize on how difficult it is to forget things that had happened in the past or past memories are very difficult to forget.

In the above examples, there is antithetic parallelism between the first part of each line and the second. Line 1 is a conjoined sentence, the first part is joined to the second by the contrasting conjunction *ama* “but”. An opposition is drawn between a fight which may come to an end and an insult which is never forgotten.

Moreover, the second part of the line is the antithesis of the first “a camel may die but its dropping / dung last forever. Also, the two lines taken together demonstrate a synonymous parallelism between the seemingly unimportant camel dropping that are preserved long after the camel itself is dead and gone on the other hand and how an old insult may be nursed in the heart and remembered even when a big fight is long forgotten on the other side as well.

The aesthetic quality of these proverbs form part of the literary device and also forms the allusion being made to the fact that some Gonja people consider the camel dung/droppings as medicinal and they may thus be carefully preserved and exist long after the camel itself is dead and gone.

28. (a) *Maan ji asheɲ be asɔ nɛ asheɲ bee mɔ ma aa?*

(I will not eat the things of trouble and yet I am being killed by trouble?)

(b) *N shile n saa ɲana asheɲso nɛ asheɲ bee nyɛ ma?*

(Running and hiding from trouble and yet I am being caught by trouble?)

Both proverbs are used in a dirge to lament on how we human beings do try to control death and sickness but we rather fall victims because they are cause by nature.

Parallelism is again detected in the pair of examples. Thus, the second part of both lines introduced by the conjunction *nɛ* “and yet” are the antithesis of the first parts. In the first part of each line, every effort is made to avoid trouble from reaching us, only for the opposite to take place in the second part of the line. The two lines (28a and 28b) taken together however are another example of synonymous parallelism, for both lines convey similar meaning in their context of usage. In both instances effort are being made to avoid



trouble leads to the opposite. The ability of these proverbs to be in the same context with the same meaning accounts for the aesthetics quality of both proverbs which form part of the literary device used.

#### **4.4 Summary**

This chapter looks at the structure, themes and the literary devices with their aesthetics qualities that are embedded in the Gonja proverbs. In the analysis, one hundred and sixty four (164) proverbs were used. Seventy six (76) proverbs was to analyse the structure, sixty (60) proverbs for the themes and twenty eight (28) was also used to analyse the literary devices.



## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.0 Introduction

The study looked at the analysis of the structure, literary devices and themes of Gonja proverbs from a descriptive point of view. To do this effectively, enough data was collected and analysed. This final chapter of the study presents the summary of findings, conclusions and some recommendations.

#### 5.1 Summary of findings

In undertaking this study, what the researcher observed was that not much work has been done in the oral literature of Gonja and specifically on proverbs. As a result the researcher had to consult a lot of elderly Gonjas from the research area and some lecturers of the University of Education, Winneba before realizing that Gonja proverbs have a place in the socio- linguistic culture of the people. Some of the major findings that came out of the study include the following.

i). It came to light from the study that Gonja proverbs have two main structures which include the simple structure and the complex structure. The simple structure of a proverb could be a phrase or clause. For example; *kɔnɔ ɛla ɛshɛ* “mouth is trouble”

The complex structure of a proverb is one that has two or more clauses in its composition. For example; *kusɔ nɛ enimu bee dese kasawule a wu, hali kebia dii kadibi tentɛn gba e maan kuu kumobe ɛfɛ to* “what an elderly man sees while lying down, a young man will not even smell it when he climbs a tall tree”.

ii. It was realized that the proverbs are full of symbolic representations of humans, fauna and flora. These symbolic representations help to bring out the aesthetic quality of the language. Some of the literary devices found in the Gonja proverbs include; metaphor, simile, personification, paradox, synecdoche and parallelism.

iii.) It was found out that there are difficulties in the categorization of proverbs under a single theme. This is because it was observed that some proverbs can refer to practically any situation in life and it would be impossible to analyse such proverbs under only one particular theme.

iv. Again, the study has revealed that the Gonja proverbs serve as an avenue for transmitting knowledge, attitudes and values, which are often expressed metaphorically.

v. The study also found out that syntactically, some of the proverbs by function are either interrogatives, imperatives or declaratives.

vi). The study also revealed that Gonja proverbs advise or admonish members of society and are therefore indispensable in our daily lives.

v). Gonja has borrowed some proverbs from other languages like Akan and Hausa. For instance; *kakra kakra akəkɔ be num nsuo* (gradually, the fowl will drink water) and *ga wuka, ga nama* (this is knife, this is meat) respectively.

## 5.2 Conclusions

Since language and for that matter proverbs serve as an index to the culture of a people, then it could be said that if we ignore them, we are, by implication, ignoring our culture. This research helped to document, from the recent cross-linguistic perspective, how the Gonja proverbs form an integral part of their lives.

This has implications for policy makers, curriculum designers and Ghanaian language developers. This study is expected to serve as a guide to policy makers so that they will avoid making policies that would sideline Ghanaian languages and, for that matter, Ghanaian culture. It would help the curriculum designers to design curricula that would encourage pupils and students to appreciate, use and uphold the Ghanaian languages in schools, such as Colleges and Universities. For the Ghanaian language teacher this study is a reminder. That the Ghanaian language cannot be taught effectively when they are detached from the culture of Ghanaians because proverbs in every communication is culture-tied.

## 5.3 Recommendations

The linguistic and literature development of every language rest on the amount of research carried out by linguists and scholars into its study and documentation. In the course of conducting this study, several oral literature aspects relating to Gonja proverb analysis which need further investigation came to the fore. Thus the following recommendations are being made.

- i. There is the need to make investigations into how some Gonja proverbs are changing in structure, form and meaning.

- ii. Also, the counselling role and functions of proverbs in discourse, and the ethnography of speaking folklore, imagery in proverbs, proverbs and conflict management and proverbs and gender construction could be looked at.
- iii. Future researchers and / or scholars should investigate into the socio- cultural analysis of the Gonja proverbs including a comparative study of Gonja proverbs with those of other languages.
- iv. Others can also conduct research into protoproverbial and postproverbial of the Gonja language.



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## APPENDIX A

### SOME GONJA PROVERBS

1. Afuu maa ta kejembu  
“The wind cannot carry away the stone”
2. Alaŋ maa kii ayu  
“Water pots do not turn into millet”
3. A maŋ tu fo, fo maa pin  
“If doesn't affect you, you don't feel it”
4. Aŋasa e naa bra kolu  
“Proverbs bring (are the cause of) quarrels”
5. Anishi anyo bee sha abar  
“Two eyes love each other”
6. Anishi maa pin mfɔl be epo  
“The eyes cannot know the soup that has salt in it”
7. Anishi maa shu ne kamuna tase  
“The eyes don't cry while the nose sits”
8. Anishinyor shimbi bo ketenteŋ  
“Shame, which is short, is better than a long one”
9. Anye nyi amo, n shaa lato  
“We know (all about) them, but we are quit”

10. Aso kaa nu, kumu pite  
“Once the ears have heard it the head is safe”
11. Asɔ gberɛ be enyapo bɔ eyu  
“To own few things is better than to be thief”
12. Awor maa mɔɔ lambe  
“Noise does not kill the hawk”
13. Baa nyi fo lepo nɛ fo don  
“Know your friend and your enemy”
14. Baa niɲi kadibi kibi to nna  
“We straighten a tree when it is still small or I it’s early years”
15. Bɔrɛ nyikpɛ nɛ n wu fo  
“Lightening has made me see you”
16. Kɔnɔ elɛ eshe  
“The mouth is trouble”
17. Pɛ mfa nɛ n pɛ mfa e maa pɔɔ kushuɲ so  
“Hold here and I also hold here does the job”
18. Sa maa ji mbe aya  
“Do not ‘eat’ my footsteps”
19. Nkpa e la asɔ  
“Life is riches”
20. Nnɛ nɛ a maɲ wɔ?  
“Where are they not present?”

21. Achintir e naa bra adɔso  
“It is sitting together that brings offence”
22. A beɛŋ nu nangori nɛ mo alɛ e kii ebi  
“A slave will suffer before he becomes a royal”
23. A bee nɛ abee maa sher, ama nchu nɛ nchu bee sher abar  
“Mountains do not meet each other but water does “
24. Agangɔŋ nɛ tee laŋ na  
“It is drums you are beating”
25. A kaŋ bɛ, a beɛŋ dufe  
“When they rot, they will smell”
26. A la meya, maŋ la anyeeya  
“It is mine is not ours”
27. Alaŋ maa kii ayu.  
“Water pot do not turn into millet”
28. A maŋ tu fo, fo maa pin.  
“If it doesn't affect you, you don't feel it”
29. Amo nɛ baa fɛ, Ebɔrɛ maa fɛ amo.  
“What they think of, God does not think about”
30. Aŋasa e naa bra kolu  
“Proverbs bring quarrels”

31. Anishi anyɔ bee wu abar a duɲ.  
“When two eyes meet each other, they die off”
32. Anishi anyɔ bee sha abar.  
“Two eyes love each other”
33. Anishi maa pin mfɔl be epo.  
“The eye cannot know the soup that has salt in it”
34. Anishi maa shu nɛ kamuna tase.  
“The eyes don’t cry while the nose sits”
35. Anishinyɔr maa mɔɔ, ama a bee bu kubɔ.  
“Disgrace does not kill but it breaks the neck”
36. Anishinyɔr shimbi bɔ ketentɛɲ.  
“Shame, which is short, is better than a long one”
37. Anye nyi amo, n saa lato.  
“We know all, but we are quiet”
38. Asɔ gberɛ nyapo maɲ la eyu.  
“The owner of few things, is not a thief”
39. Ashushombi be piɲi nɛ fo buu na.  
“You are wearing a gown made of flies”
40. Asoe kaa nu, kumu pite.  
“Once the ears have heard it, the head is safe”

41. Asɔ nɛ a bɛɛ basa, amɔ nɛ baa nyiti.  
“It is provocative things that one should be patient”
42. Atatanpurɔŋ nyi anishi nɛ a bɛɛ pɛ.  
“Short sightedness knows his attacks”
43. Awor maa mɔɔ lambe.  
“Noise does not kill the hawk”
44. Atembiaŋ n ji e naa bra atembiaŋ luwu.  
“To jump and eat brings about to jump and die”
45. A wɔ e bel nna nɛ lakasa bɛɛ pɛga ebi.  
“A monkey only carries its child in good times.
46. Baa nyi fo lepo nɛ fo doŋ.  
“Know your friend and your enemy”
47. Baa niŋi kadibi kibi to nna.  
“We straighten a tree when it is still small”
48. Bra kumu e baa chɔ kawala.  
“To bring good luck is better than to be handsome.
49. Bri kitambo.  
“To beat a thatch”
50. Bɔiŋbɔiŋ be mpirgi, a beenŋ kaŋ ba.  
“The castanets of an egret, it will soon come”
51. Anyishapo e naa we mɔbe kufolɛ n sa bore kiwuibi to.  
“A wise person eats his egg while cracking bones”
52. Baa shuŋi anyishɛŋpo nna, manɛ aya tentɛŋwura.  
“We send a wise person but not a person with long legs”
53. Bɔrɛ nyikpɛ nɛ n wu fo.  
“Lightening has made me see you”
54. Bɔrɛ bɛɛ ba, bu maa keni awuleto aa?  
“Don` t people look upwards when it is raining”
55. Bulombuto bɛɛ foŋ nna n shaa duŋ.  
“The mouse blows air on before biting”

56. Buluŋ pibi, nyifriŋ pibi.  
“The son of lion, is also the son of the leopard”
57. Bu maa china jaga a nya edankana.  
“The do not sit idle and receive sympathy”
58. Bu maa churo gbaŋe koŋwule be eshile.  
“The do not praise the race of a single horse”
59. Bu maa ji elepo fane edoŋ.  
“They do not take advantage of the beloved one as an enemy”
60. Bu sha anye ne manɛ?  
“They love us with what “
61. Bu to, ne bu daŋe, konɔ e wo.  
“If they roast or they cook, all belongs to the mouth”
62. Baasa ela kuwura.  
“People make a chief”
63. Bu fule jɔnɔ ne e kini kuwuibi.  
“They lie to the dog to refuse a bone”
64. Bu wu ma ne anɛ.  
Whom have they seen with me?
65. Daŋ n keni e naa bra keji ga.  
“Testing the food brings a bout too much eating”
66. Dra be nchu maŋ naa wo eboŋto.  
“Old water is no longer in the stream”
67. Dra maŋ la mbre  
“The past is not today”
68. Dra maŋ so fo, kabre been so fo.  
“If the past did not save you, today will do”
69. Fo nyiŋi ndre, kabre e maŋ par fo.  
“If you remember yesterday, then you are not happy about today”
70. Ebi ko maa too.  
“No child is thrown away”



71. Eboŋ be kebulɔ, maa mɔn kelanɛ  
“If a stream is full, it does not prevent one from returning”
72. Ebu ye nɛ kowu nu.  
“The room says and the outside hears”
73. Ebɔrɛ e naa sa n shin naa sɔ.  
“God gives and takes”
74. Echinakpa lubi nɛ tempir duu.  
“A bad sitting place is where there is spouting grass”
75. Echɔl e naa ju ketamewura.  
“Spitting drives away a man with a smelling sore”
76. Edoŋ maan ye ma.  
“My enemy does not praise me”
77. Efɔ e naa churɔ kpawu.  
“It is only a stranger who greets a deaf person”
78. Efɔ maŋ nyi kachubuŋ.  
“A stranger can not tell the deepest part of the stream”
79. Egba nyi mo barkasa egba.  
“It is a witch that knows her fellow witch”
80. Egbiri e naa shine jɔnɔ bee gbu.  
“It is noise that makes a dog to bark”
81. Ekpampo nɛ wane e yɔ m ba aa?  
Who went and returned with the hunter?
82. Enɔshilbi gba puŋi, ku beɛŋ ler nchu.  
“Even the finger, if it swells, will produce pus”
83. Esa e naa sha nɛ leŋi bee duŋ mo.  
“It is man who likes and the crocodile bites him”
84. Esa wɔ lanɔto, baa bii aya a chi.  
“If a person is at home, be careful of your steps”
85. Esa mo e baa, nɛ e maan yɔ?  
Which person comes and will not go?

86. Esatapo so ne kusɔ bee foe.  
“It is because of the taker that things get missing”
87. Gba nkuli so.  
“Trap backbiting”
88. Gberɛ, gberɛ ne eboŋ bee bulɔ.  
“Small, small that the river gets full”
89. Gberɛ bɔ fo kaa paŋ cheche.  
“Small is better than nothing at all”
90. Gbaga ne kumobe efol e naa yɔ kupuŋ to.  
“A carrier and its rope go to the bush together”
91. Kachina ncher, kumo e la kowurnyen.  
“Long life makes a man the head of the house”
92. Kade kama be lakasa lute anishi.  
“The monkey of every place has deep eyes”
93. Kodutentɛwura maa tembienɛ ede.  
“The owner of a long tail does not jump over fire”
94. Kafoli e kraa foŋ, kashɛ beenɛ ba.  
“While whistling is still on, a song will soon follow”
95. Kajiblambi ne danga nna.  
“The small cat is clever at deceiving”
96. Kakil maa tiŋ a kil, kakil be awɔrɔbi so.  
“Marriage is not an easy thing, it has many demands”
97. Kakiliya so ne lambe bee ji njɔŋ.  
“It is because of kapok tree that the hawk is boasting”
98. Kejibi kama ne kumobe kadaŋɛ.  
“Every food and how it is cooked”
99. Ketele lela bɔ kedama.  
“Good name is better than riches”
100. Kanase ka foe, ku choŋ keŋe to.  
“When the hoe is lost, it has gone to strike”

101. Kasha maa nu kaye.  
“Love does not hear advice”
102. kashe dra be keshuli so maŋ du kpakpa.  
“The response to an old song is not difficult”
103. kashinteŋ bee basa.  
“Truth is painful”
104. kataboŋ maŋ la koyu.  
“Gentle picking is not stealing”
105. kadibi koŋwule maŋ tiŋ puga ede.  
“One stick can not make fire”
106. kebolpo wuso maa ŋana kasaŋe.  
“A dead sheep does not fear the knife”
107. Kebikpoŋso ne mobe barana bee bala a ji.  
“A rough boy is always trained by his colleagues”
108. Kadibi koŋwule bee so afuu ku beeŋ bu.  
“If one tree collects all the wind, it will break”
109. Kadibi koŋto maa tiŋ a niŋi.  
“A crooked tree cannot be straightened”
110. Kadibi koŋwule maa kii kupo.  
“One tree does not make a forest”
111. Kenalu dra maa paŋ efe  
“An only kraal does not lose scent”
112. Keni eko so, ne eko pin asheŋ.  
“Look on a person and a person will learn sense”
113. Kepegaso bo kekere  
“To be bruised is better than to be tied”
114. Ketentembirito be yawu maa tiŋ a ji.  
“It is not easy to trade in darkness”
115. Kebelso ka tor ede to, kuko e naa lara kumo.  
“If an iron falls in fire, it is another that takes it out”

116. Kena ko choŋ, kena ko beej naa ba.  
“If one war passes, another war will come”
117. Kena to ne baa wu benyen.  
“It is in the war that we see those who are really men”
118. Kena mo e baa ne ku maaj luwe?  
“What war comes and does not end”
119. Kinishpre gba, ku ma alar ede.  
“When the eye is red, it does not emit fire”
120. Kinishi koŋwulewura maa mushe tanpo.  
“The one eye person should not laugh at the blind”
121. Kejimuni bee kaa bra geshi.  
“Selfishness brings dissatisfaction”
122. Ketor maŋ la bomin be ekar.  
“Falling is not the end”
123. Keterso ne bomin bee gben.  
“It is because of good name that man suffers”
124. Kiya be kalaber bo kepirbi peye.  
“The dust of the leg is better than that of the buttocks”
125. Koshinio e naa junkpar mobe bibi.  
“It is the hen that leads its chicks”
126. N daŋ mo dra maŋ daŋe kekpaŋ so.  
“I have ever killed is never part of hunting”
127. Eno maŋ daŋ n nye m mon kuno.  
“The hand has never had and denied the mouth”
128. Kpawu nya aso, manne enupo e wo.  
“When the deaf gets things, they are not for the hearer”
129. Kuchon konkuron e dese m be.  
“The lean heartbeat should ly and rot”
130. Koshi maa di kumuni epaŋ.  
“The fowl does not thank the rubbish dump”

131. Koshinyen Kama bee boŋ mobe langar so nna.  
“Every cock crows in his own surroundings”
132. Kufɔ kufɔ be a jembu bee futi amu.  
“Stones thrown from afar pierce heads”
133. Kufu be eluanyɔ bee mɔɔ eboipo.  
“Double fear kills the common man”
134. Kuchulgito ne kenan̄to be kebaŋso, kebuto e naa ba.  
“Stretching and bending in excess are follow by breaking”
135. Kujɔ gboŋ maŋ la kapal.  
“A big yam does not necessarily give big fufu”
136. Kufu maa tɔ sheŋ ne manne anishinyɔr.  
“Fear does not buy anything if not shame”
137. Bomin mo doŋ ela kolɔ.  
“Human beings enemy is sickness”
138. Kulɔ ne baa che, bu maa che da.  
“It is sickness that the cure not character”
139. Kulor maŋ ba nna ne ku ba ju kuwalbe.  
“The hernia has not come to sack the testis”
140. Kelepo lela be Kaman, kudoŋ ne fee nya.  
“After love, there comes hatred”
141. Kutuŋ ye kefiti gba bee che enite so.  
“The hyena says stumbling also helps walking”
142. Kutuŋ ye keji wɔ anishito n shaa wɔ Kaman.  
“The hyena says food can be found both in front and at the back”
143. Kumuni maan̄ tiŋ daŋ fane kibee.  
“The rubbish heap cannot grow like a mountain”
144. Katuntunlombi be etaŋ bee kukwe mobe eche.  
“The ant`s slap suffices its wife”
145. Kusɔ Kama kɔ kumobe kache.  
“Everything has its day”

146. Kusol maa puwi.  
“An elephant cannot hide itself”
147. Kusɔ nɛ kame bee sha ela tikiŋ.  
“What the stomach wants is to be full”
148. Kususonkolon e naa bra akuruwase ebu to.  
“The fly brings the jiggen into the room”
149. Kuwu a maan̄ ji bee basa.  
“Seeing and not eating is very painful”
150. Lakasa be kodu nɛ bu kɔ a kre mo.  
“The monkey`s tall is what they use to tie it”
151. Lalabodu maa ŋana ndɔɔwurwa.  
“The wild parrot does not fear the farm owner”
152. Lambɛ bee tɔ a ma aka.  
“The hawk buys but does not pay”
153. Lambu so nɛ jɔnɔ bee wani.  
“It is because of the hall that the dog boasts”
154. Baa kule lambu n shaa shu kali.  
“We do beg for hall to mourn”
155. Lubi pibi maa mushe mo nio be anyi.  
“A young bush pig does not laugh at its mother`s teeth”
156. Maaan̄ sulɔ kubo n kaa we ayu.  
“I will not carry a grinding stone and at the same time chew grains”
157. Maa tuwe amo n ya kii amo wura.  
“I will not mind them least I become their chief”
158. Nchu maa nyan̄ jaga.  
“Water does not ferment without reason”
159. Nchu monɛ a bee tushi nɛ enyɛn bee ber.  
“It is water that is hot that a man baths”
160. Nchu pupɔr e naa bulɔ ebon̄.  
“It si new water that floods a stream”

161. N daa nyi maa junkpar.  
“Had I known does not come first”
162. Ndoo wɔ mpar, kanaŋ Kama ku kɔ eɔbaŋ.  
“However big a farm is, it must have sections”
163. Nkpa e la aso.  
“Life is riches”
164. Nkuli maa mɔɔ nyingbasa.  
“Gossip does not kill human beings”
165. Nyɛ, nɛ bu bii fo.  
“Get and you will be known by them”
166. Pulo be nchu bɛrso, maŋ la sude.  
“The toad does not bath with hot water”
167. Sa maŋ fa kaboe nɛ fo maŋ keni kulu to.  
“Do not sell a goat without looking into the kraal”
168. Sa maŋ nyagbo n yeshi nyifu n sa afuu.  
“Do not become angry and throw the flour to the wind”
169. Sa maŋ pulɔ kadii, keshera e maŋ walɛ.  
“Do not blame the acid of ashes, it is the tobacco which is not good”
170. Suwe ma to nɛ sulo ma wɔ.  
“Help me to put down the load comes from help me to carry”
171. Songur ka bee gelge kepa, kusoko nɛ e wu.  
“If you see the tortoise avoiding the pond, it has seen something”
172. Songur be enite, bee basa lambe.  
“The walking of the tortoise pains the hawk”
173. Tama e so durnyaŋ a tase.  
“It is hope that is carrying the world”
174. Ta fo lepo n lɛ mo tata.  
“Take your beloved one and throw him to stand on his feet”
175. Tanpo be ashe nɛ digi.  
“A blind person has no use for a mirror”

176. Asongur anyɔ a nyi abar be a duɔ kpa.  
“It is only two tortoise that know each others biting places”

177. Tɔr nɛ n tɔr ela epel.  
“Fall and I fall makes the play interesting”

178. Wondoɔ gboɔ maɔ nyɛ n chal kumowura.  
“Big trousers do not fall off its owner”

179. Wule n ta to e la kudur.  
“Medicine is sweet when it is taken early”

180. Yili n wu, bɔ shile n wu.  
“To stand and die is better than to run and die”

181. Kaɔin be ekar ela ketar.  
“A stop to pushing is the wall”

182. Kanyiɔi so nɛ baa kurwe ebi  
“It is because of remembrance that is why we give birth”

183. Kakpa monɛ kusɔbuni wɔ, ndoɔ nɛ ajita bee sher.  
“Where there is carcass, it is there that vultures meet”

184. Esa monɛ e bee kur ketirbu, maa nu kedɛpo.  
“The person that dig well, does not drink mud”

185. Ekpa kɔnto maa buu kiya.  
“Crooked path does not break leg”

186. Esa koɔwule maa puli ebuni.  
“One person does not burry a corpse”

187. Bu maa puli ebuni n sha ka mobe aya.  
“We do not burry a corpse, leaving the legs behind”

188. Kaboelote maa nu mobe kumu so be efɛ.  
“The he-goat does not small its own odour”

189. Baa kɔ wale nɛ kanaɔ a baa sha fo.  
“Have a job and family will love you”

190. Kacha purwase maa tiɔ a cha.  
“A surprised dance is never well-danced”



191. Kanyɛn kɔŋto beɛ malga, kuko nɛ e wu.  
“When a crooked man speaks, it is because he has seen something”
192. Kɔnɔ belɔ bɔ akɔŋ.  
“Having the mouth twisting is better than hunger”
193. Kanyɛ maŋ biri, nkpancheri maŋ aya n foe fo so.  
“If the night is not dark, you will not get lost at the crossroad”
194. Kabulumutobi maa bir kabir to.  
“A small mouse does not hit an escape hatch”
195. Enimu be kɔnɔ be kanakama, mobe kamalga bre maa dufe.  
“The mouth of an elder smell but his speech does not smell”
196. Kiyapuye maa nya a chɔ kibɛaŋ.  
“The leg cannot be bigger than the thigh”
197. Kusɔ mo nɛ fo du kumo nɛ fee teŋi.  
“What you sow, is what you reap”
198. Anishinyɔrwura maa kɔɔ kabeto.  
“A shy person does not shit in the market”
199. Enyitipo e naa nyaŋ kanaakurwebi.  
“It is a patience person who milks a heifer”
200. Kabuibi du fimbi kanakama, bu maa we mo nɛ atɛ.  
“No matter how small a bird is, they do not eat it with feathers”

APPENDIX B

DISTRICT MAP OF SAVANAH REGION



*District Map of East Gonja, Savanna Region of Ghana Source: East Gonja Minicipal Assembly.*

## APPENDIX C

### INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

The purpose of this interview schedule is to get your views on proverbs in Gonja. Any information that you give will be treated with confidence and will only be used for the success of this academic research.

Your name (optional) .....

Age .....

Male .....

Female .....

Occupation .....

#### A. Proverb statement

1. How do you call proverbs in Gonja .....

2. What are some of the statements that are considered proverbs?

i. ....

Why?.

ii. ....

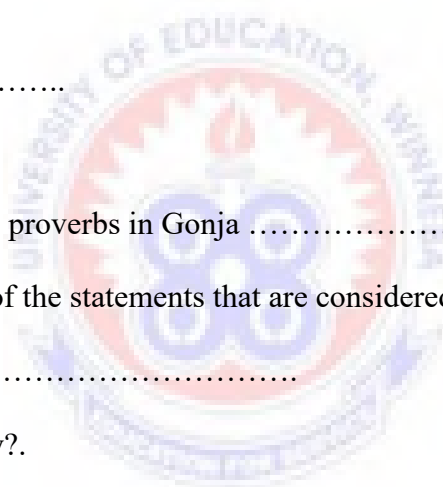
Why?.

iii. ....

Why?.

iv. ....

Why?.



3. What are some of the structures that people use on proverbs?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

B. Theme

1. How do we call themes in Gonja

2. Name any five (5) themes in Gonja proverbs.

a.

i. Unity

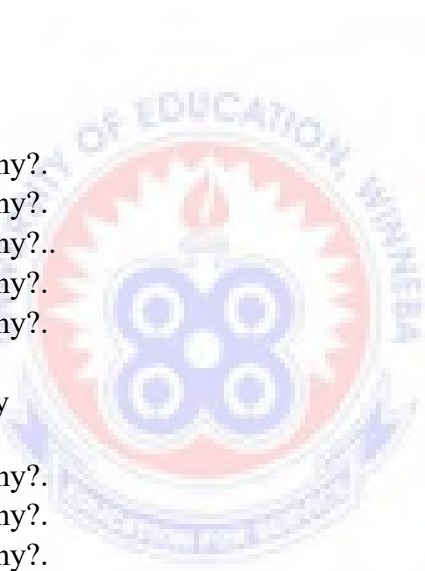
Why?..  
Why?..  
Why?..  
Why?..  
Why?..

ii. Hospitality

Why?..  
Why?..  
Why?..  
Why?..  
Why?..

iii. Advice

Why?..  
Why?..  
Why?..  
Why?..  
Why?..



3. What are some of the literary devices that can be identified in Gonja proverbs?
4. What are some of the aesthetics qualities that are embedded in some of the literary devices of the Gonja proverbs?

Than you.

Asaŋ ne kushuŋ.

