

## Exploring the Characterization and the Literary Devices Used in the Narration of the Gurenε Folktales.

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### Abstract

The study is about the Gurenε folktale which was narrated by the Farefari people of the Upper-East Region of Ghana. The study examined the Characterisation and the use of literary devices during storytelling. The purposive sampling technique was used. The design of the study was the ethnographic and qualitative research since the analyses of the data was descriptive. The sample size of the study population were two renowned storytellers and their groups of participants and the audience from two communities in Bongo. The instruments used for the data collection were an unstructured interview and a participatory observation. There are varied ways of characterising stories in the folktale narration in Gurenε. The use of animals to perform human roles such as farming and marrying were found to be the case with characterisation. All the major literary devices as exist in the English language were employed by the storytellers to narrate. The findings confirmed that the Gurenε folktale has several socio-cultural significances. Apart from it being an effective source of entertainment to the youth, its other importance, such as imparting the values of respect, tolerance, truthfulness and the enhancement of knowledge and wisdom for educational purposes were found.

**Keywords:** folktale, socio-cultural, values, renowned, acclaimed, community.

### 1. Introduction

Agyekum (1999, P.141) explained the folktale as “a short narrative story that is preserved and transmitted orally from one generation to another without showing the actual author. Various storytellers and groups continue to modify the stories by adding and subtracting portions from them. Folktales therefore become genres of cumulative and multiple authorship and the expressions of the entire community and therefore represent some aspects of the people’s philosophy, culture, religion and social life”. This means the narration of folktales by a group of people is a re-enactment of their total life experience, since the people display their world view as embedded in these folktales and reveal the same to the community members, especially the youth. Among the Farefari people, the folktale encapsulates other oral genres. In the performance of the folktale, there is usually an embodiment of most of the oral genres such as songs, riddles and proverbs. Lusweti (1984, P.91) writing on the oral literature of East African communities stated that prose narratives (folktales), “are a very important type of African oral literature”. Though told by individual storytellers, folktales are well known in the communities in which they occur and as such could be regarded as belonging to the community rather than to individual artists. They include the following trickster stories, dilemma stories, the ogre stories and others which may be termed as stories of the recreation of the oral artists using experiences of their environment and their imagination. The folktale is a major narrative genre among the oral genres of the Farefari people. Unlike the proverb, which is an art form mostly delivered by the elderly in the society and the riddle by the children; the folktale is narrated by all. Another reason why it was widely patronized by the people is its entertaining nature since it involved the use of songs and imitation of characters and dramatization by the storyteller (narrator). In other cultures, for instance among the Akan, Ananse "the spider" is considered the most cunning character in their folktale narration and it is usually the hero in some cases, the folktale narration in Farefari has *Asɔ’ɔŋa* "the hare". In the Farefari folktales the hare features prominently and it is often portrayed as the hero arising out its cunning behaviour.

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## 1.1 Statement of the Problem

The narration of the folktale among the Farefari people, was an effective means of imparting the knowledge of the people to the youth. Storytelling sustained the socio-cultural lives of the people. The general principle of living at peace with other members of the society was imbued in these folktales which were narrated and served as education to not only the youth but to everyone in the community. However, all the good attributes of the folktale has waned due to the lack of its effective narration by members of the Farefari Communities, especially as a form of a non-formal educational tool for learning by the youth. The research is therefore aimed at collecting and examining the characterization and the use of literary devices in the Gurene folktale. The socio-cultural and educational values of storytelling among the Farefari would be examined and the good aspect of the cultural wisdom in them considered for effective implementation and use by children at the basic level to enhance their academic progression. The folktale is a major narrative genre among the oral genres of the Farefari people. The characterization during the narration of these folktales, for instance the roles the storyteller assigns the various characters brings about the successful delivery of this art form.

### 1.1.1 Research Questions

The research proposes to answer the following questions:

Research Question 1. How is characterization done in the Gurene folktale narration?

Research Question 2: What are the literary devices used in the Gurene folktale?

Research Question 3: What are the socio-cultural and educational values of Gurene folktales?

### 1.1.2 Significance of the Study

The folktale is a major narrative genre among the oral genres of the Farefari people. Unlike the proverb, which is an art form mostly delivered by the elderly in the society, the folktale is practiced by all. Another reason why it was widely patronized by the people is its entertaining nature since it involved the use of songs and imitation of characters as dramatised by the storyteller (narrator). This study is aimed at examining the characterisation of the folktale and the identification of the literary qualities in the Farefari folktale as is portrayed in the English language. It is the hope of the researcher that the study of the Gurene folktale will inspire both scholars and the people of the area to work at developing every aspect of the language. The scholars will be encouraged to concentrate more on other oral genres of the language which are not yet studied in the scholarly field. This way, the interest in the narration of the folktale, it is hoped could be rekindled and sustained to enable the youth of the area and everyone else to benefit from the cultural values of the Farefari people as they entertain themselves. This study will also ascertain the nature of the aesthetic and literary use of the Gurene language in the folktale narration so as to help in the teaching of literature and to serve as an effective tool for the development of language skills among the youth.

### 1.1.3 Limitations of the study

This study does not cover all aspects of the Gurene folktale. Its focus is on the characterisation and the literary devices used during the narration. Though the study is said to be about Farefari society, it is practically not feasible to undertake a study of this nature in the whole society. Folktale narration is a special skill possessed by oral artists in parts of the society. The two principal storytellers were selected from the Boonjo district of the Upper East Region, for two important reasons. First the researcher is familiar with that environment as admonished by (Okpewho 1992, P.335). The researcher speaks the Gurene dialect of the Farefari people. Then again it is the Gurene dialect that is reduced into the writing system of the Farefari people and used in schools. However, the study is applicable to all since there are only dialectal differences among all members of the Farefari society.

### 1.1.4 Delimitation of the study

The study is to examine the characterisation and the literary devices used during the narration of the folktale in Gurene. This is because storytelling as a literary genre has other components such as the structure, and mode of delivery.

## 2.0 Methodology

The qualitative approach to data collection was applied and the ethnographic research design was used. The researcher purposively selected two principal storytellers from two communities-Namuen-Sambo'lego and Akayooŋa-Sapuuro in the Boonjo district. The ethnographic research design was used in the study because it gives the researcher a direct access to the culture and practise of the two identified groups of the society. In that instance, the researcher gets to interact with the storytellers and is able to obtain a first-hand information on the Gurene folktales from these principal storytellers (Miruka 2000).

On different days and times, the researcher met and interacted with these principal storytellers and their groups for the performances. This way, the researcher was fully immersed in the principal storytellers' social context of narrations and thus obtains the authentic information with regards to the Gurene folktale narration. The storytellers narrated the stories and the researcher played the role of a participant observer while recording the performances with an audio recorder. These stories were then transcribed and translated and then analysed using the narrative logic approach. This method of data analyses involves the narration and the putting down of the findings in paragraphs.

### 3.0 Results and Discussions

#### 3.1 Characterisation in the Gurene folktale

Galli (1983, P.25), observed the storytelling process among the Anyi-Bona of La Cote d'Ivoire, and stated that, "there is the principle of equilibrium in the characterisation of animals in stories. That, storytelling is a well-balanced game. No character is always completely successful or completely a failure. For instance, following a group of stories on the success of Spider and failure of Hyena, other stories will be completely opposite: the failure of Spider and success of Hyena or another animal". This is the case in Gurene folktale characterization. While Hare is considered the wisest, other animals such as the woodpecker are able to outdo him in the display of wisdom in certain instances. Farefari storytellers characterized stories using the resources in their environment, both human and non-human. The human characters that are often used are men with special skills such as the *gonea*, "hunter". The hunter among the Farefari people acquires 'special eyes' *nyetatuura*, clear vision to enable him to operate in the bush. Sometimes he is said to be able to foresee ahead of time what is happening in the bush and to decide whether to go hunting or not. *Naduma* "chiefs" are also portrayed as prominent members of the community who often use their position to exploit the less privileged in society. In one of the stories about the chief's farm and the orphan, the orphan was made to take care of the chief's horse but was poorly fed by the chief. The narrator, intending to ridicule the chief, described how the chief took time to dress and to go to the farm to find out what prevents his wives from fetching the guinea corn. On arrival, and upon hearing the song of a bird, he became so frightened that, he fell off his horse and became unconscious. There is usually an exemplification of the activities undertaken by members of the community which might disturb the peaceful co-existence of other community members. The storyteller in one of the stories, started by saying, *Mam n yuumboi* "I once lived". The storyteller then goes on to narrate events involving himself. In one of such stories about the ogre and the boy who went in search of rats, the storyteller referred to himself as the stubborn boy who set fire on the bush in order to catch rats, thus, sparking off a conflict between himself and the ogre, the owner of the bush. This young man was probably a member of the Bush Fires Volunteer Squad or have had enough education on the effects of bush fires and decided to link the idea up with this story which existed long ago. The intention is to put the event in the present and within the reach of the audience so that the message of bush fire prevention will be well disseminated, especially to the youth present. This is clearly a utilitarian purpose of the Gurene folktale characterization during storytelling. The non-human but animate characters are mainly made up of animals, birds and trees. There are also the supernatural beings that occur mostly in stories having their setting in the bush. The animals portrayed in the stories are made up of the domestic and the wild types. Domestic animals and birds that often feature in the stories include; *Sakua/Deebia* "the cat". This animal has gained a good reputation among the Farefari people as a meek and soft, slow to act and friendly character. It easily mixes with the members of a household and is seen often rubbing its fine and smooth fur against people. It is known to be effective in guarding against the destruction of cereals by rodents such as the mice. But it is very selective in feeding and does not take unnecessary risks. Thus the proverb relating to its cautiousness is, *Asakua yeti de'eyokaboikunkwan*. "Miss Cat says the neck is not a place to play with". In stories the cat portrays femininity and is usually confined to activities of the home. That is why in the story about, *Abaa n di Asakua* "Mr. Dog got married to Miss Cat", the Cat was the woman and it played an effective role of a dishonest wife when she cooks and eats only at the times her husband was out of the house. Other domestic animals that are also used often are the dog, the he-goat and the cock. The dog usually represents masculinity and will fight if need be to defend the values of the family. The cock is the first item to be presented by a man to the parents of his newly married wife to legitimize the marriage in the tradition of the Farefari people. It is the first to be offered for sacrifice among other animals and could sometimes be used in place of a bigger animal during funerals and other cultural activities.

Among the wild animals, those used as characters include the following: *As'w'eta* "the hare", *Asase'eta* "the hyena", *Webaa*, "the leopard", *Gigene* "the lion", *Goonaa'fa*, "the bush cow", *W'obeg'o* "the elephant", *Kakure* "the tortoise" *Dea* "the warthog" *nyaa'eta* "the monkey" and *Puny'eta* "the hippopotamus". Among the family of birds in the Farefari culture, those that frequently features as characters in their folktale include:

*Laaleya* “the woodpecker” *Gooku’uṅṅ* “the bush guinea fowl” *Dulego* “the horn bill” *Dawene* “the dove” *Kəṛreṅa* “bush fowl” *Wibega* “the falcon” *Tugefo* “the eagle” *Niintorega* “the singing bird” and *Nəḍḍ* “the cock”. Other characters are the reptiles that are found within their locality and those in the bush. These are generally termed as *bunvuula* “crawling animals”. These are; *Wəbekim* “the African python”, *Boosene* “the royal python” *εbega* “the crocodile” *Zankəṅa* “the viper” and *Kamponé* “the toad”. Some trees are also used. Among them is *Tu’a* “the baobab tree” *Gūṅa* “the kapok tree” and *Kinkalega*, (*Afzelia Africana*) “the hard wood tree”. The Farefari storytellers also rely on the use of supernatural beings in the formulation of characters. The almighty God known as Naawine is made to play roles. Others are *Tingane* “the shrine” *Sinsirego* “the dwarf”, *Kuleka’arega* “a wild spirit”, *Seerego* “a monster” and *Nərewəka/Bunsilemasi’o* “half human or ogre” and parts of the human body such as *Nifo* “eye” and *Lane* “scrotum”. The last of these are natural inanimate characters including *Təṅa* “rock”, *kulega* “river”, *Məgere* “dam” and *Zoore* “hill”. All the animals and birds, natural and supernatural beings mentioned above, according to the world view of the Farefari people, are assigned certain attributes according to their size, appearance and the actions that they are made to perform in the stories. Some of the common attributes are; wisdom, patience, impatience, wickedness, greediness, spiritual power, temperamental attitude and cowardice. The hare is accredited to be the wisest of all. With its small size, the hare is able to manipulate the bigger animals and, in most cases, succeeds in duping them to its advantage. It therefore represents cleverness and is the main character in most of the animal tales of trickery among the Farefari people. In their everyday life encounters, it is common to hear people refer metaphorically to their neighbours who are smarter in providing solutions to the daily problems of themselves and others, and are always first to take precaution against future hazards as *Asə’əṅa*, “the hare”. There are other smaller animals that shared in being tagged as characters with wisdom and also behave in cunning ways. Sometimes these are able to outdo the hare in a competition of wits. Such characters include the tortoise, which is patient, very slow to act but full of determination and succeeds in whatever it does. The woodpecker and the bush guinea fowl, like the hare are not strong but succeed in their encounters with bigger animals. The attribution of wisdom to the hare, tortoise and other smaller animals and the use of such animals to outwit bigger ones in Farefari folktales, is about the idea that knowledge and resourcefulness do not reside in only those who are naturally endowed, but results from an individual’s hard work. In the Farefari people’s world view on the use of characters, the bigger the animal the less knowledgeable it is and the more limited the display of wits that is attributed to it. To them, being wise is a gift from God and it is only those who go in search for it that gets it. Hare, though smaller in stature, is always ready to take risks by being among the bigger animals offering to serve them, and by that he is able to learn to know their weakness and use it later to his advantage. This emphasizes the need for mechanisms to check excesses in the society and to reinforce the belief that wisdom is not the preserve of any individual. On the other hand, the hyena is portrayed with qualities that are directly opposite to those of the hare. Hyena is greedy, impatient and foolish. Though very huge as compared to the hare, it cannot manage its own affairs and most often relies on smaller characters like the hare for solutions to its daily problems, and that is usually the fertile ground for it to be fooled and cheated by these smaller counterparts. The leopard is very strong but temperamental and does not easily forgive the weaker ones that cross its path. The bush cow on the other hand is reputed to be spiritually powerful and is often portrayed to engage hunters in a battle of magical power display in the bush, when they pursue its life. The birds which are used often in the stories, apart from the woodpecker and bush guinea fowl, are the hornbill, the signing bird, the bush fowl and the dove. This bush fowl is very cautious and would always take maximum precaution against the hazards of life. It is reputed with the age old proverb that, *Akəṛreṅa yeti nyəvore n de zəḷa* “the bush fowl says when there is life, there is wealth”. This is manifested in its ability to detect threats to its life and to flee the spot before any harm is caused to it, leaving behind a heap of eggs in most instances. This proverb is heard often when people are faced with making sacrifices in life to survive. For instance, when faced with a situation of life threatening hunger, with no alternative source of providing for the family, a man would go in for the seeds reserved for planting to feed his family while consoling himself with this proverb. While the hornbill acts foolishly, and is often used by others to their favour, the dove and the singing bird are reputed to be very useful. They are always around to save distressing situations involving vulnerable members who are being tormented in the community, by sending messages to the concerned members to come to the rescue of their loved ones. The last of the birds is the falcon, which is said to be the king of the birds. It is aggressive, fearless, and always goes for what it wants without hesitation. The famous saying that goes with its name is, *Agoowibega yeti, a san ṅwəkoṅekə mavaənyuur*, “the falcon says, when it attacks and fails to carry away its prey then children will gather the remains”. This means, on failing to carry away its prey, upon an attack, whatever is left behind is usually of no consequential use, except for children to play with. Praise singers in the Farefari society sometimes adopt this saying as part of the appellations of prominent members of the community such as the chiefs. In the characterisation of the Gurene folktales, the reptiles are used with varied intentions. The viper is seen as wicked and is not often used. However, whenever it appears in a story with the hare, it is often fooled by the hare.

The African and royal pythons and the crocodile often portray kind characters and would not attack until they are extremely provoked. This group of reptiles are very strong with huge bodies and could easily get their way through force. However, they represent calmness and are slow to act even when provoked. They are used in folktales to remind us of the patience we need in dealing with others in the society, especially those in authority. The crocodile is even more helpful to human beings where it appears in stories. It sacrifices to transport people across rivers to safety, but with a warning to such beneficiaries not to reveal what transpired to anybody else. The crocodile is said to have led an ancestor of a section of the Farefari people from Zᵛᵛᵛ and Bᵛᵛᵛᵛ, both in the Boᵛᵛᵛ district to safety. These people hold the belief that upon death some clan members who have led meaningful lives transform into crocodiles. As such a lot of reverences is given by these people to the crocodile. Parts of or whole trees are used in stories to represent human life and features. For instance, the smooth bark of the baobab tree was borrowed by an apparition as its body. The red flowering of the kapok tree represented the local red fez worn by chiefs and other prominent members of the Farefari community, and a walking stick was borrowed from the *Asampareᵛᵛ* tree. The apparition used all these items together with others from different trees to decorate itself. It then appeared as a rich handsome man and when he asked for the hand of a stubborn girl in marriage, she readily agreed to, against the wish of her parents, and that led to her death. The representation of supernatural beings in Gurene folktales is common. The Farefari people like others in Africa, have a strong belief in life after death. They equally believe that these spirits have the ability to do good or bad to the living.

#### 4.0 Literary Devices used in the Gurene folktales

##### 4.1 Personification

In literature, personification is one of the devices that the literary artist uses most. Personification involves the assigning of human attributes to animals and other beings. Agyekum (1999:109) states that, Personification endows animals, ideas, abstractions and inanimate objects with human attributes, forms, characters, sensibilities and emotions". *Alame* "the testicles" and *Asᵛᵛᵛᵛ* "the hare" featured in most of the stories. In one of such stories, *Asᵛᵛᵛᵛ* "the hare" had a bitter encounter with, *Alame* "the testicles". *Alame* commanded *Asᵛᵛᵛᵛ* to carry him about and also to feed him with the meat which he, Hare had denied his family members of. Another story had the title as, *Aputi'ire la Ayem n zεbe*, that is "Wisdom and Knowledge had a challenge". These two terms are abstract nouns but have been endowed with the human qualities to challenge each other to determine who is the wisest. In this challenge they rode on horses to a festival of the Cattle Egrets. Since these birds are all white-feathered, Wisdom remembered to mark the Egret that tethered his horse with red earth, to which Knowledge failed to do. At the end of the dance, Knowledge lost his horse because he could not identify the particular Egret that took and tethered his horse. He therefore conceded defeat. Wisdom was declared the wisest. Also, in the competition for the chief's daughter, the Crown bird and the Tortoise who were the contestants did everything from dressing, singing and all that is in the domain of humans to catch the attention of the lady and please her father, the chief. By making these animals and inanimate objects to take up human names, act, communicate, and eat, to mention a few, the Farefari oral artist in his/her performance makes a complete metaphoric representation of the qualities of humans to animals and other inanimate objects.

##### 4.1.1 Suspense

Suspense is a literary device in which the narrator in the course of narration employs his skills in the use of the language to sustain the expectation of the audience consistently through a sophisticated manipulation of their emotions to the extent that they become temporarily "addicted" to the narrative. Agyekum (1999:156) explained suspense as "the point in a fiction where the reader or audience eagerly anticipates the outcome of the events of a story, a novel, or a play. It is a major device for securing and maintaining the interest of audience". In *Oral Performance in Africa* (1990:139) Sekoni discussed at length about a storyteller being able to sustain the interest of the audience by using the activating, stabilising and depressing scheme which eliminates boredom and created sensation in the audience emotionally. This is also part of the complete structure of the story since it is carefully woven into the main stream of the narration. Sekoni described this manipulation of audience emotions to create sensation and carry them along in the narration as an image-patterning technique where the storyteller ensures that the audience's emotion fluctuates back and forth as they listen. There is an activation of the audience sensation when the narrator introduces a conflict situation between characters. It stabilizes when the characters are at it to outwit one another and finally depresses when the conflict is resolved. In one of the stories, a boy went hunting and met an Ogre. For burning the bush in search for rats, he was chased by the Ogre, the owner of the bush. The boy ran and met the biggest animal on the way. As he waited in fear the elephant tore up trees and shouted that nothing could overpower him. Upon seeing the Ogre, the boy was advised by the elephant to run as fast as he could. He ran to the Wasp who was busy scooping water to trap fish. The Ogre got closer but the Wasp ordered the boy to help him scoop the water and not to mind the Ogre.

The Ogre got in the river, grabbed the Wasp and swallowed up. The Wasp came out through the Ogre's anus and also swallowed up the Ogre. A rope was used to tie the mid-section of the Wasp to prevent the Ogre from escaping through the anus. That is why the Wasp is seen these days with a narrow waist. In another story about the shepherd and the magical old woman, the shepherd witnessed the magical old woman symbolically stirring *sagebo* (t.z.), with all parts of its body. This could be a show of her magical powers. It could also mean the ability of the woman to sacrifice her whole body for the sustenance of life. The shepherd coined this action of the magical old woman into a song and sang it with his wooden flute. This started the conflict between the shepherd and the magical old woman. The Dog that always saved the shepherd from being killed appeared at the scene at the last minute because it had to break the chains the shepherd tied it with. At one point the magical old woman was climbing the tree to kill the shepherd when the dog suddenly appeared and tore her into pieces and rescued the shepherd. In these two stories, it is clear that the storytellers employed suspense to capture the attention of the audience. For instance, the audience's emotions were being activated when the Ogre started chasing the boy. It was at its peak when the Ogre got closer to the Elephant, and reached a second peak when he encountered the Wasp. Also when the magical old woman climbed to the top of the tree and was about to grab the shepherd the audience were emotionally charged, as they could be heard murmuring and lamenting and showing signs of anguish over the inescapable tragic end of the boy's life being revealed by the storyteller. However, their emotions stabilized when the Elephant dismissed the boy. Then again, they listened keenly when the Wasp, a tiny creature called the boy to come and wait for the Ogre to come. It was activated at the instant when the Wasp and the Ogre engaged in the fight of swallowing up each other. The depressing stage came when the storyteller concluded that the Wasp won the battle by eventually tying up its waist to prevent the Ogre from passing through its anus thus, resulting in its waist being smaller and round. In the case of the shepherd and the magical old woman, the resolution of conflict was when the shepherd's dog rushed to the spot just when the magical old woman was about to grab the shepherd. The dog then grabbed and tore the magical old woman into pieces and that marked the point of depression.

#### 4.1.2 Sound Imagery

Okpewho (1992:98) sees imagery as words that are used to "paint mental pictures that appeal to our feeling and understanding". Imagery makes use of devices such as the simile, metaphor, allusion and symbolism to create these sensory impressions by employing those expressions and meanings in the cultural and physical environment which are already familiar to the audience. There is also a sophisticated and subtle use of idiophones as is evident in the discussions below. In one of the stories, about the chief's farm and the orphan, the storyteller described the steps of the orphan as he led the way and walked to the farm house to fetch the guinea corn as; *viina, viina, viina*, and also *nyuuna, nyuuna, nyuuna*. These expressions left no doubt in the minds of the audience as to the diminutive stature of the orphan as he walked along leading the way. The storyteller's aim was to paint a vivid picture in the minds of the audience by his choice of those expressions. Apart from the mental picture, it is even more entertaining to hear the sounds made by these expressions. A shepherd caught the mysterious bird on the chief's farm and *yuulum, yuulum, yuulumfo belateri*, meaning "swung it round and threw it hard on the ground to sound lateri", and the bird was in pieces paving the way for him to enter into the farm house and to fetch the guinea corn that was badly needed to save the chief and his family from starvation. The orphaned little he-goat bit hard on the scrotum of hyena and it expanded *bom, bom, bom*. He then held the guitar that Hyena played with and pulled it *kururuu*, and started playing and singing. Afterwards he jumped about *ꞑꞑi, ꞑꞑi, ꞑꞑi*, apparently to tease at Hyena, then jumped into the animal pen and instructed the goats to move out. He again led the way *vula, vula, vula*, as they escaped. The expressions above created images of the actions in the minds of the audience as they portrayed. The reactions from the audience confirm that the use of imagery actually painted mental pictures in their minds as they in turn reacted to such situations noisily. For instance, hearing that the he-goat bit hard at the scrotum of Hyena, *werii, werii, werii* and followed that with the use of the guitar on Hyena's head *pugeya*, a member of the audience remarked noisily, *Woi*, and added that, *ti Asasejavurege* "woi, then Hyena moved to a different spot" The expression, *wois* a sign of anguished and the said member of the audience let it out involuntarily to show his empathy for Hyena's suffering. He even went further to suggest a remedy by stating that, Hyena moved away from the danger spot. In a similar vein, the sound that sometimes accompanied these expressions of imagery adds to the vividness of the mental picture that appears before the audience at the spot of the narration. For instance, the sound *kururuu*, represented the dragging of the guitar along the rough floor. When the hunter's son shot at the dwarf and the arrow landed on him, he caught fire and *ran/ꞑꞑꞑ, ꞑꞑꞑ, ꞑꞑꞑ* and fell to the ground *kuntaluy*. These and many other expressions abound in the Gurenε folktales. According to Okpewho (1992:92) "an idiophone is a stylistic technique that relies on sound". In one of the stories, a lady whose suitors came to visit, walked briskly into the main room and pulled at the store of calabashes *darii, darii, darii* and removed one.

The idiophone *darii, darii, darii* used by the storyteller conveys the action of pulling with force as a result of her being in a haste and full of anxiety and this conveyed the state of being of the young lady, very clearly. Then again in washing the calabash, the lady kept one knee in front and another behind and washed *keoku, keoku, keoku*, and then she washed '*wooku, wooku, wooku*' then she rinsed the calabash *saau, saau, saau*. This is where the audience understanding of the language and culture of the narrative events is called to play. In the Farefari society one of the qualities of a marriageable lady is her ability to prepare a good dish. In the case of the young lady in the story, she was being put to test because her lover had come and the first impression would be the kind of calabash, she presents to him with the water in it. This informed the efforts and anxiety she puts in, in the washing of the calabash. Another cultural issue that should not be lost sight of is the fact that calabashes are washed with rough sand collected from the riverside. It is the combination of the sand and the force applied by the lady in her bid to succeed in creating a lasting impression that produced the musical idiophones stated above and the last part of the stanza is the sound of the water used to rinse off the sand. In the same story, the father of the lady who was called to exchange greetings with the suitors, stepped *gim, gim, gim*. This is a vivid description of the heavily built nature of the old man who still exhibits youthfulness in his manner of walking and the fact that he was consenting to the idea of his daughter's marriage was exhibited in his steps. When Hare tricked his colleagues and took Dea's nice fitting mouth away, Dea was left with no choice but to pick the last and only ugly mouth left lying on the ground. He then fitted it hurriedly and ran *nyeki, nyeki, nyeki* away to safety. When a herd of goats were saved by a little he-goat, the goats came out of Hyena's house running and jumping *birega, birega, birega* and in a similar fashion, Mr. Wisdom's horse moved *tagaru, tagaru, tagaru* and also *taparega, taparega, taparega* and got back to the dancing ground of the Cattle Egrets to take back the horse of Mr. Knowledge who conceded defeat. When Mr. Rain accepted to provide water after a plea from Mr. Dam the sky sounded *gum, gum gum*, this was followed minutes later with rain water coming down in torrential form, *yorego, yorego, yorego*. As evidenced by the above examples Gurene storytellers employ these techniques variously in their delivery. These expressions afforded the audience the opportunity to see in their mind's eye the situation being narrated. This closeness to the point of action where the storyteller creates with the use of words and expressions is what excites the audience emotionally and keeps their concentration on for the period of the narration. These expressions have another quality of getting the audience so excited that, some of them would make comments on what is being narrated. The sound of some of the expressions serve as a form of entertainment since it becomes "good music" in the ears of the audience.

#### 4.1.3 Smile

This is a comparison of two things that are dissimilar with the use of such connectives as like, as and then. This is usually a literal observation and examples from the fifteen transcribed stories illustrated how the Farefari oral artists employ the device in the folktale narration. In one of the stories, the steps of the orphan who rescued the chief and his family from the torture of the bird from the bush farm house was described as he led the way, *nyuuna, nyuunanyuunawuutinganetinabula la* "walked like a little goat under a shrine". The magical old woman in one of the stories, transformed herself into a young charming fair lady, to take revenge on the shepherd for seeing her nakedness. She then appeared before the group of shepherds with her pubic hair, *yububuuuuukuleganuurensi la*. Like the millet crops by the river side". In story about the shepherd, he sang a song with his wooden flute about the nakedness of the magical old woman as she stirred the t.z. The storyteller described the sound getting to the magical old woman as, *ti lakijε taijεpogenya'anala tuberεnbalawuusε la n luibini la*, "the sound reached the magical old woman like something has fallen into the ear.

From the above instances, we realized that the storyteller had to compare two dissimilar things from his environment with the term *nyuu* which is likened to the English term "like and as" used in this type of comparison. It is meant to create an image of the situation or condition in the audience's mind.

#### 4.1.4 Parallelism

According to Agyekum (1999:56) "parallelism is a device by which the oral artist brings together in a balanced relationship of ideas and images that may seem independent of one another. It is also described as the soul of oral performance because it affords the skilled oral artist an opportunity to organize and sequence ideas around the central theme. In storytelling, this enables the storyteller to build on the foundation of "core-images" by hanging on and introducing a variety of incidents and even whole stories to the central theme or "core-images". The parallel structuring of stories during narration helps the storyteller and is for his convenience. The first general idea about parallelism in the fifteen folktales transcribed is the organization of the stories by the storytellers into the multi-layered themes and the presentation of each story and its related theme and moral teaching. Another interesting feature of parallelism is the repetition of statements and expressions simultaneously between the storyteller and the respondent on one hand and the storyteller and the audience on another hand in the case of songs. The following expressions from the stories are used to support the above view.

1. Storyteller: Mam n yuum boi I once lived.

Respondent: Fum n yuumboi You once lived

2. Storyteller: Kawumdamene Did not hear any sound

Respondent: A kawum damene S/he did not hear any sound

3. Storyteller: Ba n kɔ'ɔm ta, ta, tapaeɣaa When they finally got there.

Respondent: Ba n kɔ'ɔm ta, ta, ta paeɣaa When they finally got there.

Sometimes the statement is put in the form of a question from the storyteller using the negative markers “ka” and “dagi”. This is then repeated by the respondent in the form of a positive statement as the response. For instance,

Storyteller: Ba kadikedinlɔnɔ la boba? Have they not given them the instruments?

Respondent: Ba dikedinlɔnɔ la boba They gave them the instruments.

4. Storyteller: Dagi kunkone la zuen Not on the leper's head?

Respondent: Kunkone la zuen On the leper's head.

In the case of songs, the parallel repetitive nature of the interactions between the audience and the storyteller occurred in all the songs that were part of the narrative processes recorded by the researcher.

#### 4.1.5 Repetition

Okpewho (1992:71) stated that “the repetition of a phrase, a line or a passage does have a certain sing-song quality to it; if the repetition occurs between intervals in say, a song or a tale, the audience is often delighted to identify with it and to accompany the performer in going over a passage that has now become familiar. Besides this general aesthetic impact, repetition does have more specific values within the text”. This means that in storytelling repetition is used by the storyteller for many reasons. In the fifteen stories transcribed there are instances of repetition of sentences, songs and the rephrasing of statements. Agyekum (1999:44) observed that “repetition has both aesthetic and utilitarian value. It makes the work beautiful. It is a device that not only gives certain beauty or attractiveness to a piece of oral expression, but also serves certain practical purposes in the overall organization of the oral performance”. The oral artist uses the technique of repetition first of all to achieve a certain communicative effect. As noted by Havranek (1964:10), the touchstone of verbal art lies in a maximized “use of the devices in such a way that this use attracts attention and is perceived as uncommon”. In oral art performance, the performer is usually seen to be in a contractual obligation with the audience, who is constantly evaluating the performer. The Gurene storyteller uses repetition often in his narration. For instance, the repeated word ‘*ta*’ creates the impression in the minds of the audience of a far distant place when a storyteller expresses the concept of distance. The storyteller repeated the verb particle ‘*ta*’ four times in a row. Thus it sounded, *ti Asɔ'ɔha ta, ta, ta, ta, ta pae Asaseɣayire*, “then Mr. Hare walked for a long time and finally arrived at Mr. Hyena’s house”, and the shepherd who domesticated the dog among the Farefari people, is said to have, *‘εεra, εεra, εεra ta nyenebaakɔma*. “He went around and then discovered the young leopards”. Here the repetition of *ta* and *εεra* have a special appeal both as sounds and as a more dramatic way of capturing the idea of extent. The aesthetic effect of the sounds as they are repeated in succession, to the audience is also worth nothing. In the story about the young lady and her lovers, the action of washing the calabash was repeated three times in each stanza, thus conveying a musical tone. Farefari storytellers also adopt this technique frequently as a means of marking off segments or episodes of a story. In the story of Mr. Dog contracting a marriage with Miss Cat, and when Mr. Rain asked for the hand of Mr Dam’s daughter in marriage, the storytellers repeated the songs at every stage of their narrations from the start to the end. Apart from this function of marking off episodes, the use of songs in folktales with repeated lines abound in the stories collected. Two of these songs from the stories are illustrated below.

10. *ɲwaamɔgere kiɲesaa yire* “Dam has gone to the house of Rain

*ɲwaamɔgere kiɲesaa yire* Dam has gone to the house of Rain

*ɲwaana'am lore tue sore* To say that he is sorry

*ɲwaayɔɔmakɔmadɔgerikiima* The youth disregard elders

*ɲwaabibe'εsinyεtiye la* It is the stubborn ones that get

*ɲwaanɲaa bugunɲwabelega* problems”

15. *Mpɔremanyɔrema* (2x) “I am grinding

*N boi la neeren* I am grinding

*Sabuabiapelege la ninibɔnanεeren* The beautiful one with spotless eyes is grinding.

*ɲwana ma'a Abaa duma wɔgebanɔa* By Mr. Dog with a long mouth is coming.

*ɔna sore yaa*

*N puadunifupaammanye ti n dɔgεmεyo?* If I suffer abdominal pains, have I grown lean?”



These songs are usually sung by both the storyteller and the audience and the repetition, sometimes is encouraged by the audience for the musical purpose. In the song numbered 10, the phrase ‘waa’ has been repeated throughout the lines of the song. The first two lines are also repeated. In one of the stories, the refrain ‘*mpɔremanyɔrema*’, is repeated at every third line in the song. The audiences usually take up the refrain while the storyteller provides the information in a call and response fashion. In some instances, storytellers use repetition to fill in gaps in the narration and to make time to readjust and organize their line of thoughts, as I observed during the recording of these stories.

#### 4.1.6 Rhyme

One other device used by oral artists especially the storytellers among the Farefari people are sounds that rhyme. Agyekum (199:93) explained a rhyme as “a close similarity or identity of sound between accented syllables that occupy the same position in two or more adjacent lines or verses”. Rhyming sounds have a musical component that is pleasurable to listeners, thus drawing their attention to what is being said. During narration, rhyming expressions help to create interesting sounds in the ears of audience. A few illustrations from the fifteen transcribed stories will confirm its usage as a device for attention-getting among storytellers in the Farefari society. In a story about a challenge between Wisdom and Knowledge to determine who is the wisest, the narrator said, *Aputi’irɛ la Ayem nɛɛbɛyuumɔpisenaaasi la anaasi* “Wisdom and Knowledge challenge for supremacy for forty-four years”. The storyteller’s choice of a second *naasi* “the figure four” to match with the end of the first *naasi* which is the ending sound of the compound word meaning forty years is purposely to create a musical tone in the ears of the audience. Similarly, the suitor in one of the stories, counted the toiletry items he used in bathing in preparation to visit his lover in this manner, *soosoo duma pisenaaasi, ki’ibopisenaaasipapa’asipisenaaasi*, “that is forty pieces each of sponges, soap and towels”. We can only conclude that it is not by mere coincidence that the storyteller choice of every item ended on the sounds *pise* and *naasi*. It is a clear indication of the ability of the storyteller to exhibit his skills in the use of rhyming sound to create a musical effect in his narration. The use of rhyming sound was even more pronounced in the songs that accompanied most of the stories. For instance, when a chief in a story, rode on his horseback to the farm in the bush to find out what scares away his wives from collecting the guinea corn, it was put into a song. The storyteller employed rhythmic sounds in a repeated form to describe the movement of the horse which engaged the attention of the audience for well over a minute as they joined in and stamped their feet while clapping to match. It went like this;

*KiparesinoKiyamesino* (the sound produced as the horse galloped to the farmhouse)

*KiparesinoKiyamesino*

*KiparesinoKiyamesino*

*KiparesinoKiyamesino*

The challenge between the Crown bird and the Tortoise for the chief’s daughter, involved singing which the two suitors did beautifully by the storyteller’s ability to use rhymes.

A song by Crown bird (Bugunwabelega)

*Bun-ɲwaaɲwaaɲwaaɲwaa*

*Bun-ɲwaa ta bun-ɲwaa*

*Ba nɪparum ti Bulegotɪɲazɔɛyaa*

*Beerebulikasureen*

*Daarebulikasureen*

*Bun-ɲwaa ta bun-ɲwaa*

A song by Tortoise (Pokure/Kakure)

*Kurezenkurezenkurezenyaa*

*Kurezen ta kurezen*

*Ba nɪparum ti Bulegotɪɲazɔɛyaa*

*Beerebulikasureen*

*Daarebulikasureen*

*Kurezen ta kurezen*

From the two songs above there are rhymes as shown. The sounds *ɲwaa* and *yaar* rhyme at the ends in the song by the Crown bird. Then again the suffixes “*re* and *ɾɛ*” in *beere* and *daare* also rhymes. There is also rhyming in the endings of the sounds *zenyaa* and *zɔɛyaa*.

Another interesting language feature of the two songs has to do with the names of the characters. The sound of the first starting words of the two songs is closely related to the sounds of the names of the singers. For instance, the Crown bird is called Bugunwabelega and that of the Tortoise is Pokure/Kakure.

The use of *bunhwaa* and *kurezey* to start the songs is seen here to be part of the creative ability of the storyteller using rhyming sounds to create a distinction between the two singers since the messages of their songs are the same.

#### 4.1.7 Allusion

Allusion is a figure of speech that makes brief and causal indirect reference to a historical event, a person, object, or action. In narration, the artist would normally allude to things common in his environment, to help convey the import of the event being narrated. In trying to impress upon the audience the calmness with which Wisdom prepared for the journey with Knowledge to the festival of the Cattle egrets, the storyteller, alluded to the distance between their horses as they set off by saying,

*Aputi'ire n yese la ti Ayemboi la Aguuereyirewasa.* "When Wisdom finally set out to go, Knowledge's horse was as far away as Aguuere's house". By that allusion, the audience who are members of the community are able to make a mental picture of the distance involved from the point of narration to Aguuere's house in the community and then to determine the speed at which Wisdom took to catch up with Knowledge. In talking about the several heads hanging all over the body of a Dwarf, the storyteller said; *ti zutokɔ ɔmyulabalazururuwuu Atangamɔnkɔ la'*, "with heads hanging all over him like the fruits of Atanga's mango tree". Again, this is a big and popular mango tree that bears big juicy fruits, probably eaten by most members of the community. By referring to this 'mother-like' mango tree in the community, which is known by a good number of the audience, if not all, the intention of the narrator is that, the audience will imagine the mental picture that he painted of the dwarf.

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