

Examining the Composition and the Socio-Cultural and Educational Values of the Gurenɛ Riddle.

Patrick Atanga Aduko¹

Abstract

The study is about the Gurenɛ riddle which precedes the narration of the folktale in most instances among the Farefari people of the Upper-East Region of Ghana. The study examined the Composition and the Socio-cultural and Educational Values of the Gurenɛ Riddle. The purposive sampling technique was used and the design of the study was the qualitative research since the analyses of the data was mainly descriptive. The sample size of the population of the study were two renowned storytellers and their corresponding respondents and the audience from the Boonɔ-Sapuuro and Bolega-Sokabiisi communities. The instruments used for the data collection were an unstructured interview of the storytellers and a participatory observation of the narrations of the riddles by the researcher. The findings confirmed that the Gurenɛ riddle is an integral part of the storytelling process. Apart from the riddle being an effective source of meaningful entertainment to the youth, its importance, such as imparting the values of respect, tolerance, truthfulness, cultural awareness, and the enhancement of knowledge and wisdom for educational purposes to the youth were found to be worth the attention.

Keywords: riddle, values, culturally acclaimed, tonal.

1. Introduction

The literate world has inherited a comprehensive body of knowledge from the pre-literate world of verbal communication (Nalusiba, 2010). This compendium of oral tradition from whatever ultimate origin, Nalusiba noted, is practically universal in character both in time and space. The importance of oral tradition globally and particularly in Africa, cannot be over emphasized. The African society has been labelled with phrases such as an oral society or a society that lacks the culture of reading (Mulindwa, 2001 cited in Nalusiba, 2010). She stated that traditional educators were great narrators of oral traditions which they voiced loudly accompanied by demonstrations. She mentions that, books and libraries are often seen as redundant in societies that are mainly based on oral traditions and practices. In such societies the people derive more pleasure from the oral and performing arts like talking, riddling, singing, and dancing and as a result, the oral mode remains prevalent. Oral tradition as one of the major ingredients in the struggle for asserting self-identity also has a strong patriotic content. Obiechina (1975, P.32) refers to oral tradition as a situation in which cultural transmission is carried out by word of mouth through direct contact between individuals depending largely on memory and habits of thought, action, and speech for cultural continuity. The significance attached to oral tradition is demonstrated by our annual celebrations of festivals. However, oral tradition can hardly meet the interests of the changing generations unless its social function is broadly defined, interpreted, and presented to the consumers with embellishment. With the general recognition in many circles of African studies as a worthwhile field of research, an increasing number of local scholars are turning to a detailed and serious analysis of their own oral literature and are beginning to find some measures of encouragement. Finnegan (1970), oral literature is a medium for transmitting historical knowledge and it has a timeless quality because it reflects truths of all time of a particular historic moment. In recent times, changes in the social structure of traditional communities due to urbanization and westernization have adversely affected some traditional forms of oral art. Verbal art is transmitted through someone who narrates and reaches the audience and may be seen as the full power of continuous memory at work in the process of dealing with the account of events, situations, transmission of cultural tradition and norms.

¹ St John Bosco College of Education, P. O. Box 11, Navrongo-Ghana. Email of Corresponding author: adukopatrick1969@gmail.com Telephone: 0243345194/0205683761

The verbal art of a people is by nature a dynamic literature and riddling is one of them. Hart (1964) mentions that riddles are found in oral traditions among Americans, Indians, Chinese, Russians, Hungarians, Dutch, Philippians, and Africans. According to Scott (1965), riddles as a folk literary genre has been in existence since 400 AD. Riddles advise and guide both the young and the old. Riddles serve as a foundation block for the reflection of one's life. They educate, entertain, stimulate the people's mind and motivate their observations and thinking through the natural environment. For instance the riddle: *Beni n boinikə ʔmɛɛradeɛzɛɛra a yire? Kakute-Tortoise*. "What is it that, wherever it goes, it goes with its house". This riddle advises the Farefari people that, in life anything can happen to us and as such there is the need to always prepare oneself against any mishap that may come one's way.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Riddling among the Farefari people was an effective means of imparting the knowledge of the people to the youth. Riddling, just like 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 riddles which preceded the folktale in narration and served as education to not only the youth but also to everyone in the community. However, all the good attributes of riddling has waned due to the lack of its effective practice by the people especially as an educational tool for learning by the youth. The research is therefore aimed at collecting and examining the Gureñ riddle so as to help in the promotion of its use by the Farefari people in general and as an educational tool to the youth and school children in particular. The socio-cultural and educational values of riddling among the Farefari would be examined and the good aspect of the cultural wisdom in these riddles considered for effective implementation and use by children at the basic level to enhance their academic progression.

The research proposes to answer the following questions:

Research Question 1. How is the Gureñ riddle composed?

Research Question 2: What are the types of riddles in Gureñ?

Research Question 3: Are there socio-cultural and educational values of Gureñ riddles?

1.1.1 Significance of the study

The study would be of great value to the knowledge base of the Farefari people in general and to the teaching of literature and culture at the schools in particular. Due to the fast erosion of our language and cultural ways of living as a result of globalization, a document of that nature will serve as a guide to the effective source of imparting such valuable information to the youth. In the Farefari society like most other societies in Africa, riddling has the main purpose of entertaining the audience. The nature of these riddles is such that certain inherent values of the society are embedded in them and portrayed during the riddling sessions. These served indirectly to promote the cultural value systems that are upheld by the people. By listening to and participating in riddling, the youth are indirectly influenced by these cherished values which include respect, tolerance, and truthfulness. Riddling while used by the people as a tool for entertaining themselves, could be an effective means of controlling and ordering the lives of members of the community. For instance it is a forum where the youth express themselves freely through the use of the language. By this practice they acquire the habit of appropriately using language as a tool for their socio-cultural needs. Information on riddling, which is part of the general package of stories told among the people has several benefits. There are benefits such as getting to appreciate and value one's culture for a meaningful interaction among others in the global community. Individuals among the community members could be motivated to take up the practice of riddling as a profession and even on commercial basis. In formal education, riddling could be an effective tool in preparing the youth adequately in the skills of listening, speaking, and later writing through the procedure of its narration. The opportunity to comment openly on related issues through riddling enables the youth to acquire the habit of appropriate use of the language and the accepted form of presenting their views both in and out of the formal school system. In riddling, members of the community come together irrespective of their differences in religious and political beliefs to entertain themselves and share in the culturally acclaimed wisdom of the society. This goes a long way to promote unity among members of the community which results in peaceful settlement of issues and enhances an effective development of the community.

1.1.2 Limitations of the study

This study does not cover all aspects of the Gureñ folktale and riddling. Its focus is on the riddling processes with respect to the composition. Though the study is said to be in the Farefari society, it is practically not feasible to undertake a study of this nature in the whole society. Riddling which precedes the folktale narration, is a special skill possessed by oral artists in parts of the society. The two principal storytellers were selected from the Boonjo and Bolega districts for two important reasons.

First the researcher is familiar with that environment as admonished by (Okpewho 1992, P.335). He speaks the Gurene dialect. Then again it is the Gurene dialect that is reduced into the writing system of the Farefari people and used in schools, colleges, and universities. However, the study is applicable to all since there are only minor dialectal differences among all members of the Farefari society.

1.1.3 Delimitations of the study

The study is centered on riddling and is specifically to examine the composition of the Gurene riddles and their socio-cultural values. This is because riddling as a literary genre is performed by noted individuals in the Farefari society. The researcher confined himself to the Boorjo and Bolega districts and to two renowned storytellers who are knowledgeable in the Farefari riddles and are native speakers within the specific communities.

1.1.4 Methodology

In this study, the researcher employed the qualitative research approach and the descriptive research design. The main purpose of the application of this research design in this study is the description of the state of affairs as they are and it involves the analyses and interpretation of data (Osuala, 2000). The researcher selected two principal storytellers and their groups from two communities purposively using the purposive sampling technique. The researcher used the participatory observation technique and the in-depth interview for the collection of the data. The researcher took time to listen and to record the riddles as they were being narrated by the principal storytellers. The recorded data was then transcribed and translated. This was subsequently analyzed using the systematic content analyses model. In all, thirty (30) riddles out of fifty (50) riddles were selected mainly from the primary source and these were sampled for the study based on the riddling types recorded and the cultural intuition of the researcher as a native speaker.

1.5 Results and Discussions

1.5.1 Composition of Gurene riddles

The view held about some oral literature genres in African has been that riddles are meant for children. This may be true to the extent that it is children who participate mostly in riddling. Giray-Saul (1984), writing on the composition of riddles, reported that the Mossi informants were of the view that it is impossible to create tone-riddles. This assertion from the Mossi informants, suggest that it is studied through the mentoring of individuals. Among the Farefari people, though children are said to be the frequent users of riddles due to the simple nature of their structure, it cannot be said that children are the composers. Riddles such as the ones that precede the folktale is usually composed and performed by renowned storytellers within the specific communities and it is only the children who sit by to listen that are able to repeat and perform such riddles at their play time. While it was confirmed among the Farefari people that children do not create riddles, the assertion that tone riddles are a special creation of the culture and are therefore not easily created in the everyday interaction of the people was not observed by this researcher. Among the Farefari people all types of riddles could be created on the spur of the moment just as is done with other oral genres of the language. The creativity and alertness of the oral artist narrating the folktale and riddling is what varies from person to person. This is usually evident in the selection and use of expressions and or items which are foreign to the culture of the people. For instance, in Gurene there are example of riddles that are composed using expressions and items that are foreign to the language and culture of the Farefari people. This is a clear evidence that the composition of riddles is first done by the adult members of the society in their everyday life experiences and later taken up by the children who sit through during folktale and riddling sessions. Let's consider a few examples of such riddles which are also tonal in nature.

1. Riddle: N tāataano
"My sound"
Response: ZuowuuTamalepāano.
"Your head like a loaf of bread bought from Tamale."
2. Riddle: N Halemahaka
"My sound"
Response: Zuowuuda'anmanēka
"Your head like that of a grinding mill at the market square."
3. Riddle: Nbileete
"I have a blade"
Response: Mam de la sōlemasipēeta
"I am the inspector in charge of storytelling."

From the tone riddles 1-3, it is realized that the items used in the response are not indigenous to the language and culture of the people. In the riddles, (1) and (2), the items used are not from the culture of the Farefari people. This probably explained the reason why the riddlers had to create imaginary sounds to rhyme in harmony with the new item used as the appropriate response of the riddles. Thus, the *fātaanɔ* rhymes with *pāanɔ*, while the expression, *halamahaka* also rhymes with *maneka* considering the ka sound at the end. The expressions *fāanɔ* and *pāanɔ* have a tonal relationship just as it is with the *halamahaka* and *nekaneka*. Culturally, *pāanɔ* ‘a loaf of bread’ and *maneka* ‘a grinding mill’ are not part of the people’s ways of life in the olden days. This confirms the fact that for the tonal riddles in Farefari, their creation is not limited to a particular time in the past as was reported by the Mossi informants (Giray-Saul 1984). In the riddle (3), the items used for both the question and response are relatively new to the culture. The items *bileete* and *sipɛɛta* are not known to the people in the olden days. This probably, could be due to the fact that these items were foreign to the language and culture of the Farefari people. However, with the advent of modernity the people now live and work with these items and even creatively use them to communicate artistically. This is enough evidence that among the Farefari people riddles are not created and used solely by children but they are rather created and performed by experienced oral artists in the society. Children only get used to narrating and enjoying riddles due to the simple and musical nature of most of the riddles. It is even common with children who have stayed with adults and learnt how to narrate them.

1.5.2 Tone riddles

According to Awedoba (2000) tone riddles appear to occur in most of the languages of Gur cultures across the Savanna belt of West Africa and other African communities. In many Gur cultures including the Farefari culture, these types are used to initiate folktale session. There is usually a tonal fit between the query and the response or a tonal correspondence between the query and response. Among the Luvale of Zambia, the Luba and Luluwa of Zaire and the Ibibio-Efik group of Southern Nigeria, the tone is reflected in the resemblance of rhythm between the question and the answer. Since these riddles occur in languages in which tonality is a significant feature, the question and answer are marked by identical tonal patterns. The Ibibio tone riddles are mainly characterized by their erotic allusions. The riddles mostly contained some references to vagina, penis, clitoris or coition (Simmons 1958). The tone riddles collected bear striking similarities with those of the Ibibio of Southern Nigeria in the case of their erotic allusions. For instance, among the Farefari culture, such riddles are narrated by the people.

N butilegeve kabim

“The broth of my he-goat with a curved face”

Penekatarinyina ti yo’oresinazɛɛna.

“It is because the vagina has no teeth, the penis always go there to play around.”

According to Maruka (1990), the tone riddle is one in which the challenge and the response have identical tonal and rhythmic patterns marked by syllables correspondence. The tonal correspondence between the question and the answer reflects prominently among the Farefari people as they narrate these types. Let’s consider the following tone riddles in Gurenɛ.

Riddle: *N kutɔnkɔmá’ásim*

“A shade of my anthills”

Response: *Dɔbavĩ ti funaribuazú’ásim*

“You be squatting there hoping to drink the broth of a goat”.

Riddle: *N buremayóóré*

“My pot containing the residue of extracted shea nut oil”

Response: *Itafijĩ ti tupae Davalegabééré*

“You should be economical in your ways so that we can get to the month of April, when there are shortages of foodstuff and water”.

Riddle: *N talati*-my sound that makes ‘talati’

Response: *Isige la fubayeti*

“You gossip, get up, and go away”

Riddle: *N nagedenebókó*

“My hollow ground in the cattle yard”

Response: *Nuurenwupitálókó*

“Your mouth like a quiver that costs thirty pesewas”

Riddle: *N konkonko*

“My sound konkonko”

Response: *Fuakanaæla deesunko*

“A blind person do not deserve a spoon”

Riddle: *N tãataano*

“My sound tãataano”

Response: *ZuowuuTamalepãano.*

“Your head is like a loaf of bread bought from Tamale”

Riddle: *N Halemahaka*

“My sound that, halamahaka”

Response: *Zuowuu'amaneka*

“Your head like that of a grinding mill at the market square.”

Riddle: *N bileete*

“I have a blade”

Response: *Mam de la solemasipæeta*

“I am the inspector in charge of storytelling.”

Okpehwo (1992) emphasized on the tonal correspondence between the query and the response, he acknowledged the non-correspondence in some case. However, even in the case of the non-tonal correspondence, there is usually an overall matching in the musicality of the query and the response. In the Gurene tonal riddles outlined above there is almost a complete tonal harmony between the query and the response. This is a typical case of the query-response correspondence of tone in the tone riddles in Gurene. From the riddles 1-4 above, it is observed that there is tonal correspondence in both the query and the response. The expressions, ma'asum, yoore, talati and boko which are found in the query aspect of the riddles 1-4, are in harmony in terms of tone with the expressions in the response aspect. The expressions in the response from riddle 1-4 are; za'asum, beere, bayeti and loko. As such one can easily relate the question and response in terms of the tonal correspondence as follows:

Question: *Ma'asum, yoore, talati and boko*

Response: *Za'asum, beere, bayeti and loko*

The expression that starts the question in all the four examples is ‘N’. This is a relative pronoun used by the riddler who asked the question. From the examples we can deduce that the ‘N’ which means ‘I’ in this context, is used deliberately to create tone harmony and music in these riddles among the Farefari people.

1.5.3 The simple or universal riddle

There are riddles in the Farefari language and culture, which could be referred to as the simple or universal riddles. The simple riddle consists of a phrase or statement referring to some well-known object in a more or less veiled language (Okpehwo, 1990).

Among the Thonga of East Africa, there is a simple riddle that says “Little things that defeat us” and the response is “Mosquitoes”. The Fulani who are mostly herders of cattle and survive mainly by relying on the milk they get from the cows have a riddle about the milk. “Be born; come morning, give birth” and the response is “Fresh milk”. This is because; milk is left overnight before it is used to make butter. The Shona of Southern Africa would put a riddle across by saying “The little wildcat in the long grass” and the response to this riddle is “Scissors”. Lastly, the Lamba says “The house in which one does not turn round” and the response is “The Grave” (Doke 1947).

According to Yankah (1985-89-90), there is usually a metaphorical correspondence between the problem and the solution in most of these simple riddles. In this type of riddling, there is always a question and a response, which must bear a metaphorical relationship to the query or question. Examples of such riddles as is often narrated among the Farefari people and which were recorded are:

1. Riddle: *Beni n bojyirepuanya' nuuredeeka muna di?*

“There is something in the house whose mouth is always open and never closes?”

Response: *Bɔ'ɔ* “A traditionally built room that is roofed with rafters and mud”

2. Riddle: *Beni n boitarazuuredeekamela di?*

“What is it that has a tail but do not wag its tail?”

Response: *Sampane*

“Wooden board use to hit the gravel when the women are cementing the floor to make it firm.

3. Riddle: *Sela n boi, fu san tum e ti a ta tum tuune la, a kan le lebena*

“What is it that when you send it to perform an activity for you, it will go but will not return after the work is done?”

Response: *Doore*. “A stick/stone”

4. Riddle: *Beni n boijwuma la neresaaladeedagenaneresaal?*

“What is it that looks exactly like a human being but is not a human”

Response: *Foote* “a photograph of a human being”.

In some cases, the question or query is usually short but the answer or response is very long. For instance there is a riddle that goes; “*N wagesaga*” “My sound wagesaga”. ‘*Sela n ze’elesaaazuomwaluina, ka dam papi, toleisegezeoi, deekapiise tuba*.

“Something fell from the skies without sounding papi, it then got up and run away without cleaning its ears. From the five universal riddles as stated above there is enough evidence of what can be seen as semantic fit between the query and the response. In the riddle (1), the ‘*ya’ nuure*’ and the ‘*b’o’o*’ constitute a semantic fit. In this riddle the literal meaning of “*yanuure*” is to keep the mouth open continuously. A human being opens and closes his mouth occasionally. However, the context of the opening of the mouth of a human being is similar to the entrance of the traditional room “*b’o’o*” which opens continuously. Thus, the expression ‘*ya’ nuuredeekamuna*’, “opened consistently without closing or forever”. Culturally, the traditional room of the Farefari people which is called *b’o’o* is central to the construction of a new compound in the community. This room is said to be the abode of the ancestral spirits of the family. It is usually the first to be built together with the kitchen among the people. Its position at any homestead is so conspicuous that anyone entering into the house for the first time meets it squarely. The location of this room and its socio-cultural and spiritual relevance to the Farefari people is the reason why it readily comes in to mind and used in this riddle. In the riddle (2) above, the handle of the wooden floor firmer is similar to the tail of an animal such as a dog. Both stick out at the back side. In the case of the dog, its tail is used to wag for several reasons. One of such uses is to show love, affection, and sometimes appreciation to its owner. In the case of the wooden handle it is that part of the item that enables the workers to handle the firmer and to hit on the ground. Without that part of the wooden firmer, it cannot be used for the purpose for which it was made. Both “tails” therefore have uses however, in riddling, where there is need to ask questions and provide responses, then it is appropriately used. The difference is the fact that, the tail of the wooden firmer cannot wag. This is where there is a semantic fit of both items being tail-like but with one being mobile and has different uses from the other which cannot move and has no life in it. As such it is the only appropriate response in the context of the question posed. The riddle (3) had the expression “*sela n boi*”, there is something, which carries a similar meaning as “*beni n boi*” what exists. The act of throwing a stone is compared with sending a child to perform an activity. However, unlike the child the stone can be sent to kill a bird or pluck a fruit but will not return to the sender. For this riddling type, there are usually opposing persons. The first part of the riddle posed by the contestant is usually marked off with a question marker. The precedent is often long whilst the sequent or answer may be one word. In Gurenε, the Farefari version of riddling, the interrogative marker is the phrase “*beni*”. “*Beni*” is a question marker in the Gurenε language and can be used to elicit response on its own during normal conversations.

1.5.4 The problem riddle/puzzle

Okpewho classified these under what he called ‘Dilemma tales’. The performance of these types of riddles usually end with a question or a problem that require the audience to take turns to debate constructively in an attempt to resolve the dilemma posed. Among the Farefari, some of these riddles have carefully thought out approach to solving the puzzle, while others do not have definite responses but are left to the ingenuity of the respondents. The Ila of Zambia has such puzzle like conundrum riddles. For instance, there is a puzzle that goes like “A man, his wife and their two mothers, are to cross a river. However, only three people could be ferried across. Who should be left to perish among them?” After each possible combination was found to be unacceptable, the final answer is that they all had to sit by the bank of the river and perish together. Below are three examples of these problem riddles narrated among the Farefari people.

1. *Budaasisitā n boilagumlegerapogeyija. Daarediyima ti budaasi la kayimanyaadikεbisega ti a bisesaazuonsa, nye ti bazεba la kime. A daayele a taaba la me, ti ayimak’o’mdike sunjo yerege ti ba gā’arebini ti beereyilege ti basinjekuure la. Ba yuum ta pikeranini la ti baboi la bazεba la yire. Kayima me k’o’mdike a zuureluseko’ompuannyaayaeva’asekum la zuo ti pugela la isegene’embalafabebubuudeebobaare!*

Sokere: Budaasisitāwa, ani n nari ti a di p’okawa?

“There are three suitors who are courting one lady from a distant land to marry. On one evening, one of them looked into a mirror and realized that the lady had died and he immediately informed his colleagues. The second man spread a mat and invited his colleagues to sleep on, so that they can go to the funeral the next day. They slept and woke up to realize they are at the funeral grounds.

Then the third man brought out a whisk, soaked it into water and sprinkled the water on the dead lady. Instantly, she woke up, stood up, and welcomed the three men. Now which one among these three men deserves the lady as a wife and why?”

2. *Nera n boitarasaseña, bua la yaama nyaa bota ti a tariyakekulega. Doreñ la n boi kulegan la wan ta'amze la bgerotuyima'ayake. Budaawa san loesasena la ti a tari yake, bua la kanbaseyaama la obega. A me san dikedyaama la yakera, sasegala kanbasebua la obega.*

Sokere: Fumputi'irepuan, fumi'ise ti budaawa wan ije la nyanita'amyake la kalogerowa ti dañokambona?

“A man had to cross a river carrying a goat, a hyena and fresh baobab tree leaves. The canoe at the river side can only carry two items to the other side at a go. If the man decides to carry along the hyena, the goat will eat the fresh leaves. If he carried along the leaves, the hyena will eat up the goat. How will the man cross the river at the end of the day with all the three items?”

3. *Pogesunabatā la bakomabatā n sinje ta pækuleganuuren ti bayakekinjezi'an. Pogesi la kaoberitaaba. Koma la me kaoberitaabaamaapogesi la oberisitaabakomame. Ba n pae la ti doreñ la n boikulegan la wan ta'amze la nrebabayibayima'ayakekulega la. Ba me ka tari foleganbazā'adoosedoreñ la zuoyakekulega la.*

Sokere: Fum n bise la ba wan ije la nyanita'amyakekulega la dee ti pogesi la kanobetaaba koma?

“Three women who are witches are to cross a river with their three children. Each woman had a child among the three children. These women will not bewitch and eat up their own children but will quickly bewitch and eat up one another's child if left unattended to. If the canoe can only ferry two people across at a go, how will the women and their children cross safely to the other side of the river”

1.5.5 The song riddle

Among the Farefari people this form of riddling is not common these days due to the complex nature of reciting it. It requires an instant recall of what to say next after the first expression. They are usually in the tone of a song and the narration comes in a string of queries and responses. Usually, there is an opening formula, which serves as an initial statement from the respondent. The one doing the query then begin to ask related questions based on the response given on each line. Among the Makua of Tanzania, the recitation of the song-riddles is similar to the Farefari context. The precedent and the query are both proposed and responded to by the same person-the reciter. The song-riddles are mostly recitals and their form is more fixed. In the Farefari tradition song-riddles have each of the lines related to the other through a string of words mentioned and the ending word is repeated as the root of the next line. Let's consider two example of the song-riddling among the Farefari people.

The beginning statement is: Asoree, Asore, guma;

- | | |
|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| Riddle: | Response: |
| Ani n gum? “who has gum?” | Agumatiisi“personal name” |
| Ani n ti? “who has ti?” | A tiyaarum “personal name” |
| Ani n ya? “who has ya” | Ayaazwasi“personal name” |
| Ani n zɔ? “who has zɔ” | Azɔaparumme“expression?” |
| Ani n pam? “who has pam” | Apambiir“personal name” |
| Ani n bi? “who has bi” | Abiisilega“personal name” |
| Ani n si?“who has si” | Asiinwɔɔɔ“personal name” |
| Ani n nɔm? “who has nɔm” | Anɔngɛlega “personal name” |
| Ani n gɛ? “who has gɛ” | Agɛɛmbɛɛla“personal name” |

The song-riddle is based on several factors. One must not only be alert but have the ability to instantly formulate a sound that corresponds to the question. Unlike the other types, in the song-riddle the response initiates the next line of question. This is so because the question usually repeats the central syllable or sound that the respondent supplied from the previous line. For instance, from the song-riddle above, the prominent syllable in the expression “*agumatiisi*” is the-“*tiisi*”. That then constitutes the next question. For instance the example above -*yaa*, -*zɔɔ*, -*bi*, -*nɔɔ*, -*gɛ* and -*bɛɛ* are used as the stem expressions in the question and these expressions were all initiated by the respondent.

1.5.6 Social-cultural and educational values of the riddle.

Riddling among the Farefari people, which usually is used to serve as curtain raiser for the narration of folktales during story telling plays significant roles in the Socio-Cultural and educational lives of the people, especially the younger generation. In the olden days the most effective vehicle for conveying the culture of the people and the proper upbringing of the youth from one generation to another was through riddling and storytelling. The primary function of the riddle which precedes the folktale is to entertain the audience. However riddling is a fertile ground for the unearthing of potential oral artists and for the sustenance of the culture and history of a people. Scheub who studied the Xhosa storytelling was cited by Okpewho (1992:108) to have commented as follows. Entertainment is one of the chief aims of both the storyteller and the performer. The storyteller seeks to entertain mainly by producing little more than an objectification of the core-image, allied with relatively unsophisticated stylistic devices. The performer goes beyond that, but in her efforts to do more than merely entertain the members of her audience, the fact remains that she still entertains them. She seeks to externalize the core-image, to evoke it, to give it a pleasing form. We can deduce certain structural patterns of the tradition from the production of both the storyteller and the performer, but aesthetic principles, while they do exist in rudimentary form in the works of the storyteller can be found fully realized in the works of the performer. In oral art performance, the overriding purposes are to entertain as emphasized by Scheub. However, in the course of entertainment while the audience in general is made to feel the aesthetic experience, the youth learn a lot about their culture and also acquire skills of communication. By watching and listening to the oral artist, the youth are unconsciously being taken through an informal training to become future oral artists and by extension to be knowledgeable members of their culture, language, and traditions. Riddling is an effective oral art form of preparing the mental faculties of the children to be able to embrace formal education. In the formal school system, children are expected to listen keenly to their instructors and to ask questions. They are also expected to memorize what they learnt and to respond orally and in some instances in the written form to questions from their teachers. These exercises require the cognitive development of the children's minds at an early age. In riddling which demands immediate and appropriate response, this helps to sharpen the thinking skills of the children. They are taught during riddling to listen attentively, thus acquiring the skills of listening which is vital for the school situation as well. Since the children are usually part of the audience and also engage in riddling, they get the opportunity to ask questions on issues of narration of a folktale as well as riddling. This implants in them the ability to think critically when faced with a problem in life, before attempting to solve it. They are also able to argue logically while learning to listen to and to accept opposing views if such views merit it. Riddling in effect is an effective tool for the development of the language skills of members of the community; especially the youth who are better placed to learn faster. In the process of riddling, the youth learn a lot of socially appropriate ways of communicating and generally conducting themselves in public. For instance, when a riddle is posed the child is expected to think critically and to respond. If for any reason the answer is not immediately remembered the child has to respond by saying. "N zzi" meaning "I have no response or I don't know the answer." By admitting that he/she has no response, the child is learning to be honest and truthful in his interaction with other members of the community. Being honest in life is a value system that every person in the community must acquire. It is honesty that will enable an individual in the community to live peacefully with his neighbors. A careful consideration of the youth in the Farefari society today reveals a serious lack of communicative skills and the lack of moral courage to speak the truth at all times. There seem to be a false perception of how the youth view themselves and their contribution towards building a society of morally upright individuals. The youth assume certain status for themselves and are not prepared to be truthful to themselves and their humble backgrounds. Through riddling, the Farefari people are able to define who they are in a collective sense. The people try to explain nature and the way events occur in their own understanding by the way they craft the language and idioms of their culture through riddling. The creation and narration of riddles is based on the critical observation of the environment in which the people of the society find themselves in. The environment includes the physical, the spiritual and the human society and how it is organized. The interaction between the human and the supernatural all come into play in the riddles created and performed by the Farefari people. Galli (1983) remarked that "one of the tale's most important sociological functions is to deal with and solve publicly, under the cover of allegory, the individual and collective conflicts latent in the society". This assertion is very true especially in the narration of those riddles that the storytellers are psychologically involved and sometimes put in their life experiences or those of other members of the community. They are able to relieve themselves of any burden as this seems a good opportunity for them. Riddles are performed for a variety of purposes which include teaching of values, proof of intelligence, and a way of socializing and introducing the child into the poetics of his/her society. Scholars study riddles as a form of literary expressions by members of a society because riddles reflect the environment and the people's intellectual dexterity. Riddles play an important role in the holistic development of young people.

Riddles do not only perform social and educational functions but also they include moral and cultural functions in the society. Traditionally, riddling among the Farefari people provide them with a strong sense of upholding certain cultural values such as unity, respect and honesty. These values are important elements in the proper development and education of the youth. Among the Farefari people, some riddles are instructive; they may mention names or make reference to historical events. Undoubtedly, riddles develop a sense of observation and creativity in the people's mind. As explained by one of the renowned storytellers I interacted with, riddles have an advantage of being a tool with which its users explore the Gurenɛ language to the benefit of the society in general and the youth in particular. Riddles by their content are educational in nature and this is based on the experiences and the observation that is gathered over the years. The educational value of riddles is even more evident when it comes to their cultural content which is needed for the proper upbringing of the younger members of the society. Riddles particularly train the children in the art of memorization. For a child to reasonably provide solutions to a number of riddles posed at a contest it requires a deeper and quicker thinking. This means that the riddles narrated among the Farefari people are an effective means of testing and improving the listener's ability to think very fast and provide the accurate response when the need arises. Ajayi (1990:502) noted that riddling constitutes an impressive moral and intellectual exercise which develops the individual's reasoning ability and this is key to good moral judgment on issues of morals such as uprightness and kindness. This study collaborates what Ajayi found out about riddling among the Yoruba. For instance, among the Farefari people, parents train and instruct their children to be upright, kind, honest and helpful to other members of the community and will therefore spare no time in instilling these virtues into their children through the narration of folktales and riddles in which these moral lessons are embedded. Maruka (1999), cited in Kihara (2013), identified entertainment, recording of history, commentary in human life, environmental and scientific education as some of the social functions of riddles. He noted that the entertainment function of riddles is the most recognized one, while the other social functions are ignored. This study shares the same view. Socially, riddles bring people together to interact, compete, and make friends with one another. Riddling creates a spirit of competitiveness among the players and also a spirit of togetherness for those who find themselves in the same riddling community or group. Riddling therefore, involves two or more people in a competitive or non-competitive basis regardless of their social and religious background as was the case. It is also a way of keeping the children awake while they wait for the evening meals to be served so that the children could eat before sleeping since the pressure of farm would usually cause a delay in the preparation of the evening meals. Ishengoma (2005) observed that riddles are not just about amusement and entertainment only, but also they afford the young ones the chance to participate in the social, cultural, political and economic aspects of their society as well as helping them to develop critical thinking and to exercise the art of memorization. Apart from the amusement that the people get from riddling, they also constitute an impressive intellectual exercise. They are used as a medium for developing the child's reasoning faculty as well as skills in decision-making among members of the Farefari society. Riddling among the Farefari people, mostly emphasized the recall of associations. The art of recall is a salient feature of riddling which goes beyond the mere recollection of the appropriate or an acceptable response. It is an important contribution to a child's educational performance and a good knowledge in his culture. The riddles in the Gurenɛ language and culture, just like in other cultures of Africa function as a task of wits. Many of the riddles are instructive; they usually contain names of items and places and or make reference to events of the past. These riddles develop in people in general and the youth in particular, a sense of observation and later a meaningful commentary on happenings around them. This is probably due to the fact that the riddles often contained an elaborate and rich linguistic forms of the language. The Gurenɛ riddles therefore serve as educational tools since their contents involved the youth getting to study their cultural ways by experience, observation, and participation. Riddles helps to increase the store of vocabulary of the children as they get involved in learning and acquiring the skills needed to manipulate the Gurenɛ language.

References

- Agyekum, A. (2013). *Introduction to Literature (3rded)*. Accra: Adwinsa Publication (Gh) Lt.
- _____ (2005). 'An Akan Oral Artist. The Use of Proverbs in the Lyrics of Kwabena Konadu'. *In the Journal of the Institute of African Studies*. Research Reviews, NS21.1:pp1-17, Legon. Ghana. Historical Society of Ghana. University of Ghana, Legon.
- Ajayi, B. (1990). Riddles and the Yoruba child. *International Journal of Moral and Social Studies*. 5. 5: 251-261.
- Awedoba, A. K. (2000). *An Introduction to Kasena Society and Culture through Their Proverbs*. Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America.
- _____ (2000). Social Roles of Riddles, with reference to Kasena Society. *Research Review, New Series*. Vol.16.2. Legon, University of Ghana.

- Blacking, J. (1961). The Social Value of Venda Riddles. *African Studies*, 20(1), 1-32.
- Burns, T. A. (1976). Riddling: Occasion to act. *The Journal of American Folklore*, 89(352), 139-165.
- Dakubu, M. E. K. (1996). *A Grammar of Gurene*. Language centre: Legon
- Dakubu, M. E. K. (1990). Why Spider is King of Stories: The Message in the Medium of a West African Tale. In *African Language and Cultures 3* pp33-56
- Doke, C. M. (1947). Bantu Wisdom-Lore. *African Studies*, 6, 101-120.
- Evans, D. (1976). Riddling and the Structure of Context. *The Journal of American Folklore*, 89 (352), 166-188.
- Finnegan, R. (1970). *Oral Literature in Africa*. Nairobi: Oxford University Press. University Press.
- Galli, Silvano (1983). Story Telling Among the Ayi-Bona. In Ayidoho, K. Avorgbedor, D. Domowitz, S. and Giray-Saul (ed) *Cross rhythms*. Bloomington Indiana: Trickster Press pp13-42.
- Giray-Saul (1984). A West Africa riddling tradition. The solem-kueese of the Mossi of Upper Volta". In Ayidoho, K, Avorgbedor, D. Domowitz, S. and Giray-Saul (ed) *Cross Rhythms*. Bloomington Indiana: Trickster Press pp68-86.
- Gyekye (1996). *African Cultural Values. An Introduction*. Accra-Ghana: Sankofa Publishing Company.
- Harries, D. (1942). Some Riddles of the Makua People. *African Studies*. Vol: 1.
- Harries, L. (1971). The Riddle in Africa. *Journal of American Folklore*, 84(3), 77-93.
- Hart D. (1964). "Riddles in Filipino Folklore: An anthropological analysis to Genre Definition". *International Journal of American Linguistics* 4:31-53.
- Ishengoma, J. M. (2005). African oral traditions: Riddles among the Haya of North Western Tanzania. *International Review of Education*. V. 51.
- Kihara, C. P. (2013). On Mchongoano and Riddles in Kenya. *The Journal of Pan African Studies*. v6. 100-121.
- Lebel Arnold (1972). *Collection of Folktales and tone riddle (ms)*. Bongo: Bongo Parish.
- Maruka, O. (1990). *Encounter with Oral Literature*. Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers.
- Maruka, O. (1999). *Studying oral literature*. Nairobi: Acacia Publishers.
- Nalusiba, P. (2010). *Strategies for the Development of a Reading Culture in Uganda*. Uganda: Makerere University
- Noss, P. A. (2006). Gbaya riddles in changing times. *Research in African Literatures*. 37(2), 34-42.
- Obiechina, E. (1975). *Culture, Tradition and Society in West African Novel*. London: Oxford University Press
- Okpewho (1992). *African oral literature; Background, character and continuity*. Bloomington, Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.
- Osuala, E.C. (2000). *Introduction to Research Methodology*. Onitsha: Africana. FEP.
- Patton, M. C. (2002). *Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods. (3rd ed)*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Rattray, R.S. (1932). *Tribes of the Ashanti Hinterland*. Vol. 1. Oxford University Press.
- Sekoni Ropo (1990). *The Narrator, Narrative-Pattern, and Audience Experience of Oral Narrative-Performance*. Ibadan: Spectrum Book Ltd. Pp 139-159.
- Simmons, D. C. (1958). Cultural Functions of the Efik Tone Riddle. *The Journal of American Folklore*, 71(280), 123-138.
- Simmons, D. C. (1961). Efik Tone Riddles and Anang Proverb-Riddles. *The Journal of American Folklore*. 74(293), 245-246.
- Yankah, K. (1984). "From loose Abuse to Poetic Couplets: the Case of Fante Tone Riddles" in Meledicta. *The International Journal of Verbal Aggression*, Vol. 7 Pp 165-177.