

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

LITERARY ANALYSIS OF THE GONJA DIRGE

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DECLARATION

STUDENT'S DECLARATION

I, ABUKARI SEIDU declare that this thesis, with the exception of quotations and references contained in published and unpublished works which have all been duly identified and acknowledged, is entirely my own original work, and it has not been submitted, either in part or whole, for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, MR, HENRY K. AFARI- TWAKO, 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.

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DATE.....

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DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to my family, my wife Seidu Zeibatu, my sons Seidu Abdul-Bariwu Bikunu and to all those who have contributed in diverse ways in bringing me this far.



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ABSTRACT

This thesis is a literary analysis of fourteen Gonja dirges using descriptive theory as an analytical tool. The Gonja people are the speakers of *Ngbanyato*, a Kwa language spoken by about 500,000 people in the newly created Savannah region and other regions of Ghana. The data used for this study was taken from a collection of dirges recorded on

funeral grounds from Busunu in the West Gonja district of the Savannah region. Some dirges were also taken from Amidu (2013) (lecture notes). A total of fifteen participants were involved which comprised ten females and five males using the purposive sampling technique. The study established that, the Gonja dirge is an integral aspect of funeral rites that must be performed on the loss of some elderly person in the Gonja community. The study also found out that, the Gonja dirge can be classified into two based on who is performing the dirge, and that includes *Kenanawɔba* which is performed by grand children and *Ngbanyachewɔba*, which on the other hand, is performed by Gonja women. With regard to the structure of the dirge, it came to light that the songs are generally short in nature. Themes such as advice, consolation, anger, regret and grief were also found to form part of the Gonja dirge. The study also examined literary devices such as personification, simile, ideophone, assonance, alliteration, rhetorical questions, repetition, metaphor and symbolism as the major figures of speech constituting the Gonja dirge.





CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL OVERVIEW OF THE THESIS

1.0. Introduction

This chapter discusses the background to the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, objectives of the study, research questions, and significance of the study, limitation and delimitation as well as the general layout of the study.

1.1 Background to the Study

A dirge is a song of lament usually of a lyrical mode (Cuddon, 1998). This points to the fact that a dirge is a song that is normally sung to express grief and sorrow on the occasion of funeral. It is therefore accurate to say that, a dirge is a song that is sung or performed to mourn the dead. This shows that, a dirge can be performed or sung before, while the funeral is still ongoing or after the necessary funeral rites have been performed. In the Gonja context, a dirge can be sung the very day the deceased passes on and this is usually done before or after burial, normally by the deceased's grandchildren and is referred to as *kenana wɔba* (grandchildren's dirge). Apart from the grandchildren's dirges, there are other dirges that are performed by elderly people in the society and this is what is referred to by the Gonja people as *Ngbanyache wɔba* (Gonja women's dirge)

Because of its nature as a funeral song, the Gonja dirge is not generally sung by and for everybody. Rather, it is sung by some particular group of people as well as for a certain range of people in the community. In this regard, this study will look at the various types of dirges that are performed and sung by the Gonja people as well as the various instances that these dirges are sung among the Gonja people. Emphasis will be given to

the literary devices such as metaphor, personification, simile, and imagery as well as some figures of speech that are contained in the Gonja dirge. In connection with this, the structure and style of the dirge will not be left out as they form the core aspects in doing a literary analysis. Furthermore, themes and functions of the Gonja dirge will be looked at.

1.2 Ethnographic Background

This research is about the study of the Gonja dirge. Gonja is a language that belongs to the Kwa branch of the Niger- Congo phylum (Hall, 2010) and is spoken by the Gonja people in the Northern region of Ghana. According to Braimah (1962), the term Gonja is believed to have its etymology from the Hausa sentence *zaani gun ja goro* meaning “I am going to the place of the red cola nuts”. *Gun ja* (at the place of the red) was picked out of the sentence to give the people the popular name Gonja. The indigenous name for the people is *Ngbanya* plural and *Kagbanya* singular while the language they speak is *Kegbanya*, in other words *Ngbanyato* which literally means “in Gonja”. The Gonja people occupy six local government areas (districts) all in the newly created Savannah region of Ghana. These are: Sawla Tuna Kalba, Bole, West Gonja, Central Gonja, East Gonja and North Gonja (Jindayu, 2013). Each of these districts has its district capital or headquarters. They are Sawla- Tuna- Kalba, Bole, Damongo, Buipe, Salaga and Daboya respectively.

Afari- Twako (2005) cited in Kotochi (2017) indicates that, Gonja has three main dialects which include East Gonja dialect, West Gonja dialect and *Ndompo* dialect. Gonja is regarded as the second largest language of the Guang languages in terms of speakers in Ghana (Dakubu, 1988). It is also considered as the northernmost of the Guang language

speaker in Ghana (Debora et al, 2016). The Gonja people as Afari - Twako (2010) indicates span from Kpembe in the East to Bole and Nyoli in the West and Chache near Wa in the North and to Bamboi in the South. The 2010 population and housing census as cited in Jindayu (2013) gave the population of these people as about four hundred and sixty nine thousand, four hundred and ninety (469, 490) (G S S, 2010). The Gonja kingdom as it stands now, consists of different ethnic groups that have settled within it, some of which include; Gurene, Dagaaba, Chokosi, Sissala, Kokomba, Safalba, Birifor, Ewe, Zambarma, Ewes just to mention but a few. The main occupation of the Gonja people is farming and they produce maize, yams, cassava, millet and groundnuts. Apart from farming, they are also engaged in hunting, fishing and smock weaving. It is as a result of these economic activities that neighboring groups have moved from other areas into the land in order to work and earn a living to cater for themselves and their families. The seat of the Gonja kingdom originally was Nyange in the Bole district. However, around the late 1800s and early 1900s due to short periods of reigns by successive paramount chiefs as a result of deaths, the capital was moved to Damongo in the West Gonja district in the late 1900s. Despite the change of the seat of government (*Yagbon*) from Nyange to Damongo, the title of the seat remains unchanged. In this regard, the overlord of the Gonja kingdom is enskinned with the title *Yagbonwura* (overlord of the Gonja kingdom). He sees to the affairs of the entire kingdom.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

A critical observation has shown that, the study of oral literature has been given little attention as far as Gonja is concerned. This is partly due to the fact that, many scholars

give little or no recognition to the culture of their own people. Various studies have been done in the Gonja language with little attention on Gonja dirges. The few who have attempted investigating the oral literature of Gonja have concentrated on proverbs and songs to the neglect of the dirges. It is worth noting that the Gonja dirge forms the major tool of communicating ideas, thoughts, and feelings as well as paying of last respect to a departed soul. But due to the influence of modernization as well as religion such as Christianity and Islam, which are dominant in our part of the world today, people shy away from it and so give little or no attention to the dirge when the need arises. It is therefore necessary for us as researchers, to educate the youth of today regarding this aspect of their culture. This therefore calls for the need for an extensive study into the Gonja dirge in order to address certain pertinent issues in the language and culture of the people so that, the youth become aware of their culture and become fully involved in such cultural or traditional practices. This will help maintain the culture and sustain these important aspects of our people.

For instance, Daniel (2001) researched into funeral rites of the Gonja people and identified the various stages of funeral rites some of which include; *nchensa*, *nchen shunu*, *nchen kuduanyɔ*, *nchen adena* and *kafɛ* whiles Fatimah (1977) on her part worked on some aspects of funerals and types of burial among the Gonja people. These are; burial and funeral of chiefs, burial and funeral of the ordinary person and burial and funeral of children. Similarly, Haruna (1977) in his project work discussed how funeral rites are performed in the southern part of Gonjaland and how death is perceived by the Gonja people as well as how a funeral is announced by the Gonja people. It is obvious from the above that, little or no work has been done when it comes to the Gonja dirge. However, many studies have been conducted on dirges of different ethnic groups across

the length and breadth of the world. In Ghana, Saanchi, (2002) worked on the linguistic parallelism and the Dagaaba dirge. Gbolo (2010) dealt with a critical analysis of the Sisala dirge and looked at the occasion for the performance of the Sisala dirge and the various forms of the Sisala dirge. He also discussed the theme and literary devices that constitute the dirge. However, scholars of Gonja have given attention or concentrated on songs and proverbs to the neglect of dirges. This aspect of oral literature forms the major tool of communication between the dead and the living which needs to be given adequate and proper attention so as to prevent it from fading out. It is in this regard that this research intends to fill this gap by researching into the literary analysis of the Gonja dirge.

1.4 Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to investigate how the Gonja people view death and perform funerals for a departed soul. It also aims at discussing the type of dirges among the Gonja people as well as the various instances that these dirges are performed and the manner in which these dirges are performed or rendered. Dirges generally have literary devices in them. In this regard, the study also aims at unearthing and discussing the structure, themes and functions of literary devices found in the Gonja dirge.

1.5 Research Objectives

The objectives that will guide this research are to:

1. Discuss death and funeral among the Gonja people
2. Discuss the types, occasion and performance of dirges

3. Discuss the structure and themes of Gonja dirges.
4. Identify and analyse the functions of literary devices found in dirges.

1.6 Research Questions

The following are the research questions that would be addressed at the end of this study.

1. How do people view death and perform funerals?
2. What are the types, occasions and performance of dirges?
3. What is the structure and what are the themes of the Gonja dirge?
4. What literary devices are found in the Gonja dirge and how do they function?

1.7 Significance

It is my fervent belief that this study, when completed will help in bringing out the aesthetic beauty of the Gonja dirge. The study will also be of great significance by adding to existing literature, thereby, serving as a source of reference for those who would want to do further research in the area of Gonja dirges.

1.8 Limitations

The first challenge that was encountered by the researcher in the course of gathering information for this study had to do with the fact that dirges are not commonly sung except during funerals. As a result, it became difficult to get people to respond to my

questions since they were afraid that in doing so they might lose their lives or members of their families. This is attributed to the fact that the Gonja people believe that anyone who sings a dirge for fun might invite death into the family. This therefore compelled the researcher to move to and fro to places where there were funereal celebrations. The researcher also had to wait until there was a funeral in the community. Another thing that posed a problem was financial constraint since many respondents requested some drinks or cash before agreeing to sing the dirges.

Due to lack of sufficient literature, it was not easy in gathering the secondary data on the oral literature of the language. Despite the aforementioned challenges, the quality and standard of the thesis was not compromised.

1.9 Delimitation

This study is limited to the literary analysis of the Gonja dirges and the various instances that these dirges are sung and performed by the Gonja people and how these dirges are performed. It is particularly limited to the Western part of Gonjaland precisely Busunu and its environs in the west Gonja district of the Savannah region of Ghana. Also, the study is limited to fifteen (15) participants and fourteen collected Gonja dirges.

1.10. Organization

This research is put into five main chapters. Chapter one of the study comprises the introduction, background of the study and the people, purpose of the study, significance of the study, research objectives, research questions, limitations and delimitations of the

study as well as organization of the entire thesis. Chapter two encompasses related literature review. Chapter three on the other hand deals with research design, target population and accessible population, sampling technique, sample size, instrumentation, sources of data, and data analysis procedure. Chapter four deals with data presentation and discussion while chapter five consists of findings, summary, conclusions and recommendation.



CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses some related literature that is relevant to the current study of the Gonja dirge. The review relates to death among the Gonja people, and how funerals are performed. The review also relates to the various types of dirges and how these dirges are performed coupled with the occasion that these dirges are performed. Again, it relates to themes that are usually contained in the dirge and of course, the literary devices such as metaphor, simile, personification and repetition just to mention but a few that constitute the dirge. The main purpose of this chapter is to briefly review some works by previous researchers that are of great significance to this study. The review relates to how people perceive death, type of deaths and funeral performance. The review also relates to dirges, and their type as well as the occasion for the performance of dirge and the some functional aspects of dirges or funeral songs.

2.1 How People View Death

Many scholars have attempted investigating into death and came out with their views about the definition and otherwise, meaning of death. Kirwen (2008) views death as an inevitable event in the personal history of every living person. This attests to the fact that, every living soul on this earth shall one day taste death irrespective of his or her age, religious background and financial status. Death is again seen as a process which removes a person gradually from the time of physical existence on earth and the period after death

within which the departed is remembered by relatives and friends who knew him (Mbiti, 1980).

In Africa and many parts of the world, some people believe that death is the end of every soul, while others also believe that, it is the beginning of a new life. The Gonja people believe that, death is not an end to life but a transition which emanates from the physical to the spiritual world by humans where they will serve as ancestors. To support this notion, Opoku (1978) asserts that, death is a transition which involves the transformation from the physical into the spiritual as the dead continue to live as ancestors. To him, the Akans view death as an inevitable journey that each one must make in order to reach the life beyond and continue to live as an ancestor, one of the Akan maxims states that, no one climbs the ladder of death and returns which literally means, those who die never return to narrate their experience of death.

The Akans however have various beliefs about death. Nkansa Kyeremanteng, the author of *The Akan of Ghana; Their History and Culture* cited in Atta- Cudjoe (2018) asserts that traditionalists accept death as a natural phenomenon, while bad conducts may lead to death as a result of punishment from ancestors. Akans also perceive death as a rite of passage and therefore, it is considered as an act of God. In line with this, Quarcoopome (1987) posits that, death is the last rite of passage that a person has to go through on earth. In view of this, great care should be taken in burying the dead. He agrees that, death, to the Akan people is an act of God and further avers that, death is something inevitable, thus, a kind of debt to be paid by every creature on this earth. He emphasised that death is not the end of human existence since there is life beyond the grave. The Akans also believe that the spirit of man lives on after death and this is what they refer to as ghost (*saman*).

Rattray (1927) affirms that a human being ceases to live physically on this earth, but continues to live on in the land of the ghost called *asamando*. Sarpong (1974) also agrees in his report that in the Akan tradition, the life one lives after death is a continuation of the same kind of life that is lived on this earth. To him, “only a better one for in the life after death, there is no cheating, there is no physical pain or deformity and there are no evil intentions or machinations.

Also, Taylor (2001), observes that, the dead are never gone; they are in the thickening shadow, they are in the wood that groans, they are in the fire that is dying,... they are in the forest, they are in the house, the dead are not dead’. To the Gonjas, it is believed that the dead only embark on a journey from the physical world to the spiritual world just as human beings travel from one place to another. This is one of the many reasons why the Gonjas believe in the spirit of man after and referred to it as *keyoyu* (ghost). From this, one can say that death actually, is a transition or journey from one living place to another.

Many societies are most often than not, confronted with matters arising from the demise of a relative or loved one. People believe that the act of dying might have something to do with external factors which are mostly attributed to witchcrafts, and so therefore, when a person dies, people tried to uncover the possible cause of the death. Scholars like Mbiti (1975; 118) and Gehman (1989; 54) both agree that death is not a natural event, but is seen as caused by some external forces such as witchcraft, spirits or curse. This assertion is not by far different from the Gonja perception of death. The Gonja people optimistically believe that, certain deaths are beyond the power of God even though they believe that God has a hand in all that happens; there are other external factors that can lead to a person’s death.

Research has shown that, many scholars try to unravel the type of deaths that are associated with the act of dying. This is partly due to the circumstances that led to how the person dies. Woma (2012) in an attempt to classify the type of deaths among the Dagaaba people, identified death into two types. These are physical and supernatural deaths. He came out with three levels of causes of death which include; the immediate, the efficient and the final causation. The immediate cause is the technique used to kill the deceased; disease, snake bites or other natural causes and forms of mysterious aggressions. The efficient cause is to be found among the members of the community itself, the person who was behind the act of killing. The final cause on the other hand is an ancestor, the earth shrine or a medicine shrine. On the other hand, Freeman (2005) mentioned four types of death among the Dagaaba and posits that each type has implication for both the dying and for those left to grieve the loss. According to him, the first type of death among the Dagaaba is social death which represents the symbolic death of the individual in the world he or she has known for the person dying and for the socially and interpersonally. The second type of death is what he called psychological death, which refers to the death of aspects of the dying individual's personality. How a dying person moves through the grieving process and deals with their losses and may bring about changes in the person's personality. The third type is biological death. With biological death, the body as a human entity no longer exists. For example, biological death may be evident when a person suffered heart attack severe enough to damage the heart beyond repairs, causing it to stop functioning. He asserts that, although the person is biologically dead, advances in medical science allow organs to be kept alive and functioning by means of artificial life support. The fourth and final type is physiological death. He went on to say that this type of death takes place when there is a cessation of

the operation or functioning of all the vital organs. The Gonja people also attribute the act of dying on how it occurs. For instance, Fuseini (2016) identified some of the types of death among the inhabitants of Busunu in the West Gonja district of the newly created Savannah region of Ghana. His classification was also based on the circumstance that led to the cause of the death. He came out with two types of death among the Gonja people. Namely, bad death and good death. To the Gonjas, sacrifices are often made to determine the possible cause of the death of relative

Fatimah (1977), Fuseini, (2016) both assert that, the bad deaths are those types of death that come in a form of surprise, thereby, shortening the life of the individual. The kinds of death considered as bad include; dying by thunder, lightning, suicide of any sort and dying in labour. On the other hand, the act of dying as result of old age is classified as good death.

The demise of a family member or friend requires some traditional rites that need to be performed so as to ensure that, the death of a human is not comparable to animals. In this regard, the dead is given a befitting burial followed by the necessary funeral rites in order to enable him join his ancestors. This ranges from the time of death to the final funeral rite. In some Ghanaian societies, the corpse is usually preserved while arrangements are made for the funeral. For instance, among the Akan community, the corpse is preserved before the one week funeral observation. Burial follows immediately after the one week funeral celebration Atta- Cudjoe (2018). The burial rites consist of wake keeping, laying in state, encasement and interment while in the post burial, the activities that take place include; picture decoration, refreshment and memorials. This is different from the Gonjas rituals for the dead since the funeral can not take place before burial. However, due to the

influence of religion especially Christianity, some of the Gonjas who by virtue of their religious affiliation sometimes preserved the corpse while funeral is underway.

2.2 Funeral and Its Performance

Nketia (1955) and Sarpong (1974) explain that the celebration of the dead in Ghana is an important social event carrying with it certain expectations in the behavior of the individual. This event is a duty call on the bereaved and all concerned. As a result no pain is spared to make it a special event. A Funeral, therefore, is an occasion that calls for the involvement of every member of the community to pay his or her last respect to a departed soul. In this regard, when a person dies, Bame, (1991) postulates that, messengers are sent to convey the sad news to the head of maternal lineage and its members wherever they are. Some of the numerous runners are sent to inform the father of the deceased or his successor who in turn informs his lineage. In connection with this, Korang (1993) cited in Adu- Gyamfi (2010) also reports that, when someone dies, the family members send people to inform the chief or king, as well as the deceased's father, his wife, if a man and his children.

Among the Gonjas, immediately someone dies in the hands of some family member, it is a duty call for them to inform the head of the family who then publicly announces the event by sending people to inform relatives, friends and well wishers of the deceased both far and near. In a similar relation, Freeman (2005) writes; that the first task for the entire family members is the need for the family to publicly acknowledge the death at both cognitive and emotional levels. According to him, the emotional level conveys verbal and non verbal expressions which reveal the family members' grief on the

occasion of the death of a loved one. These expressions are usually a form of communication that require a conversation about the deceased as well as his or her family members, sharing feelings about the death and surrounding events. Alembi (2008) also reports that, immediately upon the occurrence of death, men, women and children burst into wailing and mourning. The act of singing and wailing to him, serves as an announcement that death has occurred and as neighbours and passers-by hear the commotion, they turn up to see and join in until eventually the homestead is filled with people mourning and attending to funeral matters. In fact, Funeral arrangement is a collective responsibility of every member in the family and the community at large. It involves both men and women. This is to prevent the family of the deceased and or any other persons from accusing someone of being responsible or having a hand in the person's death. In one of his works, Alembi (2002) observes that, it is mandatory for both men and women to sing and dance to escort the dead person else, any person who refuses to take part will be accused of having a hand in the death of the deceased person. Among the Gonja people, it is mandatory for men and women to mourn and if possible sing and dance, however, it is not compulsory for men and women to escort the deceased since women are not allowed to go to the graveyard. On the otherhand, if the deceased is an elderly person, women can join amid chanting of dirges. Fingers are however, pointed at men and women who are close relatives of the deceased and refused to take part in the funeral activities of having a hand in the person's death.

Achana (1993) is also of the view that, the announcement of an old woman's funeral in Kasena Nankana area can be made by relatives and through musketry firing. In connection with this, Adizie (1993) posits that, shouts are regarded as the first and foremost of all the funeral announcements in the Somey traditional area. They are made

by women. According to Adizie, it is known that women are easily carried out by emotions. It is this behavior of theirs that makes them responsible for the first announcement. In the Gonja cultural setup, women are seen as been responsible for announcing funeral since their first task is to shout through mourning and wailing upon hearing of the demised of a loved one. This to a greater extent publicly announces the funerals to passers by to join in the preparation process.

Adu- Gyamfi (2010) on his part classified the various ways of publicly announcing funeral under sub-headings which include; verbal announcement, non verbal announcement and electronic announcement. He refers to the verbal announcement as the kind of announcement which involves the sending of relatives and other family members to spread the message to other members of the family who might not have heard of it. In this case, those who run the errand go with a drink. Most often they carry aromatic schnapps (imported or locally according to the status of the person) or in the villages a local gin may be presented. He asserts that, it is when the drink and the message, a verbal art, have reached the recipient that informs him that he has heard of the death of his kinsman officially. He might not attend the funeral if this custom is not observed. Apart from the current methods of announcing funeral, various methods were also adopted in the olden days such as beating of gong gong, drums or booming of guns. But these days various methods have been adopted through which people learn of the death of someone near or far which include posters and invitation cards. He opined that posters were printed in black and white in the past but are now printed in colour. The posters come with inscriptions such as: "call to glory", "in memoriam", "at rest" and "home call". These posters are pasted on walls, poles, trees, church premises and homes and even vehicles.

With the non verbal form of funeral announcement, Adu – Gyamfi posits that, pictures of the the deceased person are replicated in the local newspapers in the advertisement columns, but in instances where there are no pictures, the cross is represented. With regard to the electronic announcement, funeral publicity may appear on television both state owned and private stations which according to him are a form of visual art. Apart from television stations, radio station is also an avenue under electronic funeral announcement. In the case of the gonja people, pictures of the deceased are not replicated in the local newspaper, however, they are placed on banners in the house of the deceased to serve as a form of funeral announcement.

Nketia (1955) in his study of the funeral dirges of the Akan people enumerated five different phases of funeral which include; preparation, pre mourning (including wake), the interment, the after burial mourning and the periodic mourning. However, the Akan funeral rite is characterized by the nature of death. Van der Geest (2004; 899) posits that, in Akan society, the death of an individual can be characterized as a good death or a bad death. The concept of good death characterizes the passing on someone through old age and was successful in life. For example, the deceased may have had descendants, work hard to support their well being and provided for their education, the individual was well respected by the family and in the community. When such a successful person dies, in old age, the death is celebrated, wailing, sorrow and grief are minimized. The bereaved family and people close to the deceased may wear clothes made of white fabrics on the burial day. The clothes signify victory. Conversely, the Akans believe that, young people cut off by accidents or unexpected illness did not achieve all they would have. Thus, untimely death is seen as bad death. In funerals for those who faced a bad death, there is much wailing, tension, anger and even bitterness. Mourners wear clothes made of black and red

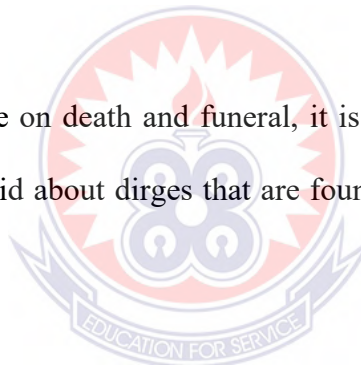
fabric, signifying great sorrow. This is true as in the case of the Gonjas where mourning, wailing and grief are minimized as compare to the death of young children.

Witte, (2001) observes that, funeral events are celebrated in the matrilineal hometown of the deceased and every Akan is a citizen of his or her matrilineal hometown. This is because, the Akans practice matrilineal inheritance. Van der Geest (2001), Witte 2006) both are of the view that, the Akan funeral ritual is a long process that starts on the day of death and continues through the 40th day when the deceased is laid in state for viewing. The celebration and long ceremony provide an opportunity for social readjustment. Among the Gonja people, funeral celebration does not only involved mourning, wailing and the chanting of dirges, it also gives an opportunity for family members to settle their differences and to reunite the family. This, to a larger extent, is mostly influenced by the deceased as Mbiti (1992) reports; the deceased continues to influence the lives of the living relatives with blessings and curses, therefore, funeral should be performed correctly. However, funeral events are celebrated in the patrilinear home of the deceased.

Bediako (2016), asserts that, the Gonja people performed five different funeral ceremonies for the departed soul. They include the following, three day funeral rite (*nchensa*), seven day funeral rite (*ncheshunu*), twelve day funeral rite (*nchen kuduanyɔ*), forty days funeral rite (*nchen adena*) and one year (*kafɛ*). However, attempt was not made to differentiate the type of death that necessitates all the above funerals since not all deaths warrant the performance of the funerals mentioned. For example, a person who dies through thunder or suicide does not enjoy the proper burial rite let alone funeral. He opined that, while the three to twelfth day funeral rite is attended by family members and people from all walks of life, the forty and the one year funeral rites are only attended by family members, most especially senior people in the family. This is to say that, the

forty and one year funeral rites are solely reserved for the elderly people in the community. This shows that the celebration of the *nchensa* funeral rite marks the beginning of the funeral while the performance of the *kafɛ* funeral signifies the end of the funeral to the departed soul. He opined that, the one year funeral rite signifies the final necessary rites that are performed. All the above mentioned funeral rites are associated with dirges if the need be. The Gonja people perform their funeral with the slaughtering of an animal precisely a ram for the common person and a cow for a chief or king which is used to prepare food (T. Z) traditionally. This food is to be distributed to family members, friends and sympathizers of the bereaved family who have come to mourn with them and in turn show their appreciation to the bereaved family for the loss of their family member.

Having reviewed literature on death and funeral, it is equally important to look at what previous some scholars said about dirges that are found across the length and breadth of Africa and beyond.



2.3 Dirge, Types, Occasion, Roles and Performance of Dirges

In the view of Cuddon (1998; 227), the word dirge is from the beginning of the antiphon of the office of the dead, *Dirige, Domini.....Direct O. Lord...* He also traced the development of the dirge as a literary genre from the Greek literary tradition, through the Roman and English literary traditions. He further posits that, dirges in the Greek tradition consisted of two parts which were both sung and in the Roman traditions; the song of praise for the dead was also chanted. He therefore defines a dirge as a song of lament, usually of lyrical mood. It was a mourning song sung over the dead and a threnody sung

in memory of the dead. In Roman funeral procession, the *nenia*, a song of praise for the departed was also chanted.

In similar relation, the history of the word *dirge* illustrates how a word with natural connotation such as 'direct' can become emotionally charged because of a specialized use. The word *dirge* is from the Latin word '*dirige*' which is a form of the verb '*dirige*', 'To direct, guide' that is used in uttering commands (Tobalase 2014). Abrams (2005) on the other hand defines a *dirge* as a versified expression of grief on the occasion of a particular person's death. By far, this definition reminds us that, *dirges* are not just performed on the occasion of the death of a person, but rather, are performed after the death of some prominent or particular people in the community and this is in line with the Gonja perception of *dirges*. It also tells us that *dirges* are not performed anyhow unless there is a funeral of a particular person. Akariga and Odaga (1982), Okpewho (1992) have all referred to *dirges* as funeral songs which is synonymous with Cuddon's definition. Nketia (1955, 17) on his part views the Akan funeral *dirge* as a medium for self expression which provide an opportunity for personal reactions to situation of the funeral. To him, the notion of personal reaction to situation is an avenue to relief one of grief, worries and uncertainty in a funeral setting. He further posits that, *dirge* emerge out of women's wailing following the news of the death of someone, and that it marks the beginning of public mourning.

Akporobaro (2001; 66) in his study of African oral literature defines the *dirge* as a highly stylistic form of expression that is governed by specific poetic recitations used to express the feelings of the mourners in a determinate form and performance procedure. Similarly, Ohwovoriolè (2006; 276) in an article published in *the journal of English language and literature* describes the *dirge* as a poem, chant, recitation or song of lamentation

expressing sorrow, usually performed at funerals or memorial rites. She went on to say that, apart from using dirges to express sorrow at the loss and exaltation of the virtues of death, a dirge to a greater extent usually would insinuate the causes of death and the supposed villain. To the Gonjas, a dirge is a song or dance that is performed on the death of some elderly people in the community. Amidu (2013) and Mahama (1993) both refer to dirge as a song or dance that is performed during the death of some prominent people such as kings, queens and people of old age. Different type of dirges exists among the various ethnic groups in Ghana and beyond of which Gonja is not an exception.

Experts who have discussed the Gonja dirge have classified them into two main types. Mahama (1993), Amidu (2013) and Jamilatu (2019) have all classified the Gonja dirge into *kenanawɔba* and *Ngbanyachewɔba*. They observed that, while the *kenanawɔba* is performed by grand children, *Ngbanyachewɔba*, on the other hand, is performed by the elderly people preferably women from the royal clans. Contrary to this, Sanka (2010) identified some of the types of the Sisala dirge based on their structure and on the age of the deceased which may warrant the dominance or otherwise lament in the song. He therefore classified the Sisala dirge into two types which include the structural and the social. He refers to the structural type as the simplest form of the dirge which consists of a song of one or two lines which is or are repeated over and over until a pause is made while the social types are those that are performed on the death of young adults and children. However, among the Gonjas, the death of children does not require the family or community to mourn their death with a dirge.

Also, Woma (2012) on his part classified the Dagaaba dirge into three. These are; *degaar langni* (introductory dirge), *lang wogo* (the long dirge), and *lang muoli* (the dirge of

lamentation). According to Woma, the introductory dirge is performed outside the *degaar* gyil (xylophone) music. The long dirge on the other hand is performed during the *bilangni* (a long funeral song cycle that is performed alongside with a dirge). He asserted that, themes in *bilangni* usually centered on condolences and sympathy with the bereaved family on the loss of the deceased. He explains further that, it is during the performance of the *lang wogo* through the *bilangni* song cycle that dirge singers express and communicate their feelings about socio political issues. Commenting on the Dagaaba funeral ceremony and its political impact on music and dirge, he opined that, the traditional ceremony of the Dagara's funeral is an essential ritual that does not only call for the celebration of the deceased's life but also an event that provide the platform for social interaction among community members, and as an avenue where musicians and dirge singers can exchange their views about the mystery of death through the performance of music and dirge singing. This is similar to the Gonja funeral since it is not just an occasion for the celebration and remembrance of the deceased, but also, a platform for the living members of the family and the community at large to interact with one another. It also provides an opportunity where dirge singers communicate the message of the living members of the family to the deceased through the performance of dirges.

Nketia (1995) cited in Sanka (2010) observes that, funeral dirges of the Akan people are of social importance since they constitute an important part of the necessary funeral rites which are normally performed to bid farewell to the deceased. He posited that, funeral dirges of the Akan people are used to emphasize the somber atmosphere of the funeral as well as to evoke sorrow and sympathy. He views the Akan funeral dirge as a medium of self expression which provides an opportunity for personal reaction to the situation of the

funeral. The notion of personal reaction to situation, to him, is a means to relief one of grief, worries and uncertainty in a funeral setting. He further says that, dirges emerge out of women's wailing following the news of the death of someone, and that it marks the beginning of public mourning. He went on to say that, the principal occasion for the celebration of funeral dirges is funeral but it is sometimes possible to hear them outside funeral grounds. Among the Gonja people, dirges are equally of social importance since they constitute an integral part of the funeral. They are also used to entertain and console the living members of the family since their performance reliefs us from boredom, anxiety and any kind of worry that one is likely to experience in the course of the event.

Anyidoho (2002) in her contribution to the Akan dirge treats *amoma* as a contemporary funeral eulogy. She asserts that, *amoma* as a contemporary genre is a combination of elements from Akan dirges, royal appellation poetry and hunter's songs. She asserts that, one peculiar feature of *amoma* eulogies is that, they are composed by educated Akan people who are sometimes contracted to write eulogies tailored to the needs and wishes of the bereaved families. This tells us that, apart from funeral songs that are composed orally, there are others that are written and peculiar to some particular people in the society. The Gonja people also have a dirge that is unique on its own and is performed during the funeral rites of a great hunter and this is referred to as *kpaana*. However, this type of the Gonja dirge is not composed by educated people as opposed to the Akans.

Funeral dirges are performed before and after burial rites of an Awori man, woman or titled chiefs (Tobalase 2014). He explains that funeral dirges are used for the burial of elderly people during their demise. He observes that, it is after burial that there is usually dancing around by children, family, friends and well wishers of the deceased to celebrate a life well lived. This is in conformity with the *kenanawɔba* among the Gonja people

where dirges are sung and performed by the deceased's grand children before or after burial. The death of a young one is not to be celebrated as it is seen as a sad event. He goes on to say that persons older than the deceased are not also supposed to observe the ceremony or be present at such gatherings. It is usually the members of the deceased's age group that take part in the performance of the Awori funeral dirges which are usually performed in a somber manner. There is some kind of similarities here, because, the Gonja people do not also perform dirges for the younger children in the society since their death is seen as a big loss to the family. He further postulated that, the Awori funeral dirges are performed coupled with some kind of aesthetic values which are a combination of thoughts and feelings stimulated by the performers some of which include sources of beauty, rhetorical question, emotional reaction to the song, transfer of cognitive experience to the singer etc.

Sanka (2010) in his study of the Sisala dirge observes that, the occasion for the performance of dirges is a funeral ground that is spacious enough to cater for mourners from different communities. He went on to say that, the execution of dirge is a significant cultural rite that has to be performed on the death of any adult member of the Sisala community. The execution of the Sisala dirges is usually led by professional dirge performers or group. He stated that the Sisala dirge is accompanied by musical instruments which are drummed by drummers. In this regard, bowls are often placed in front of the drums in which one may put a certain amount of money that he wishes to give. This is somehow similar to the performance of the Gonja dirge where bowls or calabashes are put in front of the Gonja women for one to show appreciation of any amount of money he or she wishes to offer to the performers. This is to say that, any offer that one has to give so far as the dirge performance is concerned, is put in the bowls or

calabashes. Gbolo also shows that, the money that is put in the bowl is to be shared among drummers and dirge performers at the end of the entire process. In the case of the Gonja dirge, the money is not to be distributed among the performers, it is however to be used to purchase and sharpened drum tools when the need arises.

In the process of performing dirges, the performers normally remain standing while the audience is seated and cannot dance to the music as it is done in the Abanyole community in Kenya (Alembi, 2002). He also discusses the role of songs and dance in the context of funeral among the Western province of Kenya where he looks at the people who qualified to perform the dirge among the Abanyole people, the time during which the dirge is performed and the structure of the performance as well as the implication of such performance in the Abanyole funeral context. He went on to tell us what oral poetry tells us about Abanyole perception and understanding of death. Alembi used four main areas in arriving at how Abanyole perceive and interpret death and the causes of death which include; analysis of expressions and statements in the dirges that express the socio-cultural causes of death among the Abanyole, the effect of death on the individual and the community, description of the performance and interpretation of the dirges as well as the poetic features of the oral piece. This is to say that, during the performance of dirges. One can actually deduce or tell the cause of the death of the deceased through the style of the performance. Among the Gonja people, the type of dirge that is performed on a particular occasion can actually inform or expose the audience to the cause of the death of the person being celebrated which is in line with Alembi's assertion.

The singing of the Akan funeral dirge is usually accompanied by gentle and graceful rocking of the body and the head (Nketia 1955). This is mostly done to show the feeling and sympathy of the performer. Professional dirge performers as regards the Gonja

people use various parts of the body to complement the performance which to a greater extent, helps in executing the dirge more effectively and convey the message to their audience. these include; stumping the feet on the ground and pointing the finger to the sky as well as bowing before an elder.

Mahama (1993) in his project work submitted to the University of Education, Winneba, observes that, the formal occasion for the performance of the Gonja dirge is funeral. However, the deaths of children do not warrant the execution of the Gonja dirges. He also emphasized that dirges among the Gonja people are performed for elderly people such as chiefs who are custodians of the land. Concerning the performance of the Gonja dirges, he postulated that, dirges are performed with accompaniment of musical instruments which help to boost the morale of the performers. The climax of the Gonja dirge is performed at night in the deceased's house or family's house. He stated that, during the performance of the Gonja dirge in its formal setting, it is possible to see dirge performers performing together amidst body language. He revealed that, children and older people perform dirges depending on the time. He views the Gonja dirge as a dance together and a one by one dance as it begins with the performers dancing together and finally dance one after the other in the case of the grandchildren's dirge. This can not be said to be true since the grandchildren's dirge does not provide an opportunity for them to dance one by one but only provides them the opportunity to dance together round the deceased's house or escort the deceased to the entrance of the grave. He finds out that, the performance style of the Gonja dirge depends on whether the deceased is a male or female. That, if the deceased is a male, the performers usually go round the house of the deceased three times and if the deceased is a female, they go round four times before starting the actual performance at an open place that is closer to the deceased's house and spacious enough

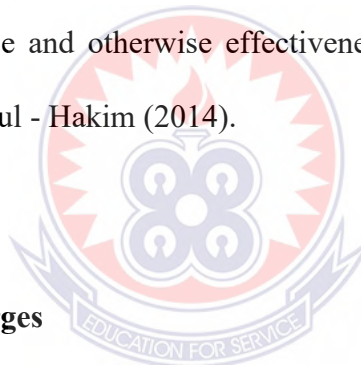
to accommodate the performers. This study confirms his assertion since the performance of the Gonja dirge involves going round the deceased house four and three times for women and men respectively however, if the grandchildren's dirge is to be performed on the way to the grave, it does not involved going round the house.

2.4 Structure of the Dirge

In doing a structural analysis of dirges, it is important to have in mind the layout of the dirge. Crosby (2017) views structure as the patterned arrangement of lines and stanzas of a poem as well as the physical arrangements of the words in the page. From the definition of structure above, one can say that structure refers to how the individual units of words, lines, phrases, stanzas and sentences are put together. That is implies that they may be short or long in nature. With the Gonja dirges, a line may consist of two or more words where as a stanza may also consist of two or more lines, which may be a phrase or a sentences. Structure could also comprise the various components that build up to form or make a piece of literary art. One can not talk about structure without style since the two aspects of oral literature move side by side. By style, we are talking about the choice of words (diction and language), figures of speech and mood of the persona in any literary work. Agyekum (2013) is of the view that, every literary work has style and the style refers to the imagery, diction that is the choice of words. He further postulate that, it is the style that really depicts the creativity of the artist. The organization of the style in oral or written literature is referred to as stylistic qualities. In view of this, Agyekum (2013) again asserts that, stylistic quality is the way in which the words and linguistic

elements of oral literature texts are organised and the resources that ensure the effectiveness of oral performance.

In line with what Agyekum posits, it can be said that, the Gonja dirge also has this type of organization in the form of diction and style. Many Gonja dirges make use of creativity where certain words are used to show that they are the themes used to touch the inner feelings of the listener. This can be seen in Amidu (2013), who in his structural analysis of some sample of Gonja dirges opines that, the Gonja dirges are made up of short stanzas and short lines. They use varied forms of figures of speech to enrich the beauty of their performance. Some of the figures of speech found in the Gonja dirges include; repetition, personification, simile, alliteration, metaphor and so on. These stylistic qualities help to determine the performance and otherwise effectiveness of the performers as stated by Agyekum (2013) and Abdul - Hakim (2014).



2.5 Themes Found in Dirges

A theme from the lay man's point of view is the central idea in any literary work or oral piece. Every oral art has a specific message that it intends to convey or carry to its audience. It is important at this juncture to say that any literary work so far as oral literature is concerned without a specific or intended message is vague since it has nothing to offer to its audience.

It is worth noting that, themes, to some extent are related from one ethnic group to the other. This assertion has been supported and acknowledged by Nketia (1955) when he makes references to the domicile, the deceased and ancestors as themes of the Akan

funeral dirges. In this regard, a Gonja person who led a very good and wonderful life is remembered and praised through the chanting of dirges after his demise. The chanting and singing of dirges among the Gonja people is not just for entertainment but celebrating a life of a worthy person thereby recalling his past deeds to the audience. Finnegan (1976) identified some of the recurrent themes in Africa dirges such as praise, grief, resignation and acceptance of the inevitable are some of the recurrent themes that dominate in Africa dirges as contained in Finnegan's report. It is therefore important to say that, this researcher agrees with Finnegan's assertion because, this current study of the Gonja dirge finds some of these themes that have been identified by her as recurrent and otherwise contained in the Gonja dirge and most of our Ghanaian cultural practices such as Dagaare and Sisala dirges. To buttress this point, the theme of grief is an example in the Gonja dirge has a direct link with the appellation in the Sisala dirge. P' Bitek (1974) in his study of the some specific dirges among the Acholi people of Uganda also looked at the various themes that are contained in those samples of dirges. He is of the view that, the primary aim of dirges is to unearth the message found in them to their audience. He came out with six themes which include; song of pathway, song of battle with death, song of surrender, song of cruel fate, the attack on the dead and the attack on the living.

Another person who also made a tremendous effort concerning the theme of oral literature is Alhassan, (2017) who discusses some of the themes embedded in the Farefare women songs. The theme of anger, the theme of advice, the theme of sarcasm, the theme of prayer, the theme of peace, the theme of awareness creation, the theme of regret and the theme of mourning were some of the themes identified in the Farefare women's song. Some of these themes can also be found in the Gonja dirges some of which include;

theme of anger, theme of regret and theme of advice. The Gonja dirges are on the other hand do not consist of a line verse followed by a chorus, however, they are arranged in short and long lines depending on the dirge being performed. Amidu (2013) unpublished lecture notes in Gonja did a collection of some Gonja dirges with emphasis on the various themes that are portrayed in some of the dirges collected. He looked at the roles that dirges play among the Gonja people both to the deceased and the society at large. In addition, he did a simple analysis of some of the dirges in terms of structure, language and mood of the persona. He found out that the Gonja dirges are generally short in nature. The aim of the writer involved a cross cultural study of the Gonja people. In the Gonja cultural setup, the performance of dirges is an occasion and a platform for dirge singers to communicate the language of the living to the dead. It is also an avenue for the performers to express their feelings and thoughts as regards to the death of the deceased. This study highlights some of the fascinating themes that have been unknown to the ordinary Ghanaian person. These are; the theme of advice, the theme of anger, theme of identity, the theme of grief and the theme of consolation.

2.6 The Use of Literary Devices

Abdul-Hakim (2014) who conducted a research on the aesthetics of Kukula songs identified personification, alliteration, repetition of varying degrees, rhetorical questions, parallelism, etc as the major literary devices constituting the Kukula songs. He further noted that, it is these literary devices or figures of speech that make the audience to be able to determine the quality of their performance (whether they performed well or not). All the above literary devices with the exception of parallelism are contained in the Gonja

dirges. However, repetition seems to be dominant and constitute an integral device. These literary devices to a greater extent help to enrich and portray the cultural expression of the language.

Saanchi (2002) on the other hand, sees repetition and parallelism as the major literary devices that constitute the Dagaaba dirge. However, Saanchi (2002) directly focused on repetition and parallelism and how they operate in the Dagaaba dirge. He did not only identify them as literary devices, but also looks at the role that these devices play concerning the Dagaaba dirge. Saanchi in an attempt to discuss the role of these literary devices opined that, repetition and parallelism contribute to the unity and easy memorization of the Dagaaba dirge. Saanchi's assertion is true also to the Gonja dirge in which repetition contributes to the easy memorization, composition and performance in order to make it appeal to its audience. Lord (1960) states that 'in oral literature, composition and performance is co-temporal'. The performer of any oral literary piece has the potential to improvise when performing. However, this to a greater extent depends on the versatility of the performer. Due to the nature of the dirge, the performer has to put everything into memory since it is transmitted orally. Infact, memorization involves formulae Mutia (2003) analyses the structure of dirges, their chants, their antiphonal form and their figurative language as well as their free rhythm among the Kpe (Bakweri) ethnic group in the southern region of Cameroon. He went on to reveal the fascinating language of the Kpe dirge form and discusses their structure, their chants and antiphonal form. He maintains that, the figurative language employed by the performers which include; lyrical repetition, personification, symbolism, imagery, apt metaphors and allusion constitute some of the essential components that are utilized in the reflection of funeral poetry in the community. He also highlighted the use of a free rhythm in the

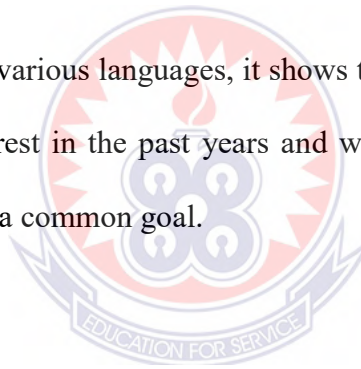
performance of the Kpe dirges which according to him is articulated by dance and accompanied by drumming, ringing of bells and the playing of a host of assorted musical instruments. What Mutia says about the Kpe dirge is quite comparable with what is contained in the Gonja dirge and how it is performed. However, there is no ringing of bells as in the case of the Kpe dirges. The Gonja people rather use foot jingles, sticks, drums and broken parts of calabashes as they sing.

Tobalase (2014) on the other hand, looks at the dirge from a different perspective. He discusses the dirge as literary and cultural expression and also identifies imageries such as metaphor, simile, anecdote and repetition as the literary devices that are found in the dirge. He also discussed the performance style of the funeral dirges from the perspective of the Awori cultural setup. He asserts that, funeral dirges are performed by children, family members, friends and well wishers of the deceased normally around the deceased compound after burial, which is performed to celebrate a life well lived. With regard to the style, he posits that, the Awori funeral songs have aesthetics features which are a combination of feelings and thoughts stimulated by the performers. These include; sources of beauty, rhetorical questions, emotional reaction to the songs etc. he went on to say that, 'dirge being an art makes use of imageries like metaphor, simile, anecdote and repetition and that these literary elements are attainable by means of intelligence and the exercise of imagination'. He found out that, dirges are literary expression since they have all the features noticeable in literary work be it drama, poetry or prose. He is of the view that, the performance of the Awori dirge is poetic, the process and procession are dramatic while other renditions are prosaic in nature. Alhassan (2017) also came out with some literary devices such as simile, metaphor, personification, hyperbole etc as the

major literary devices that constitute and also help in enriching the cultural heritage of the Farefare especially women songs.

Sanka (2010) identified some elements of prose and drama in the Sisala dirges. Impersonation and enactment, replica, theme and dialogue were identified as the major elements of drama in the Sisala dirges while simile, symbols and idiophone also constitute the elements of prose in the dirges. Apart from these two aspects, he also looked at some elements of poetry which include; repetition, parallelism and metaphorical allusion. Some of the literary devices that are found in the Gonja dirges include; personification, simile, rhetorical question, idiophone, repetition, alliteration and metaphor which will be discussed in chapter four.

From the literature on the various languages, it shows that funeral laments have generated some kind of special interest in the past years and will continue to do same since they associate themselves with a common goal.



2.7 Summary

The review ascertain that funeral rites must be performed in order to usher the deceased to its ancestors and to also enable it serve as an ancestor to the living. However, the number of days required for the performance of funeral varied from one ethnic group to the other and on the age of the deceased.

It also found out that different types of dirges exist among the various languages but are geared towards to the celebration and memory of the deceased which are composed in different styles and structure. It is also observed from the review that different themes are

contained in dirges which are common to the various African languages. It further reveals the fascinating language used during the execution of dirges which include literary devices such as metaphor, simile, and alliteration and so on. The review finds that, repetition forms an integral and otherwise the commonest literary devices among the most of the African languages.

The chapter has looked at some related literature that is relevant to this current study of the Gonja dirge. It has looked at the relevance of the review and found out that death is not an end to one's life but a transition from the physical world to the land of the spirits. It also found out that different deaths do occur in our everyday lives and are treated differently which also varies from one culture to another.

In relation to dirges, it also finds that different type of dirges exist among almost all the African languages and that the principal occasion for the performance of dirges is when there is funeral. However, it is sometimes possible to hear them outside funeral. It also came to light that, dirges are not sung and performed in isolation; rather, they are sometimes accompanied with drumming and dancing. The review also confirmed that, literary devices form the major language used during the performance of dirges. Having looked at the literature of some languages in Africa and in Ghana, let us shift our attention to the Gonja dirges in chapter four.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

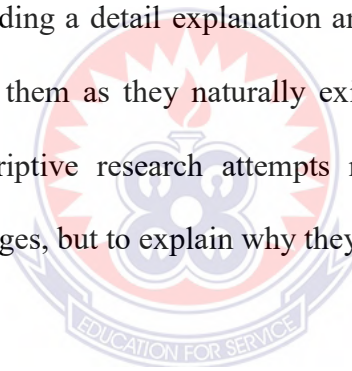
This chapter deals with the research design used in the study, population and sample size and sampling technique. Again, it discusses the instruments used, the data collection process, and data analysis.

3.1 Research Design

This study used the qualitative research as the research design. This type of research involves a detailed verbal description of characteristic cases and settings by using interviews, observations and documents as the data collecting procedures (Owu, Ewie, 2017). In order to be able to analyze dirges, it is necessary and equally important to use qualitative research. This is because, this type of research design deals with detailed verbal description of characteristics, cases and settings as well as events.

Halloway and Wheeler (1985) cited in Owu Ewie, (2017) posit that; qualitative research involves deriving information from observation, interviews and verbal interaction and focuses on the meanings and interpretations of the participants. Also, Denzin and Lincoln (1999) cited in Owu- Ewie (2017) 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), qualitative research approach tries to uncover complexities that help understand meanings. Also, this type of research design seeks to understand people's

interpretation of a particular phenomenon which is dynamic since reality changes with changes in people's perception. I had to rely on this approach because it produces more in depth and comprehensive information of events. It also uses subjective information as well as participant observation in describing the context or natural setting of the variables under consideration and interaction of the different variables in the context. This study adopted the descriptive theory as an analytical tool. The main purpose of descriptive research is to describe and document events as they naturally happen. Newman (2012) observes that, descriptive research helps to provide information accurately about a group or a phenomenon provides new information about issues and also document information that either counteracts or support prior knowledge about a particular issue. This approach actually helps me in providing a detail explanation and description of the various songs texts and also documents them as they naturally exist. Bauer (2007) cited in Kotochi (2017) opined that, descriptive research attempts not only to describe a particular language or a set of languages, but to explain why they should be the way they are.



3.2 Target Population and Accessible Population

The target population for this study was all native speakers of the language as well as professional and or qualified Gonja dirge composers. Since the target population for the study was too wide as it covers the entire Gonjaland which occupies majority of the lands in the Savannah Region of Ghana. I therefore decided to limit it to an accessible population. In this regard, I had to rely on a smaller population of participants selected from Busunu and its environs. In talking about the research site, since dirges are not sung

anyhow, but rather on funeral occasions, the research site for this study was on funeral grounds as that was the only occasion one can access dirge performances.

3.3 Sampling Technique

The purposive sampling technique was used in selecting the participants who were those able to address or get answers to the research questions. Fraenkel and Norman (2000) view purposive sampling as a method where a researcher uses his or her knowledge of the population to judge whether a particular sample of data will be representative. They further assert that, researchers normally use their discretion and judgement to select a sample that they believe based on some prior information; will be able to provide the needed information. This sampling technique was necessary because, it enabled me as the researcher to use a non probability sampling technique that I depended on for the selection of the subjects. When doing qualitative research of this nature, it is imperative and important and equally necessary to know the type of data that will enable you as the researcher to address the research questions underlying the study. With this in mind, participants were selected based on the fact that each of them had the knowledge of the Gonja dirge as well as the ability to understand, appreciate and perform the Gonja dirge.

3.4 Sample Size

In relation to the total number of participants, fifteen (15) participants were selected which comprised ten females and five males. This became necessary because, females dominate during the performance of dirges among the Gonja people and also understand the language to use when the need arises. Out of the ten females selected, six are between the ages of 45 and 60 and the remaining four have ages between 30 and 40 while all the five males are between the ages of 30 and 45. This can be found in appendix D.

This decision was necessary and taken by the researcher because, during the performance of the Gonja dirge, women play active role in the singing and dancing process. They understand the choice of words and how they are used in a particular context. Men on the other hand, play a very active role during the performance of dirge in the drumming process. Again, the choice and structure of words used as well as how and when they are used are mostly well known by women. This therefore served as a source of motivation for the researcher in selecting his participants' based on the roles each of them plays.

3.5 Instrumentation

The instruments used in gathering the data for this research were basically observation and interviews. I was a non participant observer even though I grew up in the Gonja community and a native of the language, the performance of dirges in their formal settings do not warrant the participation of non professional dirge singers. This therefore compelled me to take part as a non participant observer. In the process of observing,

audio and video recordings were taken during my encounter with the performers on funeral grounds.

Twumasi (2001) opined that, in the field of operation, additional knowledgeable informants must be recruited to assist in collecting the data, to avoid any inconveniences. On this note, I chose one of the natives of the community who also happens to be a friend of the performers as my consultant in order to minimize risk at the field. In some instances, the recording equipment was handed over to my consultant in order to enable me have a conversation with some of the performers and also enable me observed fully.

3.6. Sources of Data

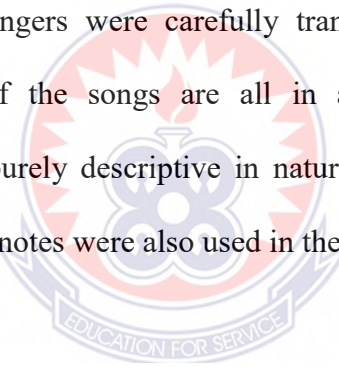
The main sources of data for the study comprise primary and secondary data. Primary data consist of the intuition of the researcher as a native speaker with proper and adequate consultations from native speakers of the language precisely dirge singers. Again, audio recordings were taken using Techno w3 phone from native language speakers.

Secondary data on the other hand came about as a result of the researcher's effort in cross examining other people's works in related areas. In this regard, secondary data comprising published and unpublished works on dirges in general and Gonja in particular were used. As regards to how the data was collected, I had to visit the performers together with my consultant at their various homes with the main purpose of interviewing them. It took me three days before my request was granted. However, some of the questions were not attended to because of their nature and scope. During the interview session, audio recordings and pictures of the interviewee were taken. Apart from visiting

funeral grounds for audio and video recordings, I also made it possible to have a one on one interaction with the informants at the comfort of their various homes. This decision was necessary because, it helps me the researcher in getting firsthand information about dirges. Unstructured interview was conducted. Arrangements were made for me to come and witness how the dirges are performed in their formal settings at funerals where video recordings were also taken.

3.7 Data Analysis

In talking about how the data was presented, the audio recordings of dirges that I took from professional dirge singers were carefully transcribed in Gonja and glossed in English. The full texts of the songs are all in appendix A for the purposes of clarification. The study is purely descriptive in nature. (Some carefully selected dirges from Amidu (2010) lecture notes were also used in the data analysis)



CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSIONS

4.0. Introduction

This chapter discusses death and the various rites that are associated with it. It also discusses the various types of the Gonja dirge in detail and the various instances that these dirges are sung or performed. It again discusses how dirges are executed or performed. Apart from these, the chapter also takes into account the structure as well as the various themes that are contained in the Gonja dirge. It also looks at the literary devices that are found in the Gonja dirges.

4.1 Death among the Gonja People

Death signifies the end of the life cycle of all living things in the entire world. It is believed by the *Ngbanya* as a transition from the physical life to the spiritual life. It is again believed that, the dead abandon and leave the physical world to the spiritual world. As a result, it came out from the informants that, when a person dies, the Gonja people believe that, he is making a journey to another world where he will serve as an ancestor to his family.

Death again, is said to be a gap between the world of humans and the spiritual world and so therefore, when a person dies, it is believed among the Gonja people that he still has contact with the living, for this reason, all the necessary funeral rites and rituals that are performed after the demise of a person emphasize or show the intimate relationship between the spirits of the dead and the living. This, to a greater extent, contributes to the

one of the many reasons why the necessary funeral rites and rituals are performed after a person dies.

4.1.1 Rituals for the Dead

According to Gonja traditional customs, when a person dies, it is an obligatory duty of the family head to see to it that all the necessary funeral rites are performed. It is therefore, the duty of the family to give the deceased a befitting burial before the funeral rites can take place. In the Gonja context, the funeral of a person cannot commence without burial. It is only when the corpse is finally put to rest that the necessary funeral arrangements can take place. The spirit of the dead equally has an important role to play in connection with the living. It is believed that the major role is to protect and guide the living members of the family.

Whenever death spreads its shoulders on a person, there are carefully planned ceremonies and rituals as well as celebrations that are done in accordance with the tradition and custom of the Gonja people. For instance, when a person dies, the first thing to be done is to honor him with a befitting burial. Among the Gonja people, when the necessary funeral rites and rituals are not performed, the spirit of the deceased will not be able to join his great ancestors. On the other hand, when the necessary rites are performed in accordance with the tradition, then the spirit of the deceased will be warmly welcomed by the ancestors.

However, people who die through accidents and suicides are usually not buried in accordance with the necessary rites. Such deceased are also not given the necessary

fitting burial and funeral rites and rituals. This is not to say that there is no burial and funeral, it is rather to say that, their burial and funeral are done differently in accordance with the manner in which the death occurred. This is to prevent such deaths from re-occurring in the family because, such deaths are considered as bad deaths.

4.1.2 Rituals before Burial

Part of the funeral rites constitute what is done before the deceased is finally made to rest in the bosom of the Lord. In the Gonja tradition in its formal settings, the first ritual that is performed after the announcement of the unfortunate incident has to do with preparations of the deceased for burial. The corpse is accommodated either at the family house or the deceased's house.

Research has shown that, some communities in Ghana by their tradition usually lay the corpse in an open place in the forecourt of the house or in the sitting room. The Gonja people are an exception to this practice. This is because; the body of the deceased among the Gonja people is not exposed to the general public. It is only the relatives of the deceased who have access to the corpse in the room. The deceased is then bathed and dressed and put in a coffin. This coffin is usually provided by a Mosque in the community if the deceased is a Moslem. On the other hand, if the deceased is a Christian or traditionalist, the coffin is provided by the members of the family.

In Gonja, when a person dies, he or she is bathed two times with water. It must be noted here that, the Gonja people do not bathed their corpse with soap and sponge as these are seen as harmful to the dead body. However, this is not to say that, the dead person is not

bathed with soap and sponge as tradition varies from one ethnic group to the other. This clearly shows that bathing the corpse with sponge or otherwise, depends solely on the culture of the people concerned. Again, the culture of the Gonja people is highly recognised to the extent that it is not every member of the community that bathes the corpse. This aspect of funeral is specifically done by people who by virtue of their clan are referred to as *dɔgti* (chief's spokes person). However, some relatives of the deceased are to be present before the bathing can take place but do not bath the corpse themselves. The relatives are there to prevent the disclosure of any disgraceful thing that might be found on the deceased. The first bath follows immediately after his demise which is referred to as *kenyelpo* (showering). This is to help prevent the body from decomposing. The second and final bath follows immediately after the necessary burial rites have been done. The children of the deceased especially the most elderly among them, is then called to pay his last respect to his or her late parent. As preparation for is on going, friends, family relatives and sympathizers who have heard of the sad news, come in their numbers to pay their last respect to the deceased and also contribute their quarter either in cash or in kind to support the bereaved family. Some of the people donate food items such as maize, and cassava while others give out money and clothes (shroud).

Putting the corpse in the coffin is seen by only relatives of the deceased. The coffin is used to carry the corpse to the graveyard but is not buried with the coffin. In the olden days, the corpse used to be wrapped in a local mat or shroud for burial but due to modernization and religion, the use of the coffin is now the other of the day. However, Gonjas who are Christians and can afford to buy the coffin also prefer burying the corpse together with the coffin. The widow or widower is not allowed to see the body of the deceased. At this point, special rituals are performed to break the intimate relationship

between the deceased, the widow or widower and the children in particular. Women are not allowed to join the funeral procession to the cemetery. The deceased is accompanied by only men to the cemetery.

4.1.3 Burial

Among the Gonja people, the burial rituals form the climax of the ceremony, as it constitutes the dramatic and saddest period. This is because; it encompasses much wailing and mourning. Some of the mourners and those who are enriched in dirge singing will be singing dirges while wailing at the same time. This is partly because; they will not see the corpse again.

As the wailing goes on, preparations are on going to find a resting place for the deceased. Among the Gonja community, custom demands that, permission be sought from the paramount chief of the town to enable them get access to the grave yard. After approval, the grave diggers are then informed. They are provided with food and water in order to boost their energy and to motivate them. They are sometimes given a certain amount of money. This money, as custom demands, is usually not for their personal use, it is rather used to help sharpen their digging equipment when there is the need to do so. The corpse together with the coffin is then lifted and either put in an ambulance or handled by men to the grave side.

In putting the corpse into the grave, two of the grave diggers will enter the grave and receive the corpse. This is usually done to ensure the safety of the deceased. In Gonja, the corpse is not buried together with the coffin, but due to the influence of religion and

modernity, some prefer burying the corpse with a coffin most especially Christians. If the deceased is a male, he is buried with his face facing the direction of the East. This is to remind him that, it is daybreak and time to go to work. On the other hand, females are buried with their faces facing to the West which also reminds them that it is supper time and it is time to go and cook.

This is because, in the traditions of the Gonja people, the role of the man in the family is to provide the family with the necessary food and shelter. Women are regarded as house wives and are responsible for the day to day affairs of the home. The grave is dug in the form of a chamber and hall. The corpse is finally made to rest in the chamber and protected with sticks or blocks while the hall is filled with the soil dug from the grave. This is to prevent the soil from touching the body of the deceased. It is by custom that, any person returning from the cemetery after burial would have to wash his hands before entering the house. In this regard, a container or gallon is filled with water and sent to the graveyard for those responsible for the burial to wash their hands before returning home. This is usually done because; it is believed by the Gonja people that, when this is not done, the person may come with bad luck from the grave yard. It is again believed that, any mourner returning from the cemetery is not supposed to look back because; it is believed that death may strike such a person to make him join his ancestors. After burial, all those who went to the graveyard are then expected to go the funeral house where the family head will then publicly announce the day the funeral will commence before everybody can go back to their normal duties at their various homes.

4.1.4 Funeral Ceremony

Funeral rites are ceremonies that are celebrated to fill the gap between the dead and the living. They portray the way the people undertake certain activities to send the spirit of the dead to the ancestors. The separation of life by death therefore creates a vacuum which requires a communal grief for people. This in effect, suggests that, without the performance of the proper rituals and customary rites, the separation between the dead and the living is incomplete which can lead to calamity in the family and the community at large.

The performance of funeral ceremony actually commences three days after burial and this is what is referred to in the Gonja language as *bugi kapuliya* (opening of the pot) or *nchensa* (three days). However, if the third day after burial falls within the wrong days (Wednesday), the three day funeral rite is postponed to the following day. This is because, it is believed that, when it is performed on this day, the likelihood of another funeral happening on that same day in the family or community is higher which, in one way or the other might not be good for the family. About five separate funerals are performed for a deceased in the Gonja context. They are, *nchensa* (three days), *nchen shunu* (seven days), *nchen kuduanyɔ* (twelve days), *nchen adena* (forty days) and *kafɛ* (one year). During the performance of all these activities regarding the funeral rites, some dirges are performed to relate the funeral to the deceased and this is usually done a night before the day of the funeral. However, the most important of these funerals are the *nchensa* and the *nchen shunu* and as such are normally associated with dirge performances. They form the climax of the Gonja funeral rites. The rest of the funerals are performed for elderly people in the society. For instance, forty days and one year anniversary are performed for chiefs and elderly people who are blessed with legitimate

children and or grand children in the society. However, when either or both parents of the deceased is or are alive irrespective of the deceased age, the funeral rite is shortened to the twelve day celebration. The reason is that, parents do not perform the funerals of their children due to the pain and sorrow that engulfs them.

Among the Gonja, young children and adolescents are not given the necessary funeral rites and rituals because; they are not yet actively involved in the affairs of the society. The society and the community therefore regard them as minors; hence their funeral is not given the needed attention as compared to the elderly people in the society. Also, the funeral of an elderly person who has neither married nor has a child is also accorded the same funeral performance as a minor. However, they are given a befitting burial and the *nchensa* funeral rites mark the beginning and also the end of their funeral rites.

The *nchensa* funeral performance is by no means different from the *ncheshunu* funeral performance except the reason for their performance. While the *nchensa* is celebrated and performed to seek for God's wisdom and blessings for the departed soul, the *ncheshunu* on the other hand, is celebrated to remember the dead. Bediako (2016). The *nchensa* celebration also marks the commencement of the entire funeral rite. On this day, the material that covered the waist and private parts of the deceased before his demise is put in a pot. This pot is turned upside down after the bath. The pot is opened on the *nchensa* celebration and the material is given to the person who bathed the deceased (Bediako, 2016), the opening of the pot signifies the beginning of the funeral rites.

The *nchensa* celebration is usually performed with the slaughtering of an animal, preferably a cow. Due to financial constraints, some families use ram. The meat of the cow or ram is used to prepare food (TZ) to be distributed to family members and

mourners who come from far and near to sympathize with the bereaved family. As custom demands, if in the course of the event, the deceased is blessed with numerous grandchildren, an additional cow or ram is provided for them to distribute among themselves. The seven day funeral rite follows after the three day rites. The counting of these usually starts immediately after burial. However, among the Gonja people, the twelfth day to the one year comes a day before or after the actual day of the counting. This is to say that, if the twelfth day actually falls on Monday, then the funeral is either performed on Sunday which is before Monday or Tuesday which is also after Monday.

4.2 The Gonja Dirge

Death is as old as humanity, and so are some of the rites associated with it (Sanka 2010). The dirge therefore is part and parcel of some of the funeral rites on the loss of a particular person in the Gonja cultural context. Since the Gonja dirge is not sung after the death of every member in the community, it is important to say that, a dirge therefore, is a song that is sung or performed on the occasion of a particular person's death.

Tradition has it that, these dirges are not sung anywhere and on every occasion. It is therefore a taboo for one to sing or perform a dirge outside funeral celebrations. Again, a person who sings or performs a dirge outside the funeral is welcoming or inviting death to his family or house.

In this regard, it therefore becomes difficult in getting access or information about dirges because, if there is no death, there is no funeral and therefore, no dirge. It must again be noted that, not all deaths or funerals require the execution or performance of a dirge in

the Gonja traditional set up. Rather, they (dirges) are meant to be performed for certain range of people or clans in the society.

In addition to this, the Gonja dirge is not sung or performed by everybody in the community. Some are sung by grandchildren while others are sung and performed by the elderly people who are referred to as *Ngbanyache* (Gonja women).

In the Gonja traditional funeral settings, the death of younger children and adolescents does not warrant or call for the performance of a dirge as far as the necessary funeral rites are concerned. It must be noted also that, the performance of a dirge forms an important aspect of the traditional funeral rites that need to be performed after the demise of renowned person or a chief in the community (whether male or female). The duration of dirge performance in the Gonja context depends on the performers and on the gender (male or female) of the deceased. The performance of a dirge is usually, done before and after burial.

Due to the advent of religions such as Christianity and Islam, which are dominant in our part of the world today, the deceased is given a special bath with warm water, dressed in white clothes, and put in a coffin before prayer is said for him at the forecourt of the house if being a Moslem. On the other hand, if the deceased is a Christian, he is also given a bath according to their tradition and dressed after which he is then put in a coffin. After all the necessary rites have been performed, he is made to lay in state for family members, sympathizers and well wishers to pay their last respect to the departed soul (if the deceased is a Christian).

Wailing gets intense as the deceased is finally being sent to the cemetery. The deceased on its way to the cemetery is accompanied by grandchildren who will be chanting or

singing dirges to the entrance of the cemetery. This is to pay their last respect and show their gratitude to the deceased. It must be noted here that, the dirge that is sung upon escorting the deceased to the main entrance of the cemetery is different from the one sung while the body of the deceased is still at home.

Consider the dirge below.

Excerpt one (1)

Gonja

English

Nana eee

Grandpa \ grandma eee

Ba naa bɔiɲ bɔiɲ

Be going gently

Nana eee

Grandpa \ grandma eee

Ba naa bɔiɲ bɔiɲ

Be going gently

Nana eee

Grandpa \ grandma eee

Ba naa bɔiɲ bɔiɲ

Be going slowly gently

Nana eee

Grandpa ' grandma eee

Ba naa bɔiɲ bɔiɲ

Be going slowly gently

This song is sung by the grandchildren of the deceased before burial. It is usually sung when escorting the deceased to the cemetery. However, the singers of this dirge are usually girls and women and are not allowed to enter the cemetery. It is believed that the deceased is making a journey to the ancestral world. It is in this regard that this song is

sung to ask the deceased to travel by walking gently in order not to hurt itself or be involved in an accident in the course of its journey. *Bɔiɔ bɔiɔ* ‘gently’ as used in the song signifies the way the deceased should embark on the journey. It is therefore sung to accompany the deceased to the entrance of the cemetery and return home before the final burial takes effect. It is against the culture of the Gonja people for a woman to have access to the body of her late husband even when the former is still at home. However, women who are the biological children of the deceased can have access to the deceased in order to pay their last respect to the departed soul but are not allowed access to the grave yard.

The song below is the one that is sung in the house while the corpse is still at home.

Excerpt two (2)

Gonja

Kapole yaa n wurwe The *kapole* has sheds its leaves

Mbuibi a ji manne? Birds should eat what?

Kapole yaa n wurwe The *kapole* has sheds its leaves

Mbuibi a ji manne? Birds should eat what?

Kapole yaa n wurwe The *kapole* has sheds its leaves

Mbuibi a ji manne? Birds should eat what?

Kapole yaa n wurwe The *kapole* has sheds its leaves

Mbuibi a ji manne? Birds should eat what?



Kapole yaa n wurwe The *kapole* has sheds its leaves

Mbuibi a ji manne? Birds should eat what?

. The grandchildren of the deceased who are on the funeral grounds perform this dirge round the house of the deceased before burial. It is observed that, the deceased in the above song is being referred to as *Kapole* (a tree) while the composers (grandchildren) are also referred to as *Mbuibi* (birds). In effect, the composers sing this song to express their stand in the society as a result of losing their only source of livelihood. In Gonja, *Kapole* refers to a particular tree that bears red fruits which serves as a source of food for birds. In a situation where the tree loses its leaves, it is a total guarantee that it cannot yield any more fruits for the birds to depend on which in effect will lead the birds to starvation. The *kapole* therefore is the source of food for the birds. The singing of the above song is not done in isolation; it is accompanied with musical instruments. The instruments used to accompany this dirge are not drums rather spoiled bowls, parts of broken calabash and metals as well as sticks. The sticks and metals are used in beating or drumming the bowls while the singing goes on at the same time. The singers therefore, compare the deceased to the tree and refer to themselves as birds. From this song, any person or groups of persons present at the funeral get the impression that the source of food for the birds is making a journey to the spiritual world.

The commencement of the funeral rites is then made public by the family head who usually steers the affairs of the funeral after burial has been done. Any form of the Gonja dirge that will be executed after the commencement of the necessary funeral rites is done by the elderly people who by virtue of their status in the community are referred to as

Ngbanyache (Gonja women). This group of women is professional dirge performers who are believed to have been in the system for a long period of time.

4.2.1 Type of the Gonja Dirges

The Gonja dirges can be categorized and grouped into two, based on the performers. It came out from the informants that, two different classes of people are known for the execution and rendition of the Gonja dirge. These include; grand children and royal women who are referred to in this study as Gonja women. When dirges are sung and performed by grand children, they are referred to as grandchildren dirges (*kenana wɔba*). For the purpose of this thesis, simple dirges would be used due to their nature and scope.

On the other hand, when dirges are sung and performed by Gonja women (*Ngbanyache*), they are referred to as *Ngbanyache wɔba* (Gonja women's dirges) which will also be referred to as complex dirges as a result of their nature. To this end, simple (*kenana wɔba*) and complex (*Ngbanyache wɔba*) dirges can, therefore, be identified under the Gonja dirge.

4.2.2. *Kenana wɔba* (Grand children's dirge)

The simple form of the Gonja dirge is usually made up of a song of one or two lines. These one or two lines are repeated over and over until a pause is made. This pause usually does not mean the end of the song, but the same lines can be repeated several times before the song is finally brought to a closure. In bringing the song to an end, it is

accompanied by lowering the pitch of voice in the final line thereby, prolonging the last syllable of the final word in the last line. In effect, the complete performance of this type of dirge may consist of only one line and or two which are repeated several times. This form of the Gonja dirge is considered simple because, it is made up of only one or two lines that are repeated several times by the grandchildren.

The choice of words and language used in this type of dirge is simple to the extent that, it is understood by people who speak and hear the language irrespective of where one comes from. Again, the simple dirge involves an absolute participation in its natural settings, and the singers, and performers as well as mourners can execute it together. In situations where the grandchildren are not given the mandate by the family head to perform a dirge, it is reported that, the spirit of the deceased will or can possess one of the grandchildren in front of the family head to signify that his (the deceased) soul will not rest until a dirge is performed. These simple dirges are performed by non-professionals who have only heard and learnt these dirges from taking part.

In talking about the duration of the Gonja simple dirge, tradition has it that, it usually takes a short period of time by going round the house of the deceased amidst drumming of local manufactured equipment and chanting of songs. The number of rounds to be moved depends on whether the deceased is a male or female. The movement usually takes four and three rounds for women and men respectively. The songs in excerpt two (2) and three (3) are examples of the simple dirge.

4.2.2.1 The Performance of *Kenana Wɔba* (Grand Children's Dirge)

In Gonja, dirges are not performed on the funeral occasion of every individual member of the community, they are performed for prominent people such as chiefs and people of old

age. They are not performed by every member of the community. They are performed by the deceased's grand children (*Benanabi*) and *Ngbanyache* (Gonja women). Their performance style differs depending on the performers.

The *kenana wɔba* is performed by grandchildren while the deceased is lying in the room and or ready for burial. This therefore shows that the *kenana wɔba* is performed during the day. In performing this dirge, the grand children chant dirges along with musical instruments such as the broken part of a calabash, sticks, empty tins and any other gadget that is capable of making noise. The stick is used as the drumstick while the empty tins and broken part of the calabash play the role of a drum, the use of drums in this type of dirge is not allowed. The composers of this dirge as custom demands move round the house of the deceased with singing and chanting of dirges and dancing as well. If the deceased is a woman, the performers go round the house four times and if the deceased is a man, they will go round the house three times. The reason is that, the Gonja people believe that, *eche bee ji elu ana ne enyen bee ji elu asa*- 'a woman eats four times and a man eats three times'. The cultural implication is that, if you attempt a Gonja woman four times without succeeding, you cannot succeed in getting her again, also for a Gonja woman to do something four times without succeeding it automatically means that she cannot succeed. The performance of this type of dirge is a platform for feast making and expressing of joy, in this regard, the head of the family or the person in charge of the funeral ceremony is obliged by custom to provide a ram or a he goat to the grand children after they have finished performing the dirge. This ram or he goat is divided among the grand children to signify that the deceased did not abandon them and that is the final gift they have received from him or her (the deceased). If for any reason the grand children are not able to perform the dirge while the deceased is lying in the room, they can do it by

escorting the deceased amidst chanting of dirges to the main entrance of the graveyard and return home for their animal. It must be remembered here that the dirge that is sung while the deceased is lying in the room is different from the one that is sung on their way to the cemetery but the performance style is the same as in both cases, they are seen chanting and dancing to the music they play. However, there is no movement around the house of the deceased when escorting the deceased to the cemetery as it is being done while the deceased is still in the house.

4.2.3. The *Ngbanyache Wɔba* (Gonja women's dirges)

The *Nganyache wɔba* on the other hand is performed by elderly people in the Gonja community. While the *kenana wɔba* is performed on the day of burial, the *Ngbanyache wɔba* is performed on the *nchensa*, *nchen shunu* and *nchen kuduanyɔ* that is, third day, seventh day and twelfth day respectively. This type of performance is specially arranged and organized by the family head. The performers of this dirge are pre informed by the family regarding which of the days the dirge will be performed. Since this dirge is not performed by children, they are not allowed to witness its performance. In this regard, the dirge is performed during the later part of the night where children might be fast asleep. Men do not take part in the performance of this dirge but the drum aspect is solely for men but due to modernization, it is possible to see men drumming, singing, chanting and performing dirges with women. My visit to one funeral site confirmed that men nowadays perform dirges. The performers are required by custom to visit the funeral ground with their instruments such as *atumpani*, *loji* (site drum), *bintirin* (drum made of calabash), *añelan* (foot jingles) and *ngbalabi* (drumsticks). The *añalan* is worn round the

ankle of both legs while the drumstick is used in drumming the *bintirin* and the *loji*. These instruments are to be used to facilitate and accompany the performance. They are also to go along with calabash or bowls which are used to keep money they get during the performance process. To begin this dirge, the performance of other dances such as *Kpana*, *Zungɔ*, and *Damba* among others are used to entertain themselves before it gets to the time of the dirge. This dirge, just like the *kenana wɔba* begins by going round the house of the deceased four and three times for women and men respectively. When this is done, the *Ngbanyache* sit in a form of line with their bowls or calabash in front of them while some of the men stand against their drums just closer to the *Ngbanyache* and those who are going to perform also assume their position in the middle of the *Ngbanyache* and the drum beaters.

One of the *Ngbanyache* who sits with her bowl will then introduce a dirge so that the performers will repeat and start the performance while drumming is ongoing. They can dance to a song several times until the need to change another one. In changing a song, the performers will usually lower their voices by strengthening the final word of the song. The performance of this dirge goes with accompaniments such as stamping of the feet on the ground, raising of either both hands or one hand up and bowing down before someone. The singing and dancing continues till the early part of the following morning. In bringing the dirge to a close, the *Ngbanyache* will dance and lower the pitch of their voices and finally pick up their bowls suggesting that the dance has finally come to an end.

4.2.4 Difference between *Ngbanyache wɔba* and *Kenana wɔba*

The first difference between the *Ngbanyache wɔba* and the *kenana wɔba* depend on who is performing the dirge. Whiles *kenana wɔba* is performed by children of all ages; *Ngbanyache wɔba* on the other hand is performed by the elderly people in the community. This is to say that, children are not allowed to take part in the *Ngbanyache wɔba*. The elderly people who are grandchildren to the deceased can however take part in the *kenana wɔba* so long as they remain the deceased's grandchildren.

Another difference that exists between the two dirges has to do with the time of their performance. The *kenana wɔba* is performed immediately before or after burial. This is to say that, the *kenana wɔba* is performed during the day and this could be in the morning, afternoon or in the early hours of the evening. The *Ngbanyache wɔba* on the other hand is performed in the late hours of the night.

Finally, instruments play a very crucial role in dirge performance among the Gonja people and therefore differentiate between the Gonja dirges. Both dirges use instruments, however, *Ngbanyache wɔba* uses jingles, drums of all kind and drumsticks whiles *kenana wɔba* uses broken part of calabash, empty tins and sticks to complement their performance. In the nutshell, performer, time and instruments are the differences that exist between the Gonja dirges.

4.2.5. Occasion for the Performance of Dirges

In its formal setting, the dirge is sung on the occasion of a funeral. (Alembi, 2002, Nketia, 1955). The Gonja dirge is sung and performed during the celebration and performance of funerals. The designated place for the performance of dirge is in an open place that is wide enough to cater for the singers or performers and drum beaters as well. The absence of a funeral implies that, a dirge cannot be sung or otherwise performed in its formal settings as far as the Gonja traditional practices are concerned. It is therefore a taboo for one to perform a dirge in its formal settings if there is no funeral.

It is usually during the performance of dirges in their formal settings that one can see two or more people performing dirges together. This is to say that, there is usually competition in performance of the Gonja dirge as revealed by the informants. When this happens, the performers use the occasion to complement each other. In performing the complex dirges (*Ngbanyache woba*), children are not allowed to either participate in the performing process or serve as observers. This is because; the language and structure of the dirge go beyond the comprehensive ability and level of children. As a result, the dirge, in its formal settings takes place in the later part of the night when children might be fast asleep.

Apart from performing the dirge in its formal settings, there are other factors that lead to the singing of dirges aside funeral occasions (Sanka 2010). In the Gonja context, dirges that are sung outside the funeral ground are not planned and organized. They are not performed with the involvement or prior knowledge of the entire community, they are sung individually when the need arises. Such dirge singing does not involved wailing and crying, and is also not accompanied with drum beating. It is only in the funeral context

that the Gonja dirge is accompanied by wailing, crying and drumming. This art of singing of dirges outside funeral context is necessitated by certain factors.

One of the factors that motivate the singing of dirges outside the funeral context is the desire to learn and master the art of singing dirges. In doing this, parents do teach their children how to sing dirges in their homes. In the Gonja tradition, some days are not good for the performance of funerals and are therefore considered as bad days. There are, Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays. In this regard, any of these days cannot be used for the practicing of dirges. The teaching and learning of dirges is usually done in the house precisely in the morning and it is not accompanied with any kind of performance. It does not also involve the use of body language. The reason is that, if it is performed outside funeral context in its formal settings, the family or community may be calling for a funeral.

Another factor that leads to the singing of dirges outside the funeral grounds is embedded in the tradition of the people. The tradition of the Gonja people requires that every woman in the community should be able to know how to sing the *kenanawɔba* type of the Gonja dirge on her own. This is to enable them sing and perform dirges in order to prevent any form of disgrace when there is the need to do so. The Gonja form of the simple dirge is sung and performed by *benanabi* without any kind of invitation, no preparation and must be performed either before or after burial. It therefore becomes necessary for each and every woman to know to sing and perform the simple form of the Gonja dirge. This, to a greater extent, calls for the need to sing a dirge outside its formal settings. Again, it also makes it possible for every woman in the community to have some level of knowledge in the execution of dirges even if they do not want to become

professional dirge singers. The tradition requires them the obligatory right to perform the simple form of the dirge.

In this regard, one can say authoritatively that, the Gonja dirge resembles that of the Akan and the Sisala dirge whose performance must be known by most women (Agyekum2004, Sanka 2010).

The third factor that brings about the singing of dirges outside its formal settings is pain and grief. This is where a woman who lost most of her relatives and or children is left alone. As a result of this, she may one day remember her relatives in a particular event which may in one way or the other force her to start singing dirges alone. When this happens, the reason why she is singing the dirge is not the intention of practicing the art of singing the dirge; it is as a result of pain, loneliness, and grief over the loss.

It came out from informants that, the execution of dirges outside their formal settings are often shorter in terms of duration. They are also not carefully planned, organized and performed by members of the bereaved family. It was also noted that, the singing of dirges outside their formal setting is only sung and cannot be performed as they are done in their formal settings.

Again, such dirges are not sung in the later part of the night and also do not involve the use of body language to convey meaning, pain and grief which characterize the dirge in its formal setting. They are rather motivated by some factors that compel them to do so.

4.2.6. Learning How to Sing Dirges among the Gonja People

Traditionally, not every man and woman is supposed to participate in the execution of the Gonja dirge. Men and women who want to learn the execution of dirges and become professionals must first of all learn it by participating in the process. Sanka (2010) in his study of the Sisala dirge reports that it is through the process of participating in such occasions that men and women learn the art of singing and execution of dirges. This is because, people are not naturally born with the talent of performing dirges, but rather, it involves a process that must be learned through observation and participation on its formal setting. This process of learning through observation and participation does not involved formal training; neither does it need a professional dirge singer to lead the process.

It is the sole responsibility of the person to present him or her on such occasions so as to enable him or her acquire the necessary skills and knowledge that are needed in the traditional performance of dirges. This form of apprenticeship in the art of dirge performance is limited to the *kenanawɔba*. In this context, a song of one or two lines is learned and repeated several times to make the full complement of the dirge.

On the other hand, adolescent girls who want to become professional dirge singers and performers usually would have to undergo some form of formal training under the auspices of a professional dirge singer. The apprenticeship is not done on funeral occasions, even though, it falls within the days require in the formal performance of funeral and otherwise dirges, the best place is outside funeral ground. In this context, the learning is not accompanied by body language and gestures. According to the informants, it is after learning how to sing that one is allowed to observe the performance in its

formal settings in order to enable him or her acquire some skills used in the performance. The learning process is also a period during which professional dirge singers use the occasion to assist themselves with super natural powers. It came to light that the performance of dirges is an annual occasion during which people or dirge singers use the opportunity to fight one another in the process of its performance. This is one of the many reasons why young children do not take part nor observe in the complex dirges, and also a reason why they are performed in the later part of the night.

Apart from this, the learner also needs to adequately prepare and fortify him or herself to enable him or her compete with others in the process in order to avoid any form of embarrassment and intimidation that may render him useless. The Gonja people believe in witchcraft and therefore, since witches operate at night, it is important to prepare oneself from being attacked spiritually in the process of performing the dirge. In other words, 'fortify' here refers to preparing oneself from any form of spiritual attacks. The performer is expected to be able to know and understand the language and world of the dead, thereby, in a position to convey messages from the spiritual world to the elders of the community through the performance of dirges. In relation to this spiritual fortification, Awoonor (1974) highlighted on a similar situation in the context of the Ewe dirge in which poet cantors do not only produce oral literary pieces but are also guided by powerful family gods to make profound statements during the course of performance.

The spiritual aspect demands a lot of patience and also time consuming. One needs to be patient in order to enable him accomplish this obligatory part of the apprenticeship (see Sanka 2010). During an interview session with two people in the Busunu Township by the researcher, both of them agreed taken in some amount of medicine so as to help improve

the quality of their voice and enable them perform without losing it (voice). They admitted the fact that spiritual fortification helps them in one way or the other to perform with the necessary skills without being frustrated and intimidated by their counterparts. They also explain that, the performance of dirges is an occasion they use to charm and conquer one another spiritually. Hence, there is the need for one to fortify himself or herself before venturing into the art in its formal setting.

In the apprenticeship period, the first thing to be considered is to get yourself attached to a professional dirge singer or better still a mentor. Your relation to the said person does not really matter since it does not necessarily influence the outcome of the learning process. However, the mentor or the trainer can be one's brother, father, mother or any other person of the community provided he or she possesses the experience and knowledge in the art of dirge execution. The most important thing is that there should be a mutual agreement between both parties involved and all modalities regarding or surrounding the apprenticeship clearly spelt out. For instance, during an interviewing session in the course of gathering data for this study, the two people interviewed said they learned the art of singing and performing dirges through their parents. For instance, Jakpa Matuamu said she received her training from her biological father while Ndoudo Binka said she learned the art of dirge singing through the effort of her uncle.

4.3a. Structure of the Gonja Dirge

By structure, we are talking about the patterned arrangement of lines and stanzas of a poem as well as the physical arrangement of the words on the page (Crosby, 2017). In view of this definition, it is often difficult to determine a line in an oral art as compared to

written text. Levin (1971) cited in Saanchi (2002) defines a ‘line as having typographical identity’. He concedes that ‘there may correspond a fictitious pause’. This therefore makes it easy for one to detect on a page where one line ends and another begins. The question now here is how does one determine a line in an oral art since there is no typography? So far as the Gonja dirge is concerned, several lines are made by the performers and this therefore makes it difficult to determine where one line ends and another begins. However, there are pauses which to a greater extent help in determining where one line ends and another one begins. Therefore, any line demarcation would have to take into consideration the pauses the performers make. In that sense, the line may be said to have “pausal identity” and may consist of a word, phrase or an entire sentence (see Saanchi, 2002). Stanza on the other hand came about when there is lowering of the voice by the performers. This is characterized by a pause, together with lowering of the voice. This stanza could also consist of a line, a phrase or a sentence. The preceding chapter presents a structural analysis of twelve Gonja dirges which were recorded on the field

Consider the text below which is a simple dirge

Excerpt four (3)

Gonja

English

Nana ye e maŋ wu eee

Grandpa said he did not die *eee*

Bɔre a yera mo

God has taken him away

Nana ye e maŋ wu eee

Grandpa said he did not die *eee*

<i>Bɔrɛ a yɛra mo</i>	God has taken him away
<i>Nana yɛ e maŋ wu eee</i>	Grandpa said he did not die <i>eee</i>
<i>Bɔrɛ a yɛra mo</i>	God has taken him away
<i>Nana yɛ e maŋ wu eee</i>	Grandpa said he did not die <i>eee</i>
<i>Bɔrɛ a yɛra mo</i>	God has taken him away
<i>Nana yɛ e maŋ wu eee</i>	Grandpa said he did not die <i>eee</i>
<i>Bɔrɛ a yɛra mo</i>	God has taken him away
<i>Nana yɛ e maŋ wu eee</i>	Grandpa said he did not die <i>eee</i>
<i>Bɔrɛ a yɛra mo</i>	God has taken him away

It is observed that, the song above is basically of one stanza of two lines. The first line consists of six words while the second line has four words in it. These two lines have been repeated to make the number of lines increased to twelve (12) while the number of stanzas also increased from one to six. The two lines can still be repeated over and over until a pause is finally made and the need to change another song. This song is sung by grandchildren and it is sung to tell us that there is life after death. The song basically tells us that human beings do not die, it is God that sent or take them to the next world and that they will surely come back when the need be. The grandchildren sing this song to console themselves and try to make people believe that the person did not die it is God that sent him or her. The language used in the text is simple as it makes use of words that do not need one to think critically in order to get its *meaning*.

Excerpt four (4)

Gonja

English

Nana wu eee

Grandpa \ grandma died *eee*

Nana eee

Grandpa \ grandma died *eee*

Nana kule Ebɔrɛ n nya

Grandpa \ grandma begged God and got

Kule Ebɔrɛ

Begged God

Nana kule Ebɔrɛ n nya

Grandpa \ grandma begged God and got

Kule Ebɔrɛ.

Begged God

Nana wu eee

Grandpa \ grandma died *eee*

Nana eee

Grandpa \ grandma *eee*

Nana kule Ebɔrɛ n nya

Grandpa \ grandma begged God and got

Kule Ebɔrɛ

Begged God

Nana kule Ebɔrɛ n nya

Grandpa \ grandma begged God and got

Kule Ebɔrɛ.

Begged God

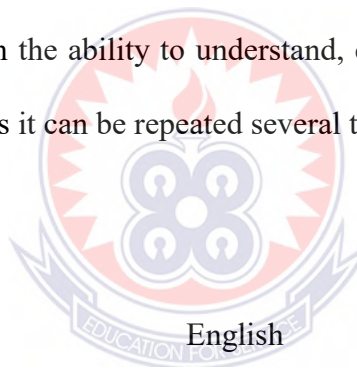
Structurally, the song is basically made up of one stanza with six (6) lines which have been repeated thereby adjusting the stanza to twelve (12) lines. In talking about the number of words in each line, line one has three words, lines 2, 4 and 6 has two words

each whereas lines 3 and 5 each has five words. The actual meaning of the song goes beyond the literal meaning as seen in the English glossary. Line one and two of the song tells us about the death of the person in question that we should appreciate and take it in good faith. Line three tells us how the deceased is blessed with grandchildren through his or her consistent prayers from God. It also tells us that we should always beg God for our needs as it is only through God that our wishes, hopes and aspirations can be granted. This is contained in line four *KuleEboɛ* 'Begged God'. The deceased through his persistent calling on God, was blessed with grandchildren and that he or she did not die empty handed

With regard to the language, the composers used simple language devoid of complexity. This is to equip them with the ability to understand, comprehend and also have an easy memorization of the text as it can be repeated several times in the execution process.

Excerpt five (5)

Gonja



Kapushe kpokpobu

Hard cola nut

Sangara a jaje mo

Sangara spoils it

Kapushe kpokpobu

Hard cola nut

Sangara a jaje mo

Sangara spoils it

The excerpt above consists one stanza with two lines and two and four words in line one and two respectively. This stanza is holistically repeated thereby making the number of lines four. The song in its actual meaning talks about the power of death. Line one

describes the strength and power of the deceased by referring to the deceased as '*kapushe kpokpobu*' hard cola nut while line two talks about the only tool or weapon that spoils the hard cola nut *sangara a jajemo* a disease that attacks cola nut spoils it. A critical look at the text will reveal that under no circumstance can somebody irrespective of his age, strength and social status will be able to escape death once the time comes.

In talking about the choice of words, the composers employ the use of simple language. This is because, the words used in the dirge are used in everyday language

Excerpt six (6)

Gonja

English

N ye fo koso, fo koso n gben

I said you should get up, you couldn't get up

Enimu a koso, enimu koso n gben

Oldman should get up, oldman couldn't get up

Kusol tiŋi e beeŋ koso

When the elephant wakes up he will get up

Ghanyen tiŋi e beeŋ koso

When the bush cow wakes up he will get up

Churu tiŋi e beeŋ koso

When the hippopotamus wakes up, he will get up

Kusol a dese faŋe shibel na

The elephant is lying down like an anthill

Koi, shibel na tɔr

Koi (exclamation), the anthill has fallen

Fo ye fo maŋ kɔ asɔ ne bibi

You said you do not have things and children

Hali abaribi adena n to mfol

Even forty cowries to buy salt

The song above comprises of three stanzas with nine lines. The first stanza is made up of two lines which comprise eight and seven words in the first and second lines respectively, while the second and the final stanzas have three and four lines respectively. All the lines in the second stanza have the number of words, which are five. The first line of the final stanza contains six words, the second four while the third and fourth lines have eight and six words respectively. When we consider the choice of words used in the song we see that they are a bit complex and go beyond the understanding and comprehensive ability of the younger children in the society. The choice of words includes *Churu*, *Kusol*, *Gbanyen* and *Abaribi*. Which are not used in our everyday language. In all, the total number of lines is nine. This song is sung at the funeral of a great person. Great in a way that his or her achievements, desires, wishes, powers, authority, strength as well as wisdom cannot be forgotten. It is in this regard that he or she is being compared to great animals like *Kusol* Elephant, *Gbanyen* Bush cow and *Churu*-Hippopotamus at his or her (death). The meaning of the above song is that, death has no respect for one's social, economic and strength status. You matter your position, your strength and age, your body will one day become weak. This song therefore reminds us that we should be respectful; show decorum in whatever that we do on this earth and have in mind that one day we will become as weak as the weakest animal on earth. The song tells us about the story of somebody who was as strong as the elephant and the bush cow, as intelligent and brave as the hippopotamus, and by virtue of death could not wake up from sleep. The song also tells us that, once a person dies, his body assumes the position of an anthill which means that, the body becomes stiff and difficult to move.

Excerpt seven (7)

Gonja

English

N niopibi a bɔ̃ ekpa anyɔ̃

My mother's child has taken two paths

Nne nɛ e bulɔ̃ nɛ n kuɲ mo?

Where do I pass to protect him / her?

Zouwu Maɲso nɛ e bulɔ̃ aa?

Did he pass through *Zouwu Maɲso*?

Nɛ n kuɲ mo anu?

So that I will protect him / her?

Nko Tulwe Maɲso nɛ e bulɔ̃?

Or he passed through *Tulwe Maɲso*?

N tutopibi a bɔ̃ ekpa anyɔ̃

My father's child has taken two paths

Nne nɛ mee bulɔ̃ a fin mo?

Where do I pass to look for him / her?

Nne nɛ mee bulɔ̃ a fin mo?

Where do I pass to look for him / her?

Zouwu Maɲso nɛ e bulɔ̃ aa?

Did he pass through *Zouwu Maɲso*?

Nɛ n kuɲ mo anu?

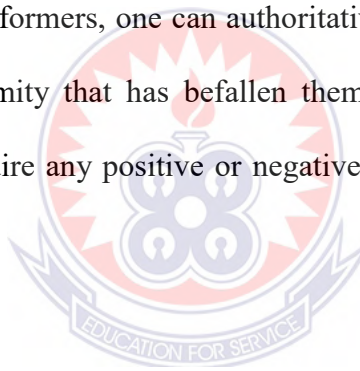
So that I will protect him / her?

Nko Ngbanya Maɲso nɛ e bulɔ̃

Or he passed through *Gbanya Manso*?

The above excerpt is an example of the complex dirge and is performed by elderly women who by virtue of their position are referred to as *Ngbanyache*. The structure of the song above consists of eleven lines with two stanzas. In breaking down the number of lines in each stanza, the first stanza is made up of five (5) lines while the second stanza

has six (6) lines. Lines 1, 3 and 5 of stanza one has six words each while lines 2 and 5 has eight and five words respectively. Lines 1, 4 and 6 of the second stanza all have six words each, lines 2 and 3 also have seven words each while line 5 has five words. The mood of the persona is sadness and confusion as she uses the song to find out the whereabouts of the deceased. Again, the language of the song is deep in nature. Deep in a way that it cannot be understood by many of the young ones. The meaning of the above song is that, every single individual, male or female will surely face the direction of the sunset or sunrise and his faith will be determined by God as to whether he or she will have space in heaven or hell. In this regard, the performers sing this song asking themselves as to where the deceased has passed so that they can protect him. In talking about the mood of the performers, one can authoritatively say that, they are in a state of dilemma due to the calamity that has befallen them. This compels them to the use of questions that do not require any positive or negative response but to inform the public about their state of being.



Excerpt eight (8)

Gonja

English

N keni luwu be kapre kɔŋto

I looked at the arrow of death

Ka baa kpala mabe danɔdan kabita

Came and hit my loved one

Luwu sangara

Bad death

Lubi ta mabe ayuwura

Bad death has taken my millet owner

<i>Bu ye ɲini mo kepɔ ne kukɔ leɲi</i>	They showed it forest and settling debt
<i>Shinne n che afol</i>	Caused me to commit suicide
<i>Hmm, nuso ne meeɲ wɔrɔ? Sheiɲ.</i>	<i>Hmm</i> (esclamation), how will I do? Nothing

The excerpt above consists of seven (7) lines with three (3) stanzas. The first stanza is made up of two (2) lines with six words each, the second stanza also consists of two (2) lines and has two and four words in line 2 and 4 respectively. The third and final stanza on the other hand is made up of three lines where line 1 has eight words, line two four and line 3 six words. This song is sung on the occasion of a loved one's funeral and a female funeral celebration. It tells us about how death has finally taken something that belongs to a man and left him all alone. The persona wonders what he will do as a result of the death of his loved one. The composers usually sing this song on behalf of the groom of the deceased. It also teaches us that death is unpreventable and that it is ordained from God and even if we see it coming to our doorstep, we cannot escape or run away from it.

Excerpt nine (9)

Gonja	English
<i>N jo eɲpakar n cher jaga</i>	I waited at the road site for nothing
<i>N yeɲ n keni kaba</i>	I want to look at the other side
<i>Kekoɲwule kpleɲ</i>	Just once

style while the complex dirges are to some extent longer than the simple dirges and also make use of deeper meaning.

Excerpt ten (10)

Gonja

English

Kaṅkaṅ ka ji kapuye

If termites have the eaten water pot

Kawufoṅ a baa fṅṅso

the broken part of a calabash should be worried

Kaṅkaṅ ka ji kapuye, kapuye eee

If termites have eatenthe water pot, water pot *eee*

Kawufoṅ a baa fṅṅso

thebroken part of a calabash should be worried

The song above has one stanza with two lines which are again repeated. The first line contains four words while the second line has five words. The song actually begins in line one *kaṅkaṅ ka ji kpuye* which means; ‘when the termites have eaten the water pot’ which is a very hard item then it calls for carefulness. Now, if termites have been able to eat up a water pot, what will they not be able to do to the broken part of a calabash? This is contained in line two *Kawufoṅ a baa fṅṅso*. That is, ‘the broken part of a calabash should be worried’. The meaning of this song is that, if death has taken away the powerful person in the community, then the less strong or the weak ones should be careful of people they live within the community. With regard to the language, any native speaker of the language understands the diction used in the text above. The language is therefore said to be simple in nature.

Excerpt eleven (11)

Gonja

English

M maa sha m maa sha

I don't want I don't want

Nε jɔnɔ pε m ba

That dog caught and come

M maa sha ooo m maa sha ooo

I don't want ooo I don't want ooo

Jɔnɔ pε m ba

Dog caught and come

In relation to the structure, the song consists of one stanza of two lines which are repeated. The first line has six words, the second line has five words, while the third and the fourth line has eight and four words respectively. Line one of the songs, *M maa sha m maa sha*, I don't want I don't want, is telling us about how premature death can be. That is, what you don't want or expect has finally come to your doorsteps. Ideally, this to a greater extent shows that death can take away the young while the elderly are still alive. The meaning of the song is that, a person that we don't actually expect to die has rather died which is something we don't expect but has been brought by *jɔnɔ* (death).

Excerpt twelve (12)

Gonja

English

Anyeeɲ yε amo

We will say them

N ka amo

And leave them

Anyeeɲ kute amo

We will narrate them

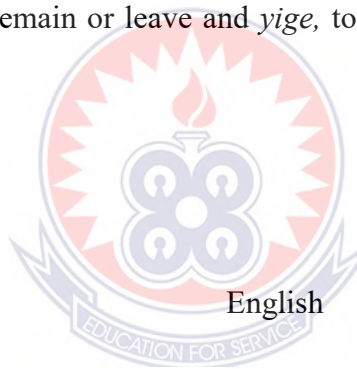
N yige amo

And leave them

The above song is a song of four lines which comprises three words in each line with one stanza and is sung on the sudden demise of a person who is believed to be killed by someone. The composers sing it to tell the supposed killers in line one *anyeeɲ ye amo*, we will say them, that they will tell the cause of the death of the person and continue in line two *n ka amo*, and leave them that they will not do anything to the supposed killers and that they will leave everything to God. This continues in line three, *Anyeeɲ kute amo*, we will narrate them and in line four *Nyigeamo* ‘And leave them’. They sing this song to express their anger as regards to how the person died. The language used in the above song is simple only that the composers employ the use of synonyms. In Gonja, *ye*, to say something and *kute*, to narrate how something happened appear to be synonyms as used in the song. Also, *ka*, to remain or leave and *yige*, to stop are also used in line two and four respectively.

Excerpt thirteen (13)

Gonja



English

Menye a baa de kakɔbi so

You should be careful of *kakɔbi*

Kakɔbi bee da a mɔɔ

Kakɔbi stabs and kills

Baa de kakɔbi so

Be careful of *kakɔbi*

Kakɔbi bee da amɔɔ

Kakɔbi stabs and kills

Basically, the song above is somehow different in structure as regards to the number of lines. It is a four line song and one stanza unlike some that have two lines with same repetition. The first line is made up of six lines, the second and the fourth line has five

words each while the third line is made up of four words. However, it can also be repeated several times during the execution process. The meaning of this song is that people should be careful of sickness. The composers in this regard, perform this dirge as a way of warning the general public to be careful about sickness and the type of food to eat since one can be poisoned through food which may eventually take away one's life. The choice of words used in the song is to a greater extent complex as it involves the use of figures of speech throughout. Therefore, to be able to understand the meaning of this song, one needs to think deep because the actual meaning of the song goes beyond the literal meaning.

Excerpt fourteen (14)

Gonja

Mo a buu anye so

Nε anyee wɔɔ

Kusɔ nε anyee sha

Kabre e luwe

Mo a kuɲ anye kike

Nε anyee wɔɔ

Asɔ monε anyee sha

Kabre e luwe



What we want or like

Today he has finished

He protects all of us

And we are doing

Things that we want

Today he has finished

In terms of structure, this song is a two- stanza song of eight lines with four lines in each stanza. Line one of the first stanza is made up of five words while line 2, 3 and 4 has three words each. Similarly, line 1 of the second stanza is also made up of five words, lines 2 and 4 has three words each while line 3 is made up of four words. Stylistically, the lines are short in nature and the language is simple. This song is sung on the death of the family head. Line one *Mo a buu anye so*, 'He covers us' and line five *Mo a kuɲ anye kike*, 'He protects all of us' tell us how supportive the deceased was to the entire family. The deceased is also being referred to as the one who takes care of the family and as a result of which they were doing things that they wanted. Line four and eight *Kabre e luwe* 'Today he has finished', tells us the disappearance of the deceased which could also in effect mean that, the rest of the family can no longer do things that they used to do. In Gonja, an elderly person is seen as the protector, the guardian and custodian of the family. He sees to the spiritual and physical wellbeing of the family.

It is clear from the above structural analysis that, Gonja dirges are generally short in terms of length of lines. The analysis also shows that repetition forms an integral part of the Gonja dirges as it forms the major figure of speech that runs through almost all the dirges collected. To talk about the diction used in the execution of these samples of dirges, the persona uses simple and complex words depending on the type of dirge concerned. The *kanana wɔba* employ the usage of simple words while the *Ngbanyache wɔba* uses complex words. However, both dirges ascribe to the usage of literary devices which to some extent adds beauty in them.

4.3b Themes Found In Gonja Dirges

By theme, we are talking about the central idea in any piece of literary work. Once songs form part of the communication system to the target audience, they are generally centered on particular subject matter (Okpewho 1992, Agyekum 2013). Dirges are generally sung and performed to mourn the dead. They are therefore regarded as funeral songs. However, they usually have a message to be conveyed from the performers to the audience. This message is usually centered on specific subject matter which will have something to do with the living or the dead. Saanchi (2002) asserts that, whatever dirge singers say during their performance is a dirge provided such utterances are uttered with the context of funeral. He further opines that, a dirge may be performed in praise, disparagement or to admonish the audience. This assertion is true of the Gonja dirges since they are not necessarily sung to lament or eulogise the death of a loved one but also contained themes that the performers would have to communicate to the audience. The various themes that are contained in the Gonja dirge under this study are categorized under the following thematic areas. The theme of advice, the theme of identity, the theme of complaint and the theme of consolation.

Theme of Advice

Songs that gear towards warning the listeners or audience against dangerous things in the future are generally regarded as consisting or having the theme of advice in them. A cross examination of the data in this thesis shows that, the theme of advice is one of the major themes in the Gonja dirge. For example, in excerpt 1, the composers' advice the deceased to be going slowly. This is to tell the driver of the vehicle that carries the corpse to drive

the deceased gently in order to prevent him or her from any accident that might occur. When this happens, the driver is bound to drive gently so that the composers can follow them on foot to the entrance of the graveyard. See line 1 and 2 of excerpt 1 below.

Nana eee Grandpa eee

Ba naa bɔiŋ bɔiŋ Be going gently

The composers want the driver to be extra careful and not to speed. If it happens that the deceased is being carried, then those carrying it are expected to be walking gently. They therefore call the deceased and ask him or her to be going slowly so as to draw the attention of the driver to be extra vigilant as they escort the deceased to the spiritual world.

Another instance where the Gonja dirge contains the theme of advice is in excerpt 10. This excerpt advice the general public to be worried about death as it leaves no one behind. The song warns people especially the less privileged ones in the community because death has taken the life of the privileged ones. See line 1 and 2 of excerpt 10 below.

Kankan ka ji kapuyɛ If termites have eaten water pot

Kawufon a baa fɔŋso Broken part of a calabash should be worried

From the excerpt above, one would clearly see that the composers are seriously warning people in the community about death because it has no respect for age, the weak, the rich and the poor as well social status. They are therefore advising the public to be careful about their lives so that they may not die at a tender age. The last of the songs that advise

people is excerpt 13. The song advises people to be careful of any sickness that they are likely to suffer from since it can end up killing them. The composers warn the public to be careful of sickness and death by saying in line 1 of excerpt 13 that *Menye a baa de kakɔbiso*, ‘You should be careful of the *kakɔbi* tree’ and went on to line two to tell them the effect of their warning *Kakɔbi bee da a mɔɔ*, ‘The *kakɔbi* tree stabs and kills’. This means that we should be careful of sickness and or bad people because they can kill. It is clear from the above that, advice is one of the major themes in many Gonja dirges.

Theme of Identity

These themes refer to instances where the composers use the song to reveal the identity of the dead person and this can be done through his strength, occupation, marital life and so on. For instance, line 1 of excerpt 5 *Kapushe kpokpobu* ‘Hard cola nut’. The hard cola nut as used in above text is telling us how strong the deceased is but due to death, he or she has suddenly become weak and this is contained in line 2 *Sangara a jaje mo*, cola disease has spoiled him. It is observed that this excerpt tries talk of the identity of the deceased.

Theme of Anger

Themes that gear towards emotional state of being of an individual are seen as having the theme of anger. In line 1, 2, 3 and 4 of excerpt 12.tell us about the anger of the composers to the extent that they express their displeasure and anger by saying they will say all the circumstances surrounding the death of the deceased and leave everything to

God. In line 1 *anyeeɲ ye amo* we will say them. They are telling people that they will reveal the actual cause of the death and in line 2 *nkaamo* 'and leave them'. The composers in this line are saying that they will not do anything again after they have revealed the cause of the death which in turn means that they will leave the rest to God. For emphatic purposes, they went to line 3 and 4 again where they are heard *anyeeɲ kute amo* 'we will narrate them' and *n yige amo* 'and leave them'. This is to tell the public how serious they are with the cause of the death of their loved one.

Theme of Grief

Songs that are geared towards complaint are mostly referred to as having the theme of grief. These songs are sung to show the sadness that the death has brought to the family. It is sometimes extremely difficult for one to express how he or she feels through words and actions. Therefore, to do this in a way devoid of the use of words and actions, people resort to the use of songs and for that matter dirge to show how they feel and what they are going through as a result of the calamity that befell them. Songs that unfold sadness usually employ the use of rhetorical questions in them since they do not require any feedback or response. In excerpt 2 line 2 *mbuibi a ji manne*, 'birds should eat what' tell us how the composers use this to express the loss of a bread winner who is their source of survival. The actual meaning of the text above is talking about what grandchildren will eat since what they depend on is no more. Therefore, the song in general tells us the untimely death of the backbone of the family which could eventually deprive the younger ones of some of their basic needs such as food and shelter. The composers therefore use this song as a matter of complaint to the general

public and also seek for support from benevolent individuals to listen to them when the need arises.

Also, excerpt 7 talks about how sad the performers are regarding the subject matter. They resort to the use of rhetorical questions throughout the song as a way of showing their level of sadness. Line 1 of the excerpt *N niopibi a bɔ ekpa anyɔ*, 'My mother's son or daughter has taken two paths' and line 6 *N tutopibi a bɔ ekpa anyɔ*, 'My father's son or daughter takes two paths', tell us about the demise of the deceased. The rest of the lines tell us the anxiety, the feeling of the performers as they do not know the direction to take and search for him or her. The mood and nature of questions used in the song depict the general feeling of sadness of the performers as they keep on asking themselves questions all the time. Questions like, *Zouwu Maɲso nɛ e bulɔ aa?*, *Nɛ n kuɲ mo anu?*, *Nko Tulwe Maɲso nɛ e bulɔ?* and *Nko Gbanya Maɲso nɛ e bulɔ?* Did he or she pass through *Zouwu Maɲso*, Did he or she pass through *Tulwe Maɲso*, and did he or she pass through *Gbanya Maɲso* respectively all depict the level of sadness of the composers and mourners.

Another instance where the theme of sadness came about in the Gonja dirges is excerpt 8. In this excerpt, the composers were mourning their loved one as they saw her struggle through sickness before meeting her untimely death. They sing this song to complaint as to what they should do after losing their loved one. In Gonja, a person who loses his or her husband or wife would probably have to begin a new life since people will be scared of him or her. In line 1 *N keni luwu be kaprɛ kɔɲto*, 'I looked at the arrow of death' and line 2 *Ka ba kpala mabe danɔan kabita*, 'Came and hit my loved one', talks about how the loved one struggled with sickness before finally dying. It also tells us that the person did not die her natural death. The performers used of *luwu sangaraɲ*, 'poisonous death' in

line 3 also tell us how sad the bereaved are. In line 7 *Hmm, nuso ne meey wɔɔ?* ‘*Hmm what will I do?*’, was not just used for using sake, rather it was used to complain to the people as to how they are going to live after the incident. It again tells us that, irrespective of where the deceased has found herself, they still remember her in the physical world.

Theme of Consolation

Songs that relieve the performers from lamentation are classified as having the theme of consolation. These songs are usually sung to make one feel as if there is something wrong with him or her. They are sung to make one feel happy while in a state of distress. In excerpt 3 line 1 and 2 *Nana ye e maan wu eee*, ‘*Grandpa or grandma said he or she will not die eee*’ and *Bɔre a yera mo*, *God sent him or her*. In this excerpt, the composers try to make themselves happy by saying that the person even though dead, is telling them that he or she was not going to die. To even make them feel happier, they in line 2 say that *Bɔre a yera mo*, ‘*God sent him or her*’. In so doing, anybody on the funeral grounds will reflect on the fact that the person did not die but was taken away by rain.

Another instance where the performers of the Gonja dirges console themselves and the bereaved is in excerpt 4 which is repeated below.

<i>Nana wu eee</i>	Grandpa \ grandma died <i>eee</i>
<i>Nana eee</i>	Grandpa \ grandma <i>eee</i>
<i>Nana kule Eɔre n nya</i>	Grandpa \ grandma begged God and got

Kule Ebɔɛ Begged God

Nana kule Ebɔɛ n nya Grandpa \ grandma begged God and got

Kule Ebɔɛ Begged God

A critical look at the excerpt above shows that it is a song sung on the funeral ground to tell people that though the person is dead, he or she thanked God that he or she left behind children. In so doing, they are consoling the bereaved by singing this song as it will go a long way to make them in one way or the other have a feeling that they are rather celebrating the gift of children. The composers in their performance style admit the fact that the person is dead which is a bad omen, but are consoling and rejoicing their spirit. They use line 3 and 5 *Nana kule Ebɔɛ n nya* 'Grandpa or grandma begged God and got' to make them forget about the sorrow, the anxiety and any kind of worry as a result of the funeral. In our part of the world today, it is the wish of everybody to have children and grand children before exiting the physical world to the spiritual world and as such, the performers also use this song to console themselves and to inform the sympathizers and well wishers that the deceased has left behind children and grand children.

4.4. Literary Devices in the Gonja Dirges

It would be of great interest to look at the various figures of speech or literary devices that are found in the Gonja dirges. This is because; one cannot talk about the structure and style of a literary work without looking into the literary devices. It is also because this aspect or genre of literature moves side by side with the structure and style. It would also

be highly impossible for one to understand a literary genre especially an oral art without considering the literary devices that are found or embedded in them.

According to Agyekum (2013), a figure of speech or literary device is a form of expression used to convey meaning or touch the feelings and emotions of readers or audience often by comparing or identifying one thing with another that has a naming or connotation familiar to the reader or listeners. He went on to assert that a figure of speech may be used in written and oral form. Alhassan, (2017) also explains that a literary device is a term used verbally or in written form to express an event or happening which deviates from the primary meaning.

Most of the Gonja dirges are usually explicitly understood in relation to their meaning due to the embodiment of such literary devices or figures of speech. Some of the literary devices that constitute the Gonja dirges include personification, simile, rhetorical questions, idiophones, repetition, alliteration, metaphor and assonance. These literary devices are the embodiment of the Gonja dirges as they help in conveying the deeper meaning to the audience and also add beauty to their performances. Having identified the literary devices that are found in the Gonja dirges, let us now shift our attention to looking at how they are used in the songs one after the other. The main purpose of simile in the Gonja dirge is for comparism. That is, to compare one thing to another.

4.4.1 Personification

Personification is a figure of speech in which a thing, an animal or an abstract term is made human (Agyekum, 2013). This points to the fact that human qualities are

sometimes given to inanimate objects thereby making them behave as if they are human. For instance, the dead man took to his heels helter skelter. The ‘dead man’ in the above expression has been given the attribute or qualities of human or otherwise living thing making him to act as if he is still alive. Even though he is human, but the fact that he is dead and does not breathe makes him a non living thing or an abstract term. The Gonja dirges make use of personified abstract terms or non living things to act as if they are humans. In excerpt one (1) the sentence *ba naa bɔiɔ bɔiɔ*, ‘Be going gently’ which has been repeated severally, is an example of personification. The grand children ask the deceased to be walking gently thereby making it sound as if the deceased can hear them. Meanwhile, a dead person cannot hear neither can he or she walk. When this happens, we say that the dead person has been personified with human qualities. Also, in excerpt three (3) of lines one (1), three (3), five (5), seven (7), nine (9) and eleven (11) *nana ye e maɲ wu eee* ‘Grandpa or grandma said he or she will not dieeee’. The composers make it sound as if the deceased is talking by telling them that he or she did not die while in actual sense he is dead and ready for burial. It is an open secret that dead people do not talk by themselves in the physical world. However, they can do so through other people. But in this case, the deceased is reported to have said that he or she did not or will not die which is a clear instance of personification.

Again, lines one (1) and eight of excerpt four (4) *N ye fo koso, fo koso n gben, Fo ye fo maɲ kɔ asɔ ne bibi*, ‘I said you should get up, you couldn’t get up’, ‘You said you don’t have things and children’. These are also instances of personification. In line one (1), the composers are heard speaking to the deceased as if he or she (the deceased) can hear them. To help console themselves as a result of the calamity that befell them, they try to speak to the deceased just like they used to do when he or she (the deceased) was alive.

In the Gonja cultural setup, we communicate our feelings and thoughts to the deceased and believe that the deceased even though dead can still hear from his people. In line eight (8), *Fo ye fo maŋ kɔ asɔ nɛ bibi*, ‘You said you do not have things and children’ is quoting the deceased as saying he or she does not have property which also indicates an instance of personification. This is because, it will be extremely surprising for one to stand and hear a dead person speak. In addition to this, lines 1 and 5 of excerpt 14 *Mo a buu anye so*, He covers us and *Mo a kuŋ anye kike*, ‘He protects all of us’ also contain personification. The attribute of cover *buu* and protect *kuŋ* are human qualities that have been given to the dead person. The truth of the matter is that, a dead person cannot cover neither can he or she protect people. Also, lines 2 and 4 of excerpt 10 *Kawufoŋ a baa foŋ so*, ‘Broken part of a calabash should be worried’ also shows personification because, it is only living things or animate objects that worry about a particular event but in this case, the attribute of living things (worry) has been duly accorded to a non living thing. It is observed from the study of personification as literary devices in the Gonja dirges that, to walk, to speak and to hear are some of the human attributes that are given to inanimate objects or abstract things during the execution of the Gonja dirges.

4.4.2 Simile

Basically, a simile is a figure of speech that directly or indirectly compares two familiar or unfamiliar things. Agyeum (1999) postulates that, ‘similes are explicit comparisons between things using words such as ‘like’ and ...as. Similes are common in many of the traditional songs in Ghana like Dagaare and Kasem (Alhassan 2017). Just like other Ghanaian languages, the Gonja language also make use of simile in its execution in order

to throw more light on how something is done by comparing it with another thing. In excerpt five (5) line six (6), *Kusol a dese fanε shibel na*. The literally meaning is that an elephant is lying down like an anthill but the actual meaning as used in the song is that the deceased is lying down without control or is motionless. The degree or extent to which the person is lying down is being compared to the position of an anthill as it usually stands motionless. The word *fanε* (like) is used to indicate or show comparison between the state of the deceased and that of the anthill.

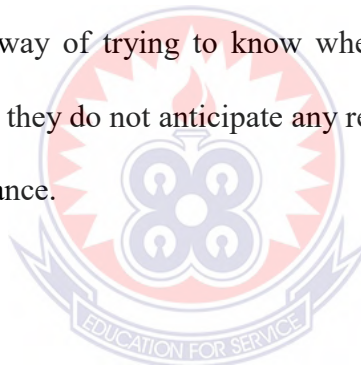
They also compare how death can take one's life within the twinkle of an eye to the wind. You can find this in excerpt seven (7) line five (5). *N sipo bombompo fanε afuu*, 'My younger sibling *bombompo* like wind'. The word *fanε* (like) is use here again to tell us about the sudden change of human. It is also used to tell us that it is not only the people who are on the sick bed that dies, but also the active ones in the society can also die in a surprise manner just like the wind comes from afar by surprise. In short, this is to say that, they compare directly and indirectly compare the way death can terminate one's life to the wind.

4.4.3. Rhetorical Question

Another important and most recurring literary device that is found in the Gonja dirges is the use of rhetorical questions. In the view of Agyekum (2007), 'a rhetorical question is a question that does not require an answer or a reply'. Such questions are usually asked intentionally in any oral piece of literary work but do not need to be answered. A careful study of the Gonja dirge confirms the use of rhetorical questions

In excerpt two (2) lines two (2), four (4), six (6), eight (8) and ten (10) *mbuibi a ji manne?*, what will the birds eat?, is a question. This question is asked by the grand children of the deceased during the performance of the dirge as they see the deceased as one who was the source of their livelihood.

Also, excerpt five (5) stanza one and two make use of rhetorical questions throughout. In stanza one of excerpt five, lines two (2), three (3), four (4) and five (5). *Nne ne e bulɔ ne n kuɲ mo? Zouwu Maɲso ne e bulɔ aa?, Ne n kuɲ mo anu?, 'Nko Tulwe Maɲso ne e bulɔ?.* 'Where did he or she pass and I will protect him or her?', 'Did he or she pass through *Zouwu Maɲso?*', 'And I will protect him or her?', or 'He or she passed through *Tulwe Maɲso?*' These are rhetorical questions that are used in the dirge. The dirge performers ask these questions as a way of trying to know where the deceased may find him or herself in the hereafter but they do not anticipate any response from anybody but rather to add beauty to the performance.



4.4.4. Ideophones

Basically an ideophone is a word that is used to depict meaning. Okpewho (1992) views an 'ideophone as an idea in sound in which one can get the nature of the event or the object referred to'. Ideophones are sometimes common in oral and written art. Below are some ideophones used in the Gonja dirge.

In Gonja, *eee* usually is used to associate with surprise. It could also be used to refer to intensity or degree of doing something. In excerpt one, the *eee* is used to refer to degree or intensity at which the performers are calling their late grandparent. The performers

said *Nana eee* 'Grandpa or grandma *eee*'. The *eee* as used here signifies the degree of the call.

Also, the word *hmm* is used to mostly refer to mourning, show anger, unhappiness and the like. In excerpt six (6) line seven (7), the performers say *Hmm, nuso ne meey wɔɔ?* 'Hmm what will I do?' They use this ideophone to express their anger, displeasure, loneliness and so on as a result of losing their loved one.

4.4.5. Repetition

Repetition is the process whereby a word or words are repeated more than ones in a piece of literary work. Okpewho (1992) and Nsoh et, al (2010) see repetition as a device that does not only give a touch of attractiveness to a piece of oral expression but also serves certain practical purposes in the overall organization of oral performance. This therefore indicates that it forms an important aspect of literary device in oral literature that puts more emphasis to the oral work.

Saanchi (1992) on the other hand argues that 'repetition may take the form of repetition of words in the same line, repetition of words in different lines, repetition of an entire line or part thereof within one stanza, and even the virtual repetition of whole stanzas in the course of the performance'. In line with this, Sanks (2010) identified two types of repetition. According to him the first type of repetition consist of the usual repetition in which words, phrases, clauses or sounds are repeated several times in a literary piece. The second type of repetition is the incremental type or anaphora. According to Abrams (2005) cited in Sanka (2010), in incremental repetition, 'a line or stanza is repeated, but with an addition that advances the story'.

After a thorough study of the Gonja dirges, I do agree with Saanchi's and Sanka's position of repetition as some of the songs have been repeated in same lines, words and stanzas. Let us now examine some of the repetitions that are found in the Gonja dirges in consonant with their argument.

4.4.5.1. Repetition of Words

In excerpt four (4) line one (1), *Fo* 'You' has been repeated twice in the same line. *Koso* 'Get up' has also been repeated twice. Also, in line two (2) of the same excerpt, *koso* 'Get up' has been repeated twice again as well as *enimu* 'oldman' also repeated twice. In all *koso* has been repeated 7 times and *Fo* 'You' has been repeated twice in line eight while in excerpt five (5), *Nε* 'And' has been repeated twice. In excerpt 8, *luwu* 'Death', *Mabe* 'Mine', and *Nε* 'And' have each been repeated two times. Also, in excerpt 12, *Anyeeɲ* 'We will', and *Amo*, 'Them' are repeated two and three times respectively. Another instance of repetition of words in same line is found in excerpt 10 line 4 *kanɲan ka ji kapuye, kapuye ooo*. 'If termites have eaten water pot, water pot *eee*.' The word *Kapuye* 'Pot' has been repeated twice in that same line. In excerpt (14), *Anye*, 'We' has been repeated two times and *Anyee* 'We are' also repeated four times. In the same excerpt, *Mo* 'He or She' appeared two times and *nε* also appeared two times. Repetition of words in same line also occurs in excerpt (13), *Kakɔbi* 'A type of tree' which has been repeated in the song four times.

4.4.5.2. Linear Repetition

The linear type of repetition seems to be the one that runs through almost all the songs. It is also seen as the most prominent and exceptional one. Alhassan (2017) explains that, ‘it is a type of repetition where a whole line is repeated more than once in one song’.

In excerpt 4 line line 3 *Nana kule Ebɔre n nya*, ‘Grandpa or grandma begged God and got’ has been repeated twice. Also, in the same song, line 4 *Kule Ebɔre* ‘Begged God’ has also been repeated two times. In excerpt five (5) line two (4) *Nɛ n kuŋ mo anu?*, ‘And I will protect him or her?’ is repeated two (2) times. Also, line seven (7) of the same excerpt, *Nnɛ nɛ mee bulɔ a fin mo?* ‘Where do I pass and look for him or her?’ is repeated twice. In excerpt seven (7) line one (1), *N jo ekpakar n cher jaga*, ‘I waited by the side of the road for nothing’, has been repeated two (2) times. Also, in excerpt 10 line one, *Kaŋkaŋ ka ji kapuye*, ‘If termites have eaten the pot’ is repeated twice and in the same song line 2 *kawufoŋ a baa foŋ so*, ‘Broken part of a calabash’ should be worried is also repeated two times. *Kakɔbi bee da a mɔɔ*, ‘The *kakɔbi* tree stabs and kills’s in excerpt 13 has also been repeated two times. Excerpt 11 line 2 *Nɛ jɔnɔ pɛ m ba* ‘And dog caught and brought’ is repeated two times. In excerpt (14) line 2 and 4, *Nɛ anyee wɔrɔ*, ‘And we are doing’ and *Kabre e luwe*, ‘Today he or she has finished’ respectively have been repeated twice each.

4.4.5.4. Partial Repetition of Lines

A careful examination of the excerpts in this study shows that most of the lines in the songs are partially repeated. Some of the lines are repeated closely to the extent that a word or two usually differentiates them.

Excerpt five (5) below shows how the lines are partially repeated.

N niopibi a bɔ ekpa anyɔ

Nnɛ nɛ e bulɔ nɛ n kuŋ mo?

Zouwu Maŋso nɛ e bulɔ aa?

Nɛ n kuŋ mo anu?

Nko Tulwe Maŋso nɛ e bulɔ?

N tutopibi a bɔ ekpa anyɔ

Nnɛ nɛ mee bulɔ a fin mo?

Nnɛ nɛ mee bulɔ a fin mo?

Zouwu Maŋso nɛ e bulɔ aa?

Nɛ n kuŋ mo anu?

Nko Gbanya Maŋso nɛ e bulɔ?



The excerpt above shows instances of partial repetition. The lines in italics clearly demonstrate how partial repetition of lines is repeated. In excerpt 11 line 3' It doesn't really matter where the partial repetition of the line starts. It could be repeated at the

beginning of the line, in the middle of the line or just at the very close end of the line. It is observed from excerpt five that partial repetition of lines mostly occur at the beginning of the line and at the end of the line.

4.4.5.5. Repetition of an Entire Stanza

Just as the repetition of lines occurs in the Gonja dirges, the stanzas are also repeated. In excerpt one, *Nana eee ba naa bɔiŋ bɔiŋ, Nana eee ba naa bɔiŋ bɔiŋ* is repeated five times. The song in excerpt one is basically of one stanza which is repeated five times. The number of repetitions in a stanza can be repeated variously depending on the dirge. In excerpt two, *Kapole yaa n wurwe, Mbuibi a ji manne?*, A tree with red fruits has shed its leaves, Birds should eat what? Has also been repeated more than once. Another repetition of stanzas in this study is excerpt three *Nana ye e maŋ wu eee, nana ye e maŋ wu eee, bɔre a yera mo*, ‘Grandpa or grandma said he or she did not die eee, grandpa or grandma said he or she did not die eee, rain took him or her’. The excerpt above basically consists of three lines with one stanza which has been repeated more than once. In excerpt 5, *Kapushe kpokpobu, sangaraŋ a jajɛ mo*, ‘Hard cola nut’, ‘A disease that attacks cola nut spoils it’ is the main stanza which has been repeated two times. Also, *kankaŋ ka ji kapuyɛ, kawufoŋ a baa foŋ so* ‘If termite has eaten water pot, broken part of a calabash should be worried’ in excerpt 10 has also been repeated two times. In excerpt 11, *M maa sha m maa sha. Ne jɔnɔ pɛ mba*; I don’t want, I don’t want and dog catches and brings’ has also been repeated twice. The main purpose of repetition be it linear repetition or repetition of words, phrases or stanzas is for emphasis as it gives us more intensity of the song being sung. Apart from emphatic purposes, Okpewho (1992) opines that “the oral

performer cultivates repetition both as a means of achieving auditory pleasure in listeners and as a convenience framework for holding the distinct elements of the composition together'. Repetition is again seen as playing a very crucial role among the culture of the Gonja people. The Gonja people as part of their culture repeat certain utterances, and words as well as actions to show how intense or important such action or utterance is and also to contribute to the easy memorization of the dirge.

4.4.6. Alliteration

This deals with the repetition of the same consonant sounds at the beginning of two or more words immediately succeeding or following each other or at short intervals in any literary work. The repetition of the same consonant sound does not necessarily have to be in direct or close concession and this is one of the literary devices that constitutes or forms the dirges.

Consider line 3 of excerpt 1 below

Ba naa bɔɪŋ bɔɪŋ Be going gently

It is observed here that, the same consonant sound (b) has repeated in a close succession in the above. Also, excerpt 3 line 1, 3, 5, 7 and 9 *Nana ye e maŋ wu eee*, 'Grandpa or grandma said he or she did not die eee' It is observed also that, the initial consonant /n/ recurs at the beginning of each line. This therefore shows that, repetition of the same consonant sound can occur in the same line or just at the beginning of two or more lines in a literary work. In addition to this, excerpt 4 line 1, 2, 3 and 5 *Nana wu eee*, grandpa or grandma has died eee, *Nana eee* 'Grandpa or grandma eee', *Nana kule Eboɔre n*

nya, 'Grandpa begged God and got' and *Nana kule Eboɔre n nya* 'Grandpa or grandma begged God and got. In these lines, the initial consonant /n/ is seen recurring at the beginning of each line. In excerpt 6 line 1 *N yɛ fo koso, fo koso n gben*, 'I said you should get up, you couldn't get up'. In the above excerpt, the consonant /f/ as repeated as in *fo* 'You'. Just like /f/, the consonant /k/ has also recurred as in *koso* 'get up' in the same line. In line 2, /k/ has repeated again at the beginning of the word *koso* 'get up'. In line 3 of the same excerpt, /k/ has repeated and this can be found at the beginning of the line *Kusol* 'Elephant, and at the beginning of the last word of the same line *Koso* 'Get up'. The last repetition of the same consonant sound in excerpt 4 appears in line 8 *Fo yɛ fo maŋ kɔ asɔ nɛ bibi*, 'You said you don't have things and children'. The /f/ sound has repeated in *fo* 'you'.

Also, excerpt 7 line 2, *Nnɛ nɛ e bulɔ nɛ n kuŋ mo?* 'where did he or she pass and I will protect him or her?' The consonant /n/ has reoccurred at the beginning of the words *nnɛ* where, *nɛ* and, *nɛ* and *n* I, and *Kuŋ* protect. In line 7 and 8 *Nnɛ nɛ mee bulɔ a fin mo?* 'Where do I pass and look for him or her?', *nnɛ nɛ mee bulɔ a fin mo?* 'Where do I pass and look for him or her?' The consonant sound /n/ has again repeated in the following words, *Nnɛ* 'where', and *nɛ* 'and'. Line 10 and the final line of the excerpt, *nko Ngbanya Maŋso nɛ e bulɔ aa?* 'Or he or she passed through *Ngbanya Maŋso?*' The sound /n/ has being repeated again in *nko* 'or', *Ngbanya*, 'Gonjas' and *nɛ* 'and'. To bring excerpt 7 to a close, it is observed that, all the lines in the song begin with the same consonant sound /n/ with the exception of line 3 and 9 where both lines began with the same consonant sound /z/ as in '*Zouwu*' a name of a town.

Another instance where alliteration occurred in the Gonja dirges is excerpt 8 line 1, 2 and 4, *N keni luwu be kaprɛ kɔŋto*, 'I look at the arrow of death', *Ka ba kpala mabe danɔdan*

kabita, ‘Came and hit my loved one’, and *bu ye ηini mo kepɔ ne kukɔ leηi*, ‘They went and showed him or her the forest and settling debt’ In line one, the repetition of the initial consonant sound /k/ has occurred in the words *keni* ‘look’, *kapre* ‘arrow’ and ‘*kɔηto* ‘turning’. In line two, the /k/ sound has repeated again at the beginning of *ka* and *kabita* and in line four also the same consonant sound /k/ appears at the beginning of the words *kepɔ* and *kukɔ*. In line 6 *Hmm, nuso ne meeη wɔrɔ?* The consonant sound \n\ also appears at the beginning of *nuso* and *ne*.

Also, in excerpt 9 line 1, 2, 4 and 6, the consonant sound \n\ has repeated at the very beginning of each of the lines as in

N jo ekpakar n cher jaga

Nyeη n keni kaba

N sipo bombompo fane afuu

N jo ekpakar n cher jaga.



It is observed from the above lines that, all the lines begin with the same consonant sound /n/. Also, in line 1, the /j/ sound repeated by beginning the words *jo* and *jaje*. Furthermore, /k/ also reoccurs at the initial or beginning of the *keni* and *kaba* as seen in line 2.

Apart from this, line 1 and 3 of excerpt 10 *Kankan ka ji kapuye*, ‘If termites eat water pot’ and *Kankan ka ji kapuye, kapuye eee*, ‘If termites eat water pot, water pot eee’ also have alliteration in them. In line 1, /k/ has been repeated at the beginning of *kankan*, *ka* and *kapuye* and in line 3 the same sound (k) recurs at the beginning of *kankan*, *ka*, *kapuye* and *kapuye* as seen from the text.

Finally, line 5 of excerpt 14 *Mo a kuŋ anye kike* has a repetition of the same consonant sound /k/ as in *kuŋ* and *kike*.

It is observed from the above data that, the consonants that play a very crucial role regarding repetition of the same or similar consonant sound usually at the beginning of two or more words in close succession in the Gonja dirges are /n/, and /k/. This is not to say that these are the only consonants that begin two or more words but they are regarded as the most prominent ones as seen in this study. Alliteration contributes to the free rhyming of the dirge, thereby, making it appeal to its audience.

4.7. Metaphor

Metaphors are a powerful tool for delivery of emotion (Lakoff, 1993). Metaphor therefore, is a literary device that reduces our emotions by comparing two unlike things without the use of ‘like’ and ‘as...as’. The Gonja dirges do employ metaphors in them to reduce the emotional level that the message might cause its audience. In metaphorical expression, the intended meaning is different from the literal meaning and the thing being compared to is not in any way related to the other. For example, *Kapole yaa n wurwe*, ‘a tree with red fruits has shed its leaves’ as in excerpt 2 line 1. In the above text, *kapole*, ‘a tree with red fruits’ has been compare to a human whiles *ya n wurwe*, ‘shed its leaves’ has also been compare to death. The *kapole* as used in this text does not necessarily refer to a tree with red fruits; it rather refers to a great person who is blessed with grandchildren and not as used in the literal form. Also, line two of the same excerpt *Mbuibi a ji manne?* ‘Birds should eat what?’ also contain a metaphor. The *Mbuibi* ‘Birds’ have been metaphorically used in place of children or grandchildren who are the composers of the

dirge. Apart from this, excerpt 5 line one *kapushe kpokpobu*, ‘Hard cola nut’ is also a metaphor. It is not referring to the hard nature of the cola nut; it is rather used to compare the deceased to a strong person. Also, line 2 of the same excerpt *Sangara a jajε mo*, ‘A disease that attacks cola nut spoils him’ has been metaphorically used. The *sangaraη*, a disease that attacks cola nut’ is used in place of death. In so doing, we are comparing one thing to the other to help convey the message in a manner that is not too emotive to the audience or receiver. Again, the ending part of the same line, *jajε mo*, ‘spoil him or her’ is also a metaphor. In Gonja, *jajε* literally means to spoil which metaphorically means to kill. The literal meaning of excerpt 5 reads, hard cola nut, a disease that attacks cola nut spoils him or her but the actual meaning talks about a strong person who became weak as a result of death. Line 3, 4, and 5 of excerpt 6 *Churu tiηi e beηη koso*, ‘Hippopotemus wake up it gets up’, *Gbanyen tiηi e beηη koso*, ‘Bush cow wakes up it will get up’, and *Kusol tiηi e beηη koso* ‘Elephant wakes up it will get up’ respectively all have metaphors in them. *Churu* in line 3 compares the strength of the deceased to that of the animal. *Gbanyen* bush cow and *Kusol* are both animals that are considered as the biggest animals that live in the forest. Their use in this context has nothing to do their literal meaning but to compare them to the dead person who by virtue of the death cannot even wake up. Also, line seven of excerpt 6 *koi, shibel na tɔr*, ‘Koi, the anthill has fallen’ has a metaphor in it. The *shibel* ‘anthill’ is a hill by structure that stands upright. It is known that if the anthill falls it cannot get up which is being used in compare with the deceased. Also, line 1 and 2 of excerpt 10 *Kankaη ka ji lapuyε* ‘If termites eat water pot’ and *Kawufon a baa fɔη so* ‘Broken part of a calabash should be worried,’ also indicate. *Kapuyε* ‘water pot’ refers to how strong people are whiles *Kawufon*, in line 2 refers to the weak ones. In effect, if death has been able to take away the strong ones, what will it not do to the weak

ones? Still in excerpt 10 line one *Kankan ka ji kapuye*, 'If termites eat water pot', *Kankan* refers to death which is also a clear instance of metaphor.

4.8. Assonance

This is the resemblance of sounds in words or syllables (Agyekum, 1999; 52). It is the relative close juxtaposition of similar vowel sounds. It is therefore worthwhile to say that, assonance takes place when two or more words close to one another repeat the same or similar vowel sounds but start with different consonant sounds. For example, 'the men selling the wedding bells'. It is observed from the above statement that, the same vowel sounds of the short vowel / e / repeats itself in almost all the words. A critical look at the Gonja dirges shows the existence of same or similar vowel sounds in relatively close juxtaposition in some of them.

In song excerpt two line 1 and 2, the same vowel sound / e / has repeated itself in *kapole* and *wurwe* while / i / has been repeated in *mbuibi* and *ji* respectively. In excerpt three line 1, the sound / a / has repeated in the words *nana* and *man* in line 2 of the same excerpt, the vowel sound / ε / also appear in *bore* and *yera*. Another instance where similar vowel sounds appear in the Gonja dirge is excerpt six. In line 1 of the excerpt, the vowel sound / o / has repeated in *fo* and *koso*. Line 3 of the same excerpt has the repetition of the same vowel sound / o / as in *kusol* and *koso* while / a / has reappeared in line six as in *fane* and *na*.

Excerpt seven line 1, the vowel sound / ɔ / has repeated in *bɔ* and *anyɔ*. In line 2 and 3, / ε / and / u / both repeat in *nne*, *nε* and *bulɔ*, *kuɲ* respectively. In excerpt eight / a / has

repeated throughout in almost all the words and in 5, /ɔ / and / u / in *kupɔ*, *kukɔ* and *bu*, *kukɔ*. Line 7 of the excerpt has the same vowel sound / ε / as in *chɛ* and *shinnɛ*.

Also, line 1 of excerpt nine contained the repetition of the same vowel sound / a / as in *ekpakar* and *jaga*. / e / reoccurred in *yɛŋ* and *keni* in lin2. Line 4 also has the repetition of the same vowel sound / o / in words such as *nio*, *mo* and *lepo*. The same applies to line 5 as the same vowel sound repeated itself in *sipo* and *bombompo*. The vowel sound / a / has also duplicated in *tama*, *jajɛ* and *fɔlbiwura* as can be seen in line 6 while / ε / repeated in *jajɛ* and *kikɛ* in the same line.

In line 1 of excerpt ten, *kankan ka ji kapuye*, it is seen that the vowel sound / a / has repeated in almost all the words with the exception of the verb *ji*. The final instance where the Gonja dirges employ the use of assonance in this study is in song excerpt eleven. The vowel sound / ε / repeated itself in the following words; *pɛ* and *nɛ* and this can be found in line 2. Just like alliteration, assonance also contributes to the free rhythming of the Gonja dirge.

4.9. Symbolism

Ideally, symbolism refers to the use of symbols to signify ideas and qualities by giving them symbolic meanings that are different from their literal meanings. This to a greater extent can take different forms. Generally, it is an object representing another, to give an entirely different meaning that is much deeper and at the sametime more significant. These symbols could take the form of words, people, locations or abstract ideas to represent something beyond their literal meanings. The Gonja dirge is one aspects of oral

literature that uses symbols to represent something and also give an entirely different meaning as compare to its literal meaning.

In excerpt two (2) line 1 *kapole yaa n wurwe*. *Kapole* as used in the song refers to sources of wealth which to a greater is completely different from its literal meaning. The *kapole* is a type of tree that bear red fruits which serves as a source of livelihood for birds and other living creatures. The dirgers therefore used of the tree symbolize wealth. It is used to create the idea that a responsible person has passed on. Also, in line 2, *mbuibi a ji manne?* *Mbuibi*- birds symbolizes people under the control of the deceased.

Also, in excerpt six (6) lines 3, 4 and 5- *kusol*, *gbanyen* and *churu* respectively all symbolize strength. These animals appear among the stronger animals in our part of the world; their usage in the dirge is to create the impression and the idea that the deceased was a strong person. Also, *kankan*-termites as in excerpt 10 symbolises sickness while *kapuya*-water pot stong person. Still in the same excerpt, *kawufoɲ*- broken part of calabash symbolizes ordinary people. This create the idea that if sickness has being able to kill the strong person, then, it calls for the ordinary person to be cautious.

4.5. Summary

This chapter has looked at death and the necessary rites that are performed or associated with death among the Gonja people. It has also looked the dirge among the Gonja people and the various instances that these dirges are performed by the Gonja people. In terms of the type of dirges, two types of dirges have been identified in this study which includes *Kenana wɔba* 'Simple dirge' and *Ngbanyache wɔba* 'Gonja women's dirge'. It also

discussed the occasion that warrants or guarantees the performance and singing of the Gonja dirge and the structure as well as the various themes that are found in the dirges. The final part of this chapter discussed the literary devices found in the dirges which include personification, simile, ideophone, rhetorical questions, metaphor, repetition, alliteration and symbolism. The data was analysed using descriptive approach as an analytical tool.



CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter deals with the overall summary of the thesis, findings and conclusions. Based on the findings that have been drawn from the study recommendations are also made.

5.1 Summary

This thesis discusses and also deals with a detailed literary analysis of the Gonja dirge. The study also discusses the structure and style of the Gonja dirge as well as the thematic analysis of the Gonja dirge. The study also examines the various types of dirges among the Gonja people and the various instances that these dirges are sung and performed by the Gonja people. The study also discusses the structure, themes and the functions of literary devices of the Gonja dirge.

Findings

The findings of this study include the following,

Firstly, regarding the perception of the Gonja people towards death, I found out that the people treat the dead person just like the living and also show concern for the bereaved family by contributing in one way or the other so as to ensure that the necessary funeral rites are in order. Again, the study also found out from this report that, death is not seen

as an end to life but is seen as a transition from the physical world to the spiritual world or land of the spirits, where they will serve as ancestors to the physical world. It also shows that, the art of dying has is not just a natural phenomenon but to some extent, is influence by certain external forces such as witchcraft and a curse. The study also revealed that, funeral rites are not just performed in isolation. However, they are performed to break the intimate relationship between the living the the dead.

Secondly, the study also found out that dirges are not generally sung and performed by and for everybody in the community and that certain dirges are more appropriate to royals. With regard to the types of dirges, the study also admits that the classification of dirges vary from one ethnic group to the other.

Thirdly, as regards to the occasion for the performance of dirges, it also came to light that the appropriate or actual occasion for the performance of dirges is during funerals. However, there are certain factors that might warrant the performance of dirges outside of funeral ground, some of which include the desire to learn the art of singing dirges and on remembering the lost of a loved one or relative.

Fourthly, prominent among the findings of this study is the message that dirges portray or carry to their audience. It is worth noting that dirges are sung to carry an intended message to their audience which forms the integral part of oral literature. The study found out that these dirges are usually sung and performed to express the state or feeling of the bereaved family and also to communicate our ideas, thoughts and feelings about the sudden demise of beloved ones as well as to reveal the identity of the deceased and also praise him or her. I also found out that, the lines used in dirges are generally short in nature.

Finally, it was observed that, literary devices such as personification, simile, idiophones, rhetorical question, metaphor, repetition of any kind and alliteration as well as assonance are mostly employed in the singing and performing style of the Gonja dirges in order to beautify them. The theme of advice, theme of identity, theme of anger, theme of grief, and theme of consolation were some of the major themes that are found in the Gonja dirges.

5.3 Conclusion

In conclusion, the Gonja dirge forms an integral part of the culture of the people and therefore must be given adequate attention. The Gonja dirge as evidenced from this study is similar to the Dagaaba dirge in a sense that they are not sung and performed on the death of young children but adults.

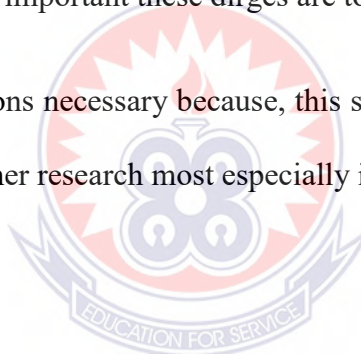
I therefore argue that, unlike in the olden days where people were actively involved in the singing of dirges, the generation of today shy away from it as they do not show up even when the occasion calls for it. I therefore want to use this noble opportunity to encourage the youth of today to take active participation in the performance of dirges as this will go a long way to maintain it.

5.4 Recommendation

Based on my findings and conclusions regarding this study, it is observed that, dirges play a very crucial role in the society yet they have received little attention. In this regard, I want to encourage literature scholars most especially scholars of the Gonja language to conduct accurate and further research studies in Literature particularly in the areas of Gonja dirges.

Some of the areas of dirges that need further research include the esthetics of the Gonja dirge, the role of the Gonja dirge and metaphorical expressions of the Gonja dirge. These areas deserve to be documented in order to help improve the aesthetic values and also help people to realize how important these dirges are to the society.

I deem my recommendations necessary because, this study is not all that enough but will serve as a catalyst for further research most especially in the area of dirges.



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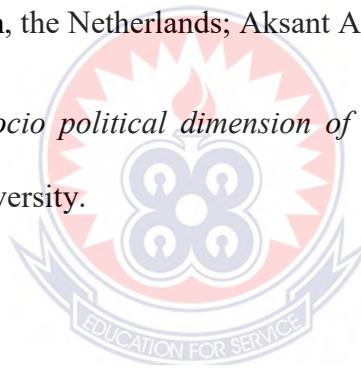
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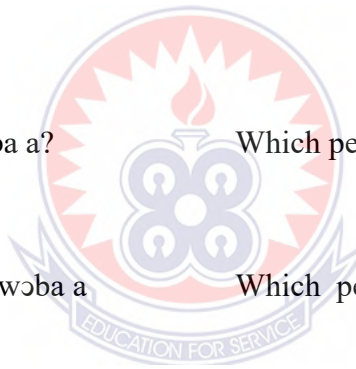
APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE ON DIRGES

Gafara fobe ketere?	Please what is your name?
Ngbanya be efuli moso nɛ fo shi?	Which community do you come from?
Fobe mfɛ afanɛ?	How old are you?
Fo ka bee boŋ awɔba fobe mfɛ afane kabre?	For how long have you been singing dirges?
Fobe mfɛ afanɛ nɛ fo fara a boŋ be keboŋ?	How old were you when you started singing dirges?
Fo bii awɔba be nshɛ be keboŋ nna aa?	Did you learn the art of singing dirges?
Fo fɔr fobe kumuso nna pɔɛ n fara awɔba be keboŋ aa?	Did you fortify yourself before singing dirges?
Manneso nɛ fo fɔr fobe kumuso?	Why?
Baa kaa fo amansherbi nna pɔɛ nɛ perform fee cha nko a boŋ awɔba aa?	Did they usually pay you money before you dirge?
Wanɛ kuto nɛ fob ii awɔba be nshɛ be keboŋ?	From whom did you learn the art of singing dirges?
Fo kaa amansherbi nna pɔɛ n bii taught awɔba be keboŋ aa?	Did you also pay money before you were how to sing dirges?

Awɔba be nshɛ kɔ ntunso Ngbanyato aa?	Do dirges have types?
Awɔba be nshɛ be untunso wɔ afanɛ Ngbanyato?	How many are they?
Amo ela amo?	What are they?
Nuso nɛ awɔba be ntunj ere kɔr abarto?	How do they differ from each other?
Ekama a naa cha nko a boŋ awɔba Ngbanyato aa?	Is it everybody that sings dirges?
Baasa mo a naa cha awɔba Ngbanyato? Gonjas?	Which people perform dirges among the Gonjas?
Baasa mo nɛ baa cha awɔba a? sa Ngbanyato	Which people do they perform dirges for?
Baasa mo nɛ bu maa cha awɔba a sa Ngbanyato?	Which people do they not perform dirges for?
Delili moso nɛ baa cha awɔba Ngbanyato?	Why do they perform dirges?
Keli be nshɛ afanɛ nɛ baa cha awɔba perform Ngbanyato?	How many days after funeral do they dirges?
Jimanɛ mo nɛ baa cha awɔba Ngbanyato?	What time of the day do they perform dirges?



Nuso nɛ baa cha awɔba?	How is dirge perform?
Nuso nɛ awɔba be nshɛ be Ngbar du?	What is the structure of the language used singing dirges?
Mbia bee cha nko a boŋ awɔba aa?	Do children sing or perform dirges?
Delili moso nɛ mbia bee cha awɔba?	At what point do children perform dirges?
Delili moso nɛ mbia maa cha awɔba?	At what point are children not allowed to perform dirges?
Manne nɛ bu kɔ a cha awɔba?	What do they used to perform dirges?
Fane amo?	What are they?
Nuso be tunɔ nɛ asɔ ere kɔ n sa awɔba be kacha?	What role do these instruments play when performing dirges?
Nuso be tunɔ nɛ awɔba be kacha kɔ n sa fo?	What benefit do you gain from performing dirges?
Benyen bee boŋ nko a cha awɔba	Do men sing or perform dirges?
Ngbanyato aa?	
Manneso nɛ benyen bee bon nko a cha awɔba?	Why do men sing or perform dirges?
Feeŋ tiŋ boŋ awɔba be nshɛ	Can you sing one dirge for me?

ko n ɲini ma aa?

Kumo ere fo boɲ nɛ n keni aa.

Then sing and I will see

Asaɲ kushuɲ

Thank you



APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE ON FUNERALS

Gafara fobe ketere?	Please what is your name?
Efuli moso ne fo shi?	Where do you come from?
Fobe mfe afane kabre?	How old are you
Manne be kushuŋ ne fee shuŋ?	What work do you do?
Esa wu Ngbanyato nuso ne baa wɔɔ?	What happens when a person dies?
Wane a naa kela mobe keli?	Who is responsible for announcing the dead of a person?
Nuso ne baa kala keli Ngbanyato? Gonja	How do they announce funeral among the people
Nuso ne baa ber ebuni?	How do they bath the dead body?
Wane a naa ber ebuni?	Who bathes the dead person?
Ngbanyato, keli mo baa shu aa?	In Gonja, if somebody dies do they cry?
Baasa mo a naa shu?	Which people usually cry
Manneso ne baa shu?	Why do they cry?
Nuso ne baa ber ebuni?	How do they bath the dead person?
Manneso ne baa ber mo?	Why do they bath the dead person?
Baasa mo a naa kur nchaŋ? the	Which people are responsible for digging the deceased' s grave?
Nuso ne baa puli ebuni?	How do they burry the corpse
Manneso ne baa puli mo loŋ?	Why do they burry that way
Nche afane ne Ngbanya ko a wɔɔ keli?	How many days do Gonjas used to perform

funeral

Nche mo ne Ngbantya ko a wɔɔ keli?

Which days do Gonjas use for their funerals?

Manneso ne baa wɔɔ keli Ngbanyato?

Why do they perform funeral among the
Gonjas

Luwu kike be keli ne baa wɔɔ

Is it every death that they perform funeral
Ngbanyato aa?

Manneso ne bu maa wɔɔ amo?

Why don't they perform funeral for such
deaths

Anyeen ta kabre be kelijima n yile mfa?

We will bring today's conservation to an end
here

Fo wɔɔ asɔ

You did very well

Asaŋ kushuk

Thank you



APPENDIX C

LIST OF COLLECTED SONGS

Excerpt 1

Nana eee Grandpa / grandma eee

Ba naa boin boin Be going slowly slowly

Nana eee Grandpa / grandma eee

Ba naa boin boin Be going slowly slowly

Nana eee Grandpa / grandma eee

Ba naa boin boin Be going slowly slowly

Nana eee Grandpa / grandma eee

Ba naa boin boin Be going slowly slowly

Nana eee Grandpa / grandma eee

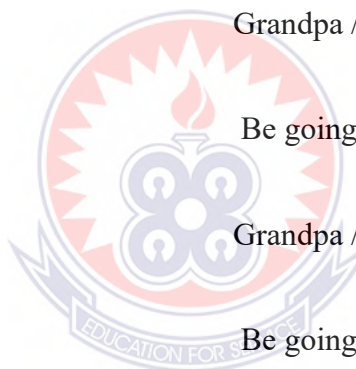
Ba naa boin boin Be going slowly slowly

Nana eee Grandpa / grandma eee

Ba naa boin boin Be going slowly slowly

Nana eee Grandpa / grandma eee

Ba naa boin boin Be going slowly slowly



Nana eee

Grandpa / grandma eee

Ba naa boij boij

Be going slowly slowly

Excerpt 2

Kapole yaa a wurwe

kapole tree has sheds its leaves

Mbuibi a ji manne?

Birds should eat what?

Kapole yaa n wurwe

kapole tree has sheds its leaves

Mbuibi a ji manne?

Birds should eat what?

Kapole yaa n wurwe

kapole tree has sheds its leaves

Mbuibi a ji manne?

Birds should eat what?

Kapole yaa n wurwe

Kapole tree has sheds its leaves

Mbuibi a ji manne?

Birds should eat what?

Kapole yaa n wurwe

Kapole tree has sheds its leaves

Mbuibi a ji manne?

Birds should eat what?

Kapole yaa n wurwe

Kapole tree has sheds its leaves

Mbuibi a ji manne?

Birds should eat what?

Kapole yaa n wurwe

Kapole tree has sheds its leaves



Mbuibi a ji manɛ?

Birds should eat what?

Kapole yaa n wurwe

Kapole tree has sheds its leaves

Mbuibi a ji manɛ?

Birds should eat what?

Kapole yaa n wurwe

Kapole tree has sheds it leaves

Mbuibi a ji manɛ?

Birds should eat what?

Excerpt 3

Nana ye e maɲ wu eee

Grandpa said he did not die eee

Bɔre a yera mo

Rain takes him away

Nana ye e maɲ wu eee

Grandpa said he did not die eee

Bɔre a yera mo

Rain takes him away

Nana ye e maɲ wu eee

Grandpa said he did not die eee

Bɔre a yera mo

Rain takes him away

Nana ye e maɲ wu eee

Grandpa said he did not die eee

Bɔre a yera mo

Rain takes him away

Nana ye e maɲ wu eee

Grandpa said he did not die eee

Bɔre a yera mo

Rain takes him away



Nana ye e maŋ wu eee

Grandpa said he did not die eee

Bɔrɛ a yɛra mo

Rain takes him away

Nana ye e maŋ wu eee

Grandpa said he did not die eee

Bɔrɛ a yɛra mo

Rain takes him away

Excerpt 4

Nana wu eee

Grandpa died eee

Nana eee

Begged God

Nana kule Ebɔrɛ n nya

Grandpa begged God and got

Kule Ebɔrɛ

Begged God

Nana kule Ebɔrɛ n nya

Grandpa begged God and got

Kule Ebɔrɛ

Begged God

Nana wu eee

Grandpa died eee

Nana eee

Grandpa eee

Nana kule Ebɔrɛ n nya

Grandpa begged God and got

Kule Ebɔrɛ

Begged God

Nana kule Ebɔrɛ n nya

Grandpa begged God and got



Kule Ebɔɛ	Begged God
Nana wu eee	Grandpa died eee
Nana eee	Grandpa eee
Nana kule Ebɔɛ n nya	Grandpa begged God and got
Kule Ebɔɛ	Begged God
Nana kule Ebɔɛ n nya	Grandpa begged God and got
Kule Ebɔɛ	Begged God
Nana wu eee	Grandpa died eee
Nana eee	Grandpa eee
Nana kule Ebɔɛ n nya	Grandpa begged Gog and got
Kule Ebɔɛ	Begged God
Nana kule Ebɔɛ n nya	Grandpa begged God and got
Kule Ebɔɛ.	Begged God



Excerpt 5

Kapushe kpokpobu	Hard cola nut
Sangaraŋ a jaje mo	Sangaraŋ spoils him

Kapushe kpokpobu

Hard cola nut

Sangaraŋ a jaje mo

Sangaraŋ spoils him

Kapushe kpokpobu

Hard cola nut

Sangaraŋ jaje mo

Sangaraŋ spoils him

Kapushe kpokpobu

Hard cola nut

Sangaraŋ a jaje mo

Sangaraŋ spoils him

Kapushe kpokpobu

Hard cola nut

Sangaraŋ a jaje mo

Sangaraŋ spoils him

Kapushe kpokpobu

Hard cola nut

Sangaraŋ a jaje mo

Sangaraŋ spoils him

Kapushe kpokpobu

Hard cola nut

Sangaraŋ a jaje mo

Sangaraŋ spoils him

Kapushe kpokpobu

Hard cola nut

Sangaraŋ a jaje mo

Sangaraŋ spoils him



Excerpt 6

N yε fo koso, fo koso n gben	I said you should get up, you couldn't get up
Enimu a koso, enimu koso n gben	Oldman should get up, oldman couldn't get up
Kusol tiŋi e bee koso	Elephant wakes up it will get up
Gbsnyen tiŋi e bee koso	Bush cow wakes up it will get up
Churu tiŋi e bee koso	Hippopotamus wakes up it will get up
Kusol a dese fanε shibel na	Elephant is lying down like an anthill
Koi, shibel na tɔr	Koi (exclamation), the anthill has fallen
Fo yε fo maŋ kɔ asɔ nε bibi	You said you do not have things and children
Hali abaribi adena n tɔ mfol	Even forty cowries to buy salt

Excerpt 7

N niopibi a bɔ ekpa anyɔ	My mother's child has taken two paths
Nnε nε e bulɔ nε n kuŋ mo? him?	Where did he /she pass so that I will protect
Zouwu maŋso nε e bulɔ aa?	Did he\ shepass through Zouwu Maŋso?
Nε n kuŋ mo anu?	So that I will protect him?
Nko Tulwe maŋso nε e bulɔ?	Or he /she passed through Tulwe Manŋo?

N tutopibi a bɔ̄ ekpa anyɔ̄	My father's child has taken two paths
Nnɛ nɛ mee bulɔ̄ a fin mo?	Where do I pass to look for him / her?
Nnɛ nɛ mee bulɔ̄ a fin?	Where do I pass to look for him / her?
Zouwu maɲso nɛ e bulɔ̄ aa?	Did he/she pass through Zouwu Maɲso?
Nɛ n kuɲ mo anu?	So that I will protect him?
Nko Ngbanya maɲso nɛ e bulɔ̄?	Or he /she passed through Ngbana Maɲso?

Excerpt 8

N keni luwu ba kaprɛ kɔɲto	I looked at the arrow of death
Ka baa kpala mabe danɗan kabita	Came and hit my loved one
Luwu sangaraɲ	Bad death
Lubi ta mabe ayuwura	Urgly has taken my millet owner
Bu yɛ ɲini mo kepɔ̄ nɛ kuko leɲi debt	They went and shoed him forest and settling
Shinne n che afoɓ	Let me hung a rope
Hmm, nuso nɛ meeɲ woɔ̄, Sheiɲ	Hmm, what will I do? Nothing

Excerpt 9

N jo ekpakar n cher jaga	I waited long at the road site for nothing
N yeŋ keni kaba	I want to look at the other side
Kekoŋwule kpleŋ	Just once
N nio mo lepo	My mother's friend
N sipo bombompo fanε afuu	My sibling <i>bombompo</i> like wind
Tama jaje folbiwura kike	Hope has spoilt the folbiwura entirely
N jo ekpakar n cher jaga	I waited long at the road site for nothing

Excerpt 10

Kaŋkaŋ ka ji kapuye	If termites have eaten water pot
Kawufoŋ a baa foŋso	Broken part of calabash should be worried
Kankaŋ ka ji kapuye	If termites have eaten water pot
Kawufoŋ a baa foŋso	Broken part of a calabash should be worried
Kaŋkaŋ ka ji kapuye	If termites have eaten water pot
Kawufoŋ a baa foŋso	Broken part of calabash should be worried
Kaŋkaŋ ka ji kapuye	If termites have eaten water pot



Kawufon a baa fonso	Broken part of calabash should be worried
Kanƙan ka ji kapuye	If termites have eaten water pot
Kawufon a baa fonso	Broken part of calabash should be worried
Kanƙan ka ji kapuye	If termites have eaten water pot
Kawufon a baa fonso	Broken part of calabash should be worried
Kanƙan ka ji kapuye	If termites have eaten water pot
Kawufon a baa fonso	Broken part of a calabash should be worried

Excerpt 11

M maa sha m maa sha	I don't want, I don't want
Ne jonɔ pɛ m ba	And dog catches and brings
M maa sha oo m maa sha oo	I don't want, I don't want oo
Jonɔ pɛ m ba	And dog catches and brings



Excerpt 12

Anyeeɲ ye amo	We will say them
N ka amo	And leave them

Anyeen kute amo

We will narrate them

N yige amo

And leave them

Excerpt 13

Menye a ba de kakɔbi so

You should be careful of *kakɔbi*

Kakɔbi bee da a mɔɔ

Kakɔbi stabs and kills

Baa de kakɔbi so

Be careful of *kakɔbi*

Kakɔbi bee da a mɔɔ

Kakɔbi stabs and kills

Menye a ba de kakɔbi so

You should be careful of *kakɔbi*

Kakɔbi bee da a mɔɔ

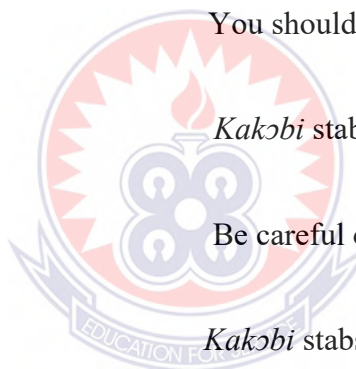
Kakɔbi stabs and kills

Baa de kakɔbi so

Be careful of *kakɔbi*

Kakɔbi bee ds a mɔɔ

Kakɔbi stabs and kills



Excerpt 14

Mo a buu anye so

He covers us

Nɛ anyee wɔɔ

And we are doing

Kusɔnɛ anyee sha

Things that we want

Kabre e luwe

Today he has finished

Mo a kuŋ anye kike

He protects all of us

Nɛ anyee wɔɔ

And we are doing

Asɔ nɛ anyee sha

Things that we want

Kabre e luwe

Today he has finished



APPENDIX D

LIST OF RESPONDANTS

MALES

Name	Age
------	-----

Mbonwura Bugli	35
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Jintiri Adam	40
--------------	----

Wuro Adam	30
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Kuntala Breh	45
--------------	----

Ndenyi Kipo	34
-------------	----



FEMALES

Name	Age
------	-----

Kewura Kewurche	30
-----------------	----

Mushie Kande	50
--------------	----

Kipo Kramose	40
--------------	----

Jakpa Matuamu	55
---------------	----

Gbepo Benyipoye	37
-----------------	----

Ndoudo Binka	35
Nkɔayɔnnɛ Chiraba	60
Enimu Debo	60
Mbonwura Chefo	55
Kajeli Hawa	59

