

KAMPALA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

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The significance of the Media in the Educational implications of Oral literature among
the Acholi of Uganda today

A Project Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Bachelor of Mass Communication

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Table of content	Page
Declaration and Approval.....	ii
Dedication.....	iii
Abstract.....	iv
Acknowledgement.....	v
Chapter one	
1.1 Background of the study.....	1
1.2 Statement of the program.....	3
1.3 Objective of the study.....	3
1.4 Significance and justification of the study.....	3
1.5 Research hypothesis.....	4
1.6 Theoretical framework.....	5
1.7 Literature review.....	6
1.8 Scope and limitation of the study.....	8
1.9 Methodology of the study.....	9
1.9.1 Introduction.....	9
1.9.2 Area of study.....	9
1.9.3 Population of the study.....	9
1.9.4 Sample selection and size.....	9
1.10 Data collection.....	10
1.10.1 Research instruments.....	10
1.10.2 Procedure.....	10
1.11 Data Analysis.....	11
1.11.1 Quantitative Analysis.....	11
1.11.2 Qualitative Analysis.....	11
Chapter Two	
2.0 Definition and classification of oral literature among the Acholi.....	12
2.1 Definition of oral literature.....	12
2.2 Type and classification of Acholi oral literature.....	12
Chapter Three	
3.0 The significance of the media in the educational implications of Acholi....	19
Chapter Four	
4.0 Questionnaire	26
Chapter Five	
5.0 Conclusions and suggestions.....	29
Bibliography.....	30
Appendix I.....	32
Appendix II.....	33

DECLARATION AND APPROVAL

I, Angom Jane Francesca, declare that this is my original work which has been achieved through library reading and fieldwork research. This work has not been presented for a degree in any University.

Signed 

Date.....

Angom Jane Francesca.

This project has been approved byDepartment of
Social Sciences, Kampala International University, Kampala.

Signed.....

Date.....

This project has been submitted for examination with my approval as University

Supervisor.

Signed..... 

Mrs. Byamukama Sylvia

Date..... 4/11/2015

DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to my Mother Ms Ann Stella Abur, my aunt Sr. Akello Lucy Dora, my grand parents Mr. and Mrs. Justine Uma and Mary Lapobo Julian, my brother Otema Denis, and to all my cousins.

ABSTRACT

This project is based on the study of the significance of the media in the educational implications of Acholi Oral Literature.

The choice of this topic has been prompted by a strong desire to contribute through my research to the promotion of Acholi Oral Literature.

This study attempts to define Oral Literature from the Acholi perspective and relates it to the definition by Nandwa and Bukenya of Oral Literature in their book "African Oral Literature". It also aims at identifying and classifying the various kinds of Acholi Oral Literature, which includes riddles, proverbs, narratives, tongue-twisters, myths, legends and songs.

In particular, the study strives to expose the love or courtship songs and funeral dirges of the Acholi. This involves interpreting and analyzing the songs collected during the field study. Of which they are later played on radios or shown on television programs.

The study also endeavors to expose the rich values contained in Acholi Oral Literature through songs played on radio by the local Artists.

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CHAPTER ONE

1.1 Back ground of the study

The Acholi live in Northern Uganda in a land once consisting largely of savannah grass land, with a few forested hillside stretching north-ward from the Murchison area off the Victoria Nile to the Sudanese border .The main administrative center in Acholi land is Gulu, which is the south –west corner of the district (Heron 1976:2).

According to the 2002 population and housing census, the population of the Acholi was 468/407. At that time there was a lot of insecurity where by most people were in camps .Acholi consists of three districts, namely Kitgum, Gulu and Pader

Gulu is 332 kilometer from the capital city Kampala .Gulu is bordered by Sudan in the north, Kitgum district from the north eastern side, Masindi at the southern ,Apac south eastern, mayo around northern also, Nebbi south-west, Arua western, Lira district also at the south and Kotido district on the eastern side .

Gulu is the headquarter of northern Uganda. The source of its money is tourist attraction which comes from Baker's Fort, at Patiko sub- country, Aswa County in northern part of Gulu.

There is also hot spring water at Amuru sub- county, Kilak county and Murchison national park. But unfortunately there is still insecurity in Gulu.

Gulu is not all that hot and even cold. There is the long rain season which runs from March to June and the short one from September to October. It rains there yearly at 1.500 mm, but monthly it rains at 14 mm. and in August rains up to a bout 230mm.

These seasons are used for cultivation, which is the main occupation of the Acholi. The long dry season is from November to February and the short one from July to August. The days are hot and the nights are cold. It is during the dry seasons, when people have finished harvesting the crops, that they begin going for dances like, Larakaraka, 'bwola' and 'otole'.

'Larakaraka' is a youth's courtship dance but it can be performed during funeral rites. According to Okot P'Bitek, it was a dance performed very rarely, usually once a year, during the dry seasons when crops have been harvested and stored. An 'Otole' session lasted many weeks or even months (Okot P'Bitek, 1992: 16)

'Otole' songs were intended to incite people to go to war and to fight and to fight without yielding (Ociti, 1979: 67-68).

'Bwola' is a royal dance and it is the most peaceful and gentle dance of the Acholi. During its performance not much vigor is involved, though the steps of the dance are complicated. The time for singing and dancing is late afternoon or at night when the moon is bright, a time when people want to relax after the fatigue of work

'Otole' and 'bwola songs have their origin in the distant past and so they are traditional.

'Larakaraka' songs instead one transitory that is; they deal with day to day affairs of individuals. This being the case, they qualify as part and parcel of the Acholi oral literature.

These three types of songs are significant because they reflect the political, social and historical background of the Acholi.

Through these songs, the media presents them to the present generation in many different ways.

For example through especially the radio the traditional songs are recorded and played for the audience.

It is through filming of the different dances of 'Larakaraka' 'Bwola and 'Otole' that the audience is able to view them on television or video tapes

At Radio Uganda the Luo traditional programme which is aired every Saturday at three O'clock. The programme includes local drama of real life experience which is educative to the local society.

These songs are recorded during the different performances and played on radio for the current generation.

At Uganda television these dances are shown on the screen for the viewers.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Oral literature has for a very long period occupied a central position in the lives of many African communities.

Among most Africa communities oral literature has therefore been valued for its cultural, moral and even historical purposes. In a way, therefore, oral literature is a reflection of a people's consensus of opinion on social behavior and aspirations. But oral literature, in its true perspective, is also open to many different interpretation, depending mostly on the individual communities concerned.

Among the Acholi of Uganda, for example, oral literature, especially songs is (are) indeed highly regarded as a vital organ through which society transmits educational values through the media to its members mainly through the local songs played by local artists. Or even traditional sings on radio Uganda or Uganda television.

The didactic element of the Acholi songs is centered mostly on the social historical, political and even economic matters effecting society.

This study therefore undertakes to demonstrate how the media transforms Acholi oral literature through songs.

1.3 Objective of the study:

The main objectives of the study are as follows:

- i) To explain the relationship between media education and the Acholi oral literature, particularly songs.
- ii) To find out how Acholi oral literature as a discipline is relevant today.
- iii) To examine the genres of Acholi oral literature through the media.

1.4 Significance and justification of the study:

Significantly, oral literature is the main means through which the collective social norms of the community are transmitted and preserved. The future of the individual and that of the community depends upon his or her understanding of the community's values and norms, as well as its social institutions which is aired through the different media houses. This justifies the study of oral literature.

Through the media, in oral literature, especially story telling, children are able to develop the ability to express themselves in society and to develop intellectually. This then prepares them for future participation in the affairs of their societies.

The use of songs both those played live on radios, acts as a means of uniting the entire group. This is because in it people express their communal fears, hopes and reactions vis-à-vis the events in society.

Oral literature therefore, acts as a means of social integration.

Songs or dances sometimes provide emotional release from restrictions imposed on the individual by society. Acholi songs for instance, are a kind of theatre through which the community releases its tensions and emotions.

When people find themselves bored or frustrated, they sing and dance, and in so doing they become happy once again.

To facilitate the fight against emotional imprisonment, it is necessary to wisely and creatively study Acholi songs and the message that they convey.

Oral literature has one broad function of maintaining the stability of a person's culture and ensuring its continuity, consequently, this is seriously taken up to encourage and promote the values and teaching that Acholi oral literature carries.

1.5 Research hypothesis:

- That oral literature is not adequately valued by the young and is not used as a means of transmitting moral values today.
- That despite the modern development, oral literature seems still relevant to the Acholi today.
- That the social, economic and political changes have had a great influence on the significance of the media in the educative role attributed to the Acholi oral literature.

1.6 Theoretical framework:

The study of this project is guided by the sociological and psychological models of literature. Sociologically, Allan Merriam tells us that:

Songs of social control play an important part in a substantial number of cultures, both through direct warning to erring members of the society and through indirect establishment of what is considered to be proper behavior. This is also found in songs used, for example, at the time of initiation ceremonies, when the young members of the community are especially instructed to proper and improper behavior. Songs of protest call attention as well to property and impropriety (Allan Merriam, 1964: 224).

The above quotation is in agreement with the social function of Acholi songs. The Acholi use songs to admonish ridicule and effect actual change in the behavior of erring members of society. The songs are directed to social ills like promiscuity, sorcery, witch craft, theft and lying, singing about these anti-social behavior patterns bring shame and tarnishes the reputation of the victims and even alienates them. The offenders then try to reform so as to be accepted once again by the community. The songs therefore are a kind of legal mechanism by which the Acholi community mobilizes and launches ridicule against the offenders.

Allan Merriam again informs us thatsong texts reveal a number of problems of a psychological nature, as they concern the individual and also the society at large.

Text(s) reflect mechanisms of psychological release and the prevailing attitudes and values of culture, thus providing an excellent means of analysis (Ibid: 208).

The quotation agrees with the psychological functions of Acholi songs. Among the Acholi, songs are a means through which the individual and the entire society express

their hopes, Joys, fears, thoughts, ideas and frustrations. The songs generally provide psychological healing.

When people sing of their oppression and the injustices in society, they feel relieved because they are assured that other people also share in their pain.

1.7 Literature review:

The educational significance of the media through songs has been studied by other scholars who have based their view both on Acholi songs and those of other African communities.

Among the Acholi, songs form an integral part of people's daily lives. Most of the rites and ceremonies feasts and festivals are performed to the accompaniment of melodious songs and agile dancing.

According to Ociti, through 'bwola' songs children come to know some aspects of the history of their chiefdom, but especially of the royal family (Ociti, 1979: 67).

Okot p'Bitek also maintains that the lullabies, the games and the songs accompanying them form a most important introduction to the culture and moral education of the Acholi child. Though his participation he learns to express himself through his body movements, in his voice as he sings, and in the poetry which is the song that arises from the tensions of human interaction (I bid: 2).

Nandwa and Bukenya affirm that most Africa songs are not fixed to just one occasion; they may be performed quite acceptably on more than one occasion, for example, they may deal with general criticism or political development (Nandwa and Bukenya, 1990: 95).

With reference to the Maasai, Abaluyia, Kipsigis and the Gikuyu of Kenya, Bogonko makes it clear that songs as well as stories are used to recall the feasts of the clan heroes who made the physical survival of the group possible (Bogonko, 1992: 3)

Lusweti says that songs and dances sometimes provide emotional release from restrictions imposed on the individual by society. He adds that among the Akamba, through songs and the dance of 'nzaiko' one can say publicly what one could not say privately to a man's face (Lusweti, 1984: 10).

This is because in singing the message is not directed to a particular person but to the entire group of spectators and even the singers, it is then up to the individual in the group to pick out the message that applies to him or her.

The singer avoids direct confrontation and yet the message is passed on and the singer is relieved of the tension.

Also, Lusweti enlightens argues that in Kenya to day many political leaders use topical songs to encourage people to vote for them during elections. The songs may be used to ridicule opponents, to express the people's problems, or to enrich the prestige of the opponent. In Kenya, songs such as the well known 'kanu ya Jenga nchi' have the political function of buttressing the ruling party against any firms of opposition (Ibid: 12)

Circumcision songs as 'nzaiko' of the Akamba, 'yatitaet' of the Nandi, 'kimienya kie sikherbo' of the Bukusa, and 'chisimbore' of the Gusii, Lusweti adds, have as their function the entertainment of the dances. Indeed most people go to such ceremonies with the sole aim of being entertained (Ibid: 12)

According to Chesaine, the Kalenjin use some songs to satirize promiscuity and unfaithfulness in marriage. In the song they make a contrast between sexually loose women or man and one who is principled and constant. The songs are therefore meant to attack the immoral people, men and women alike, and to make them realize that the community is aware of their immoral activities (Chesaine, 1991: 118).

Among the Maasai, Naomi Kipury argues that songs are part and parcel of the circumcision rite, which is essential to any male member of the society. Songs are sung to the candidate on the eve of the operations, accompanied by spiting, pinching

and exposing the nakedness of the initiates to make them build up courage so that they can go through the operation without fear. Flinching songs of circumcision show how bravery is worshipped by the Maasai (Kipury, 1983: 205).

This literature review shows that some writing has been done on the significance of the media on the educational implications of oral literature in general. The main concerns in this project will be to study the significance of the media in the educational implications of Acholi oral literature, but with specific reference to funeral dirges and love songs.

1.8 Scope and limitation of the study:

This study is limited in many ways. First and foremost the discussion is based on Acholi funeral dirges and love songs only, as aspects of Acholi oral literature.

Due to the insecurity within the area of study, the researcher was limited to only a few resource persons.

There are very few books on Acholi oral literature, and as such the researcher had to travel far in order to collect information through interviews, researching, direct participation and the use of questionnaires.

The groups of people interviewed were mainly some Acholi elderly women and men, oral literature teachers in five secondary schools and two from the National Teacher's college, plus the youths.

1.9 Methodology of the study

1.9.1 Introduction:

My study was largely qualitative, since the population of Gulu is predominantly rural. This section present the methods used during the study. It addresses the area of study, the sample selection, methods of data collection, data processing, and data analysis.

1.9.2 Area of study

This study was conducted among the Acholi of Gulu in Northern Uganda. The field of study took place between the months of August and September, 2004, during the long vacation. Gulu is located in northern Uganda and it is 332 kilometers from the capital city Kampala. It is where the majority of the displaced camps are where headquarter of northern Uganda is based. Gulu's out skirts has been noted to be with less population because of the insecurity. And yet through the media, efforts of fighting to preserve the Acholi culture is just going on, although going to camps and recording of the local music (songs) of 'Larakaraka' 'Bwola' 'Otale'.

1.9.3 Population of the study:

Before the field work, library work was done as a preparatory stage. The study included these categories of people who were knowledged on the topic of research and were also within reach, the elders and youths with access to strategic and practical experience that is , who participated in the singing an dancing.

1.9.4 Sample selection and size:

The research was carried out among the Acholi of Gulu both in rural areas and within the town, using purposive sample because it represented all characteristics of the population. And individuals who were knowledgeable or who had experience in the phenomenon were selected and include in the sample which fastened the selection of the study zones. The sampling frame consisted of some elders who were knowledgeable on the topic of research and also within reach, youths between the ages of 22-26 from both the rural and urban areas were interviewed in order to have a comparative data of their views on Acholi oral literature as opposed to the views of the elders.

Some teachers and lecturers were also interviewed to obtain the varied views that they hold about Acholi oral literature, especially with regard to the influence of western literature in our schools today.

1.10 Data collection.

The data was collected using various techniques like, the interview guide, the questionnaire, observation and interviews schedules.

1.10.1 Research instruments.

Research was of three types namely interview guide for in depth interviewing, interview schedules for structured interviewing, of key informants and administered to key informants. The three research instrument was divided into four groups, which included the background, socio-economic achievements, political, and educational spheres.

1.10.2 Procedure

The research obtained an introduction letter from the social sciences department. She presented a copy to the district executive secretary of the sub-county who introduced the researcher to the local councils of the area. At local council II, the officials assisted her to construct the sampling frames.

With the help of the Local council (LC) personnel, appointments were made with the respondents selected. The interview was conducted in the homes, or offices of the respondents, structured interviews and focus group discussions took approximately one hour.

1.11 DATA ANALYSIS

1.11.1 Quantitative analysis.

Some tape recording of funeral dirges and love song was done to allow for easy writing and translation during the analysis of the data collected.

1.11.2 Qualitative analysis

Information was mainly done through personal interviewing .Youth between the ages of 22-24 from both rural and urban areas were interviewed in order to have a

comparative data of the views on Acholi oral literature as opposed to the views of the elders.

Some teachers and lecturers were also interviewed to obtain the varied views that they hold about Acholi oral performances. Some tape recording of funeral dirges and love songs was done to allow for easy writing and translation during the analysis of the data collected.

Some questionnaires were distributed to the resource persons who were not within easy reach.

CHAPTER TWO

2.0 DEFINITION AND CLASSIFICATION OF ORAL LITERATURE AMONG THE ACHOLI.

2.1 Definition of oral literature.

From the Acholi perspective, oral literature can be defined as the verbal utterances which convey or expose the tradition, heritage, cultural values, customs, beliefs and wisdom of the Acholi community from one generation to another.

This definition tallies with that of Nandwa and Bukenya in the book *African oral literature*. Where they defined oral literature as those utterances, whether spoken, recited or sung, whose composition and performance exhibit to an appreciable degree, the artistic characteristics of accurate observation, vivid imagination and ingenious expression (Nandwa and Bukenya, 1990:).

2.2 Type and classification of Acholi oral literature

The Acholi have a variety of oral literature, namely proverbs, riddles, narratives, myths, legends, tongue- twisters and songs.

i) PROVERBS- ‘CARO LOK’

The proverb has been defined as a ‘short statement of wisdom or advice that has passed into general use (Harris et al, 1975: 2231). Proverbs evolve from people’s experience and convey their philosophy and attitude of life. They are often expressed in metaphor, alliteration, or rhyme.

Acholi proverbs, called ‘carolok’ (mere words), are seldom quoted in full; they often consist of a whole –sentence only, a phrase, or even single words. Acholi proverbs are based on experiences of life and in the gardens. They are a result of observations of the characteristics of local plants, birds, insects and animals and are commentaries on the social institutions of the people (Okot P,Bitek, 1985: vii).

Among the Acholi, proverbs are often used at the beginning and end of a long lesson to summarize the main points. Such brief statements contain a truth or shrewd observation about practical life, religious or human nature and social relationships.

ii) RIDDLES-‘KOC’

Riddles can be defined as short sayings which, according to the Acholi, are intended to challenge a person to interpret a hidden meaning.

Sunkuli and Muruki (1990:78) defined a riddle as ‘an expression containing a puzzle to be solved by the respondents’. It is presented metaphorically, and the respondent is required to find out and state what is meant in literal terms. A riddle consists of a fixed introductory formula, the problem and a solution.

Among the Acholi, a riddle is introduced by the word ‘koc’ (riddle), to which the audience respond by saying ‘lit’ to indicate that they have the alternative and are ready to listen. They are mainly performed by children and riddling requires at least two people, namely the challenger and the respondent.

Riddles are not only a means of passing time and providing entertainment. They are also used to teach and test the skills of observation, memory and mental alertness, to train and test the quickness of one’s imagination and liveliness of wit, and to teach the history and moral values of the community.

iii) NARRATIVES ‘ODODO’.

A narrative is basically a story, a piece of prose giving an account of people or events. Narratives are usually told by elders to the young or by peers to their subordinates. The stories are always educative and can either be tragic or comical in nature. Like the riddles, narratives also have a fixed introductory formula, the story and the lesson.

Among the Acholi a narrative is introduced by the words 'ododo na niyo' (my narration), to which the response is 'eyo'(yes) indicating that the audience is attentive and ready to listen.

iv) MYTHS.

These are sacred stories which are believed to be true and which are concerned with the origins of things, or the activities of God. Among the Acholi, there are myths which tell us about the origin of particular clans. For example, one of the ancestors of Patiko is believed to have fallen from heaven.

v) LEGENDS.

They are stories regarded as true by the narrator, they are usually secular. Their principal characters are human and they concern a period of time less remote than that of myth.

Among the Acholi, the most famous legend is that of how the Luo tribe was divided after Labongo and Gipir got into conflict with each other.

vi) TONGUE- TWISTERS- 'OGWANG LOK'.

These are words or a phrase difficult to pronounce correctly or quickly. They are intended mainly to help children to learn to pronounce a certain combination of consonants some examples are:

'Kot Ocwe me labot rot lyek'. This literally means that the rain has poured to such an extent that it enables the new grass to grow after burning.

'Ogwok gwok gwok gwok okai'. The difference in meaning of the words with the same spelling is determined by the intonation given to each sound. The tongue-twister simply means, Ogwok(name of a person), be careful of the dog lest it bites you.

vii) SONGS-‘WER’.

This is another type of Acholi oral literature like those of any Africa society, Acholi songs move with time. Practically every season or period of time in Acholi society brings its own songs with it, though certain basic principles of songs composition and performance remain. The Acholi have a variety of songs and thus will be dealt with in the next section.

2.3; Types and classification of Acholi songs.

There exists a variety of Acholi songs which are songs or performed on th appropriate occasions.

They are as stated and defined below:

i) PRAISE SONGS

They are songs whose aim is to praise a hero or heroine in the community or praise a good quality like industriousness or beauty in a women or man. They are used to praise people both living and dead. The praises concern the achievement of individuals as well as the community as a whole.

ii) WAR SONGS.

They are songs which are sung to inspire people during the war. Some times they are sung to glorify the achievements of war. They are used either to honor a man who fights bravely, or inspire people to fight in defence of their clan or ethnic group.

ii) WORK SONGS.

They are sung by those engaged in a particular activity like digging, walking long Journeys, weeding, harvesting or grinding. The songs are meant to divert one’s attention from the work load or the difficulty of the Journey. Women commonly sing while grinding millet and the song may be in praise of their husbands or the achievements of individuals in society or war victories.

iv) CHILDREN'S PLAY SONGS.

These are songs by children to entertain themselves or sing by baby seaters or nurses, 'Lapidi' for babies in order to make them sleep. When sung to babies they are called lullabies. Lullabies are generally very short but are sung over and over again. They have very soft melodies children's play songs may also be sung by elders for the entertainment of children. These songs are used to express feelings and comment on life in the family as well as in the community

v) SPIRIT INVOKING SONGS- 'WER JOK'

They are sung to invoke the spirits of departed relatives during illness or when there is a malady. They are mainly performed by diviners, especially in exorcisms or casting out spirits. The wording pertains to the spirits, and the dancing and drumming are eerie.

vi) RAIN - MAKING SONGS.

These are sung when there has been a long period of drought. They are sung to invoke the gods to send rain. The songs are sarcastic and are performed in the home of the diviner or under a big tree or at the foot of a mountain that is believed to be inhabited by the gods or spirits. It is mainly performed by men.

vii) TOPICAL SONGS.

These are songs which deal mainly with current topics or problems in the community. They comment on various aspects of every day life.

viii) LOVE OR COURTSHIP.

These are sung to express deep feeling of love of boys or girls. They are also sung in a situation where love is desired. These songs express the desire of the boy or girl to be with the loved ones. Love or courtship songs are more pronounced with the youth, though it is not out of place for the old people to sing them too. They are full of

praises for the loved ones and are about the beauty, physical fitness and achievements of the loved ones. Below is a verse of a song which praised the beauty of Akulu.

The boy was so happy with the beauty of his beloved that he wants everybody to know about it, especially his father.

A2-AKULU BER

Eee Akulu ber kuman

Eee nyako ber kuman

Eee nyako leng kuman

Nyako ber kuman

Eee Akulu do abaa

Akalu ber kuman do nyako leng

Nyako ber.

There are also other love songs which express the disappointment of the singer because his or her expectations were not fulfilled. Some express the singer's poor economic position and the lack of cooperation by parents and relatives to support the boy financially, so that he cannot marry the girl. Love songs may also ridicule!

ix) FUNERAL DIRGES.

These are poems or songs sung at funeral or memorial services to express sorrow. They are mainly concerned with the deceased's deeds and achievements and the problem he or she may have encountered in life

In an interview, George Onekalit in Pece Pageya said that among the Acholi funeral dirges are sung according to the sex of the deceased. To detect whether the song is for a female or male, it is proper to identify the animal characters or the personalities used in the song.

The songs dedicated to a female deceased use the character 'roya', which is a young cow or a heifer.

The songs are usually four in number and are sung one after another until all are finished. After these official four songs, other like the war songs or 'otole' songs can be sung.

George Onekalit further explained that the songs meant for the male person use the character 'twon' meaning a ball. The songs sung consecutively are three in number. After those three, other songs that the mourners consider appropriate can be added. The number of songs and the types dedicated to deceased area determined by Acholi culture.

During the performance of the funeral dirges, these may be singing or not, depending on the age of the deceased,. Among the Acholi only those who have reached the age of fifty and above deserve dancing as part of the mourning. Below fifty years of age, dancing is not allowed because the deceased is still considered young other performances like drumming, mock fights and blowing the horns are part and parcel of the ceremony.

The Acholi funeral dirges have a common beginning, 'iye' for which there is no proper English translation. it is just meant to draw people's attention to the mourners. It is to alert people that another song has started and that they are to join in the singing and dancing as they mourn.

From the above discussion, it is clear that the Acholi have a variety of oral narratives and songs which play various roles in the Acholi community.

In this study, the materials to be considered are the love or courtship songs and funeral dirges. The focus will be on the signification of the media on the educational implications of this oral literature to the Acholi community. This will be handled in the next chapter.

CHAPTER THREE

3.0 THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE MEDIA IN THE EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS OF ACHOLI SONGS.

The analysis of this chapter centers on demonstrating the significance of the media in the Acholi love songs and funeral dirges. The discussion also attempts to show that the significance of the media of the Acholi love songs and funeral dirges exists in terms of economic, socio- political and even historical matters.

Economically, through love and courtship songs, the Acholi are able to criticize the exploitative aspects in life. An example of a song that illustrates this is A4 in Appendix III.

The singer gives a word of contain to the bride's parents and relatives for the high bride wealth demanded. The singer advises them to evaluate whether their daughter is worth the demand made or not.

A₄

Iye, the charger do the charging

It is easy to charge

The charger do the charging

It is easy to charge

We shall see if your daughter

Will maintain the home.

The are love songs that help the rejected lover express disappointment or a state of helplessness. This applies to cases when a boy who is in love with a girl failed to marry her due to financial problems, or may be due to death or some deformities.

The songs may also express the Jealousy the boy has towards his rival, who has taken the girl away from him. A₃ below express the pain and disappointment of a boy who has missed the girl due to lack of money.

He therefore tells the girl that his problem is that of poverty and that he nobody to help him financially.

A₃

Ya ii ligi ligi

There is nobody to help me, my mother

My love for her has no future my mother's property, I am defeated

I have no helper, girl

One who talks of poverty can take me for a model.

Among the Acholi, songs are a tool of political educational. Through it people express their feelings of anger, condemn bad leaders and generally mobilize people for a common cause. The funeral dirge below expresses the conflict that had existed and was taken for training in the army; unfortunately, he was killed during the war.

B₁

Our hero is no longer there

My mother's son went to join the army at Lubiri

He was selected

Our hero is no longer there

My mother's son went to join the army at Lubiri

He was pointed at

The hero will never come back

The hero.

The song, B₁, tells the history of the Acholi treated very inhumanly and denied the right to decide for them selves. Through this song then the post- colonial Acholi are

able to know some aspects of the history of their fore-fathers, especially with regard to forced labour.

Socially, through songs the Acholi are able to spell out the kind of anti social practices that are undesirable in society. By the use of funeral dirges, they show clearly how people who indulge in such kind of behavior are handled. The dirge below is about the death of a wizard. People are not sad, because the death of a wizard is good news. This kind of attitude shows that malpractices like witchcraft, sorcery and theft are not accepted in society because they are harmful. The awareness that, due to the anti social practices mentioned above, one would not be treated with respect or high regards after death, is enough to make the individual reform:

B₃

The wizard is dead, and it is good news
 You ululu, you ululu
 Touch his heart; see if it is cold and soft
 Why, this man dances with anger
 Touch his heart, see if it is cold and soft
 Look, this man dances with funny
 Ee! the wizard is dead, and it is good news

The Acholi use love songs to comment on the behavior of individual who fail to live up to the conventional norms expected of them. Values like respects and courtesy are highly valued in Acholi society and anyone who disregards them is able to be corrected. This is mostly done through love or courtship songs.

The song below, A5, is about a girl who lacks courtesy to the extent of running away from visitors. By implication the song is advocating for courtesy to be practiced in society. The fear of being a subject of those songs acts as an important sanction.

A₅

She ran away from visitors

She ran away towards Nimule

She ran away from visitors wi yo! Atoo ran away from visitors

I die of shame

Atoo ran away from visitors.

Funeral dirges provide means of emotional release for the Acholi. During the performance people sing and dance and in this way their fear of death and their sorrow for the dead is relieved.

Any funeral dirge serves that function. This is because the mourners feel one in facing the misfortunate that has befallen them. The spirit of solidarity that they have is the source of strength. Song B₂, below, expressed a situation of hopelessness because the one whom people trusted is dead, but since they are united in facing the ordeal, they soon overcome it.

B₂,

Ee, he has no helper among people

Death has taken away the handsome one

Death has taken away my brother

Whom I trusted

My brother fights

Alone with death

• He is defeated by death.

From the moral perspective, Acholi songs act as means of social control. Songs of abuse and ridicule like those of 'Aije' , and songs of approval or praise like 'Larakaraka' and love songs, help to correct the people's way of behavior in society

Apart from their historical, socio- political and economic media roles, the Acholi songs also serve other functions as discussed below. Acholi funeral dirges provide an important occasion for the people to express and dramatize out bursts of grief and wailing in the face of the supreme crisis of death. This gesture is an external manifestation of what they are at heart.

They know that death has deprived them of a person who will not return and they feel hopeless before death and yet make attempts to attack death. The song below, B4' illustrates man's efforts to come face to face with death and if possible to destroy death completely.

B₄

Everything is completely destroyed
 If i could reach the homestead of death's mother,
 My daughter, I would make a long grass torch
 If I could reach the home stead of death's mother
 I would destroy everything completely
 Like the fire that rages in the valley of river cumu, ye!

Songs and dances, especially those of love or courtship, function as a means of amusement and entertainment for the participants and the audience. This is because love songs are often a combination of praise and insult. These aims are also achieved through dramatization and dance. 'Larakaraka' songs for instance are very entertaining, especially during the dance. The song below attacks a girl for her inability to wriggle her waist while turning around in front of the boys at the dance that is to do the 'teke'.

A₆

This girl simply turns her buttocks
 This girl, cannot do the 'teke'

Daughter of my mother- in –low.

She simply moves her buttocks

Sister of the youth

‘Teke’ she is completely defeated.

Acholi love or courtship songs and dances provide an opportunity for meeting potential spouses. It is during the singing and dancing that the young boys and girls meet and get to know one another and to discover possible future mates who may have the desired qualities one looks for, or to strengthen the already existing relationship.

Funeral ceremony in Acholi creates an occasion for the young to learn the funeral dirges. It is also during the ceremony that the relatives strengthen their relationships and the young girls and boys know one another’s better relatives.

Singing encourages the participants or the artists to be open-minded and brave, because they have to use words which may be considered dirty or obscene by the society. In love songs, a suitor who fails to win the girl resorts to insulting his opponent. The fear of being the subject of insult then serves as a means of enforcing discipline, especially in those who like interfering with other people’s affairs in the song below, A, the boy who has failed to win the girl resorts to insulting his rival.

A₄

Ii aa the old ugly boy

If you talk to me I wish to die

Ii aa the old ugly boy

If you talk to me I wish to die

Ii aa the boy holds your hands

If you talk to me I wish to take poison

I am sad.

Love or courtship songs depict the beauty of the girl and the skills in dancing of the loved one. It also expresses other extraordinary aspects in the partners and their

achievements in life. It can then be said that love songs serve as a means of expressing esteem and encouraging the display and use of talents for the benefit of the community. In the love song below, A₇, the boy express his admiration for Abul as a beautiful and talented girl.

A₇

Behold, daughter of Lekamoi.
Her teeth are like ash
Oh, when does my own come back?
Daughter of the bull
Abul, come and dance before me.

Daughter of Lekamoi
Who has just shot up
All the men want her
Oh, Abul chief of women
My girl appears on the path from Anaka.....

From the above discussion, analysis and interpretation of songs, it is funeral dirges, love songs, war songs and courtship that carry a lot of teaching and functions that are relevant to the community.

CHAPTER FOUR

4.0 QUESTIONNAIRE

Background information

Please fill in the space below:

Name.....

Sex.....

Age.....

Occupation.....

Marital status.....

Answer all the questions in section A,B and C on the plain sheets of paper provided.

SECTION A

1. What is Acholi oral literature?
2. What are the various types of Acholi oral literature?
3. a). What are the different types of Acholi songs?
b). What kind of teaching if any, do the songs have for the Acholi today?
4. What are the influences of western music on Acholi oral literature/
5. What is the attitude of the present generation towards Acholi oral literature?
6. What possible suggestions would you make to promote or develop Acholi oral literature in schools and society at large?

SECTION B

LOVE OR COURTSHIP SONGS

- 1, what are the different types?
2. What is expressed in the songs performed and what role do they play?
3. What kind of teaching, if any, do the songs performed have for the Acholi today?
4. What is the importance of the love / courtship songs for the Acholi today?

5. What possible suggestions would you make to ensure that the songs fully perform their intended educative roles through the media in the society of today?

SECTION C

FUNERAL DIRGES

1. What are the different types?
2. What is expressed in the songs and what roles do they play?
3. What kind of teaching, if any, do the songs performed, have for the Acholi today?
4. What is the importance of the funeral dirges for the Acholi today?
5. What possible suggestions would you make to ensure that the song fully perform their intended educative roles in the society of today?

promote it by practicing it whenever opportunities are offered. This is clearly true of songs and dances of various types recorded in tapes from the villages and mostly the displaced people's camps (IDP's)

SUGGESTIONS:

After the above description of Acholi oral literature, we can now formulate some suggestions that would act as a means of promoting or developing Acholi oral literature in schools and in society as a whole.

Acholi oral literature should be encouraged and taught in schools and higher institutions so as to give pupils and students an incentive to listen to radio programs conveying oral literature through the different Acholi songs.

Emphasis should be placed on oral literature in universities to instill positive traditional values and attitudes. Values like respect, cooperation, honesty and obedience should be promoted.

Cultural centres should be instituted in all districts for sharing experiences. In this sharing, the elders or those knowledgeable in the art of oral literature can conduct lessons through radio, television, books and other media programs for the young and for anybody interested in that field of study.

The un written oral literature of the Acholi should be recorded and written down for future generations and use. These recorded samples of oral literature should have their meaning well defined and explained and their values and importance to community clearly stated. The recorded oral literature will serve as a spring board for beginners and also serve wider studies.

There is need for children and even the youths to spend more time with their parents and the elders of the Acholi community.