A Guide to the Study of ORAL LITERATURE

BY WAHUNGU D.K

UNIT ONE

DEFINITION OF ORAL LITERATURE

Several definitions of our oral literature have been advances but many of them are way above the secondary school students.

A simple yet all inclusive definition of oral literature shows take into account the following aspects:-

i. Mode of transmission.

ii. Inter-generation transmission

iii. Content of what it transmits.

To start with, we note that the mode of transmission of oral literature is oral. The word oral means by word of mouth secondly the transmission is from one generation to another. Thirdly, what is transmitted is the content of oral literature, that is: oral narratives, songs, proverbs, riddles and tongue twisters.

Thus a simple definition of oral literature would be;

The oral narratives,

Songs,

Proverbs,

Riddles

And tongue twisters

[These were composed and transmitted orally from one generation to another

However, this definition has changed slightly because of the mode transmission which, has broadened to include other modes like the written. However, the above definitions would suffice for oral literature.

FUNCTIONS OF ORAL LITERATURE

The introduction of oral literature into the secondary school syllabus was done in the view of the role or usefulness it serves to those who study it. So function refers to the reasons as to why oral literature is studied.

Different forms or oral literature may perform different functions but generally, the following are functions of oral literature:

1. **Oral literature is a source of entertainment. People derive amusement or fun from such aspects of oral literature as cultural songs E.g. as they are performed in wedding, Harambee meeting and other communal gathering. Oral narratives help people to pass time and derive enjoyment.**
2. **Oral literature teaches or educates people on moral values or good behaviour; songs for instance communicate a direct message and attack immorality. Proverbs also speak a direct moral message which narrative lead to moral lesson.**
3. **Oral literature sensitizes people on social and communal values. Virtues upheld by the community are taught through oral literature. On the importance of unity for instance a community would have proverbs like "Unity is Strength" Kidole *Kimoja Hakivunji chawa'* (one finger alone cannot kill a louse)**
4. **Oral Literature teaches about culture is a peoples way of life and it is well reflected in oral literature for example, the way people were governed, their form of religion, division of labour, rites of passage, mode of dressing e.t.c**
5. **Having learned about culture, this gives people confidence in their culture as they get to understand why a community lives the way it does.**

6. **Closely related to this is that we get to learn about our history or heritage. The study of oral literature provides a useful links with our roots. For example, myth of origin tells the community's origin and progress up to present.**
7. **This means the world of our ancestors is laid bare for present generations to see.**
8. **Such a link with the past enables us to understand ourselves. The present is a product of the past to understand where we are and where we are heading to, we first know the past. Today many young people know their names that seem to tie them to a certain past name of their clan and tribes.**
9. **Having understood our culture forms of good background for us to know other people's culture. This fosters good neighborliness and the spirit of nationalism as we understand and appreciate other people.**
10. **The study of oral literature provides as with heroes from the past for us to emulate. We get to know of courageous women like Wangu wa Makeri and Mekatilili, Brave men like Wang'ombe wa ihura and Lwanda Magere.**

    Such heroes provide an aspiration for present generations as we see the way they struggled and made a name for themselves.
11. **Oral literature helps to develop language skills, sense of creativity, wit and even to sharpen speech.**

    Skill of speaking and listening can be enhanced for example; one would know how to be eloquent by appropriate use of proverbs. This means that Oral literature is an important tool for shaping the individual into an all round character who can fit into the family, community and nation at large.

CLASSIFICATION OF ORAL LITERATURE

In every community's oral literature exists in various forms or groups or categories that are referred to in academic jargon as genres of oral literature. It is not the academicians who classify oral

literature rather it is the individual communities that do this classification.

The following are the main genres of oral literature.

a) **oral narratives**
b) **songs or oral poetry**
c) **proverbs and wise sayings**
d) **riddles**
e) **Tongue twisters or verbal play.**

The last three are sometimes put into a broad category called the *short fixed forms or oral short forms.* This includes the oral literary forms that are brief and compact in comparison to the songs and narratives. This broad category of oral literature would include genres like puns, jokes, and idioms e.t.c.

However, it is important to confine ourselves to the fire classes or divisions of oral literature to avoid confusion. Each of these five genres will be looked at in detail.

UNIT TWO

ORAL NARRATIVES

***Where did our Oral narrative come*?**

An obvious answer to this question would be from our ancestors. But, where did the ancestors get them? I believe from their ancestors and the endless tale of timeless past.

The following are some of the theories put forward to explain the origin of oral narratives:

1. **The existence of oral artists in society**

   these are the men or women with creative prowess who are

able to spin stories and recreate existing ones afresh. These are the people who created the stories we pass from one generation to another.

2. **Group work. Groups of people relaxing together spin a story to logical conclusion. Even today, a class can create a story by simply asking one student to start any way and others creative can on in turns until they are a logical story.**
3. **It is also possible that some stories may be have been deliberated created in those in authority to valid existing order of things. Elders for example would spin a story to force compliance.**
4. **Some ordinary happens become distorted and exaggerations such that in them they rich epic and fictional. Proportions. Many of the legends are likely to have been created this way.**
5. **The fear of mystery and the unknown could have lead to generation of related stories. That is the reason why the communities living near forest had stories about ogres/giants e.t.c. Those living near large rivers and masses of water had stories of mermaids while those living near deserts would imagine of formidable reptiles. To a creative eye and mind, nature has phenomena that naturally raises curiosity and can easily render itself to a story. The very nature of a tortoise is that way. It is for this reason that different accounts on the same phenomenon are available. Whatever theory is put forward on the origin of the stories is acceptable for at the end day it is these stories that passed on from one generation to another.**

<u>MODE OF STORY – TELLING</u>

In most of the communities, stories were told in the evening around the fire- place as a recreational activity. It was a taboo to tell stories during the day. This was done in the realization that stories can go captivating that they would disrupt work. So,

story-telling sessions were held in the evening to help pass time as people were waiting for the evening meal.

These sessions would involve either

a) Adults telling stories to children

b) Adults telling stories to both children and adults

c) Children telling stories to both children.

d) Children telling story to a mixed group of children and adults.

In telling stories there was convectional style of announcing the intention to tell a story. The narrator or storyteller would call attention as follows.

Narrator: I would like to tell you a story

(Kiswahili Hadithi Hadithi)

Audience: Tell us

(Kiswahili Hadithi Njoo).

Different communities would put it into different ways but the concept is the same.

<u>THE ROLE OF THE AUDIENCE</u>

The audience refers to those who listen to the story. They are as important as the storyteller or the narrator. They act as a stimulus or the catalyst to the creating and imagination of the narrator. The mood of the audience directly affects the narrator. They urge the narrator. There are two types of audiences.

a) <u>Active Audience.</u>

These are the listeners who are lively during the performance. They remain active throughout the performance. Through such action as laughing, nodding, clapping, asking questions, joining in the repetition or singing showing the appropriate emotion e.t.c.

b) <u>Passive audience.</u>

These listeners are attentive but they remain dormant. They keenly engage their ears and eyes but do not play any role in enhancing the liveliness of the performance.

QUALITIES OF A GOOD STORY TELLER:

A storyteller should possess certain qualities/abilities/characteristics in order to stand before the audience and tell a story and captivate the audience throughout the narrative.

The following are qualities of a good storyteller.

1. **A good storyteller should be bold in order to stand before the audience, face them and tell the story freely. A fearful person would shy away from the audience thus; his story would not be interesting. Eye contact in any communication is vital for effectiveness rapport building and for the purpose of registering the response of the audience.**
2. **A good storyteller would have a good memory in order to recall details of the story many of the stories told are adaptations of the old ones and it is important to remember the plots of the story.**
3. **A good storyteller would be creative and imaginative in order to make the story interesting. When an old story is re-told imaginatively, it sounds new, fresh and interesting. A creative storyteller reads the mood of the audience and adapts the story appropriately for example one would introduce a song in order to involve the audience. This requires a lot of creativity.**
4. **A good storyteller should be interested in various cultures. Stories, like all literature, reflect the culture of a people. For a story teller to be effective he should be well versed in a variety of culture so that his stories are within cultural contents of the community in question**
5. **A good storyteller should know about the past of his people and also a keen observer of what is happening today so that his stories are dynamic and can appeal to present generations. The artist in society is a bridge between the world of yesterday, today and tomorrow.**

6. **A good storyteller should be sensitive in order to ensure that he does offend or embarrass the audience. To be sensitive is to be careful about other people's feeling in a mixed audience in terms of age, sex, and ethnic background, the artist must be very careful not to sound rude or obscene. In certain instances, she will employ euphemism instead of use of the taboo words.**
7. **A good storyteller should be a teacher of morality so as to inculcate the necessary values and practices in the evidence. Besides entertainment, oral narratives are expected to teach good morality in society.**
8. **A good storyteller should be a good actor in order to keep the audience attentive throughout the performance. Accordingly, he will employ narrative techniques such as dramatization, gestures, facial expressions e.t.c.**

TECHNIQUES OF STORY-TELLING

To make the story interesting and to keep the audience attentive throughout the performance, the storyteller should employ certain techniques.

They includes:-

1. **Dramatization: -**
   certain aspects of the story or even parts can be re-enacted by reproducers by the narrator for the audience to have a visual insight into how they happened. E.g. the narrator would sit up the way they had done in a meeting.
2. **Use of gestures: -**
   this refers t the use of hands to demonstrate actions within an oral narrative. The hands can be used to demonstrate cutting down a tree, throwing objects, lifting e.t.c.
3. **Facial expressions: -**
   the face can be used to capture very many feelings and moods like shock, anger, joy, pain, disgust, suspicion e.t.c. The narrator should use his face to show the audience the feeling of various characters in the story.

4. **Tonal variation: -**
   the intensity of sound and projection can reflect different tones and moods; the voice can portray urgency, fear, and excitement e.t.c.

5. **Mimicry: -**
   this is the ability to imitate people or animals for the purpose of making fun. The story teller mimics the character in the story in order to make the story interesting.
6. **Involvement of the audience:-**
   The story teller should ensure that the audience is active throughout the story through being involved in such areas as the opening formulas, repetition, singing, asking questions and any other area that they can come into the story
7. **Use of costumes and decorations**
   this involves the use of objects to drive home the message. Where for instance, the hare has glued horns to his head in order to attend a meeting of animals with horns, the narrator can use small sticks to show these horns.
8. **The use of dramatic pause: -**
   At a strategic point in the story, the narrator can pause for effect. Dramatic pause can work best where there is heightened feeling like shock, surprise and unbelief.
   These techniques re married together and used where appropriate to make the story real and lively for the audience to enjoy, follow and understand.

<u>CLASSIFICATIONS OF ORAL NARRATIVES</u>

Oral narratives can be sub-divided into various sub-genres as follows: -

a) **Tricksters stories**
b) **Ogre/Monster stories**
c) **Explanatory/etiological/why stories**
d) **Dilemma**

e) **Myths**

f) **Legends**

TRICKSTER STORIES:

The stories involve trickery where one character, the tricksters, uses his wit to undo another dupe. The trickster is presented as a wise and cunning character while the dupe is usually foolish and gullible. Each community tends to have its tricksters and dupes. Common tricksters include the hare, the squirrel, Chameleon, tortoise, spider, and monkey e.t.c. The most common dupe is the hyena. There is a trend where smaller and weaker animals seem to outdo the stronger and the bigger ones. Is this done despise the bigger characters?

No, this is done with the following reasons: -

i. **To pass a moral message that might not always be right.**

ii. **To encourage children that they can also excel in spite of their size.**

iii. **To encourage the weak in society to fight for their rights in spite of their disadvantages**

iv. **To show the importance of being wise in society. Sometimes the dupe is depicted as evil and his defeat is a celebration of good over evil.**

However, the trickster occasionally finds himself outwitted. This serves as a warning to those who are sly in the society for they could get a taste of their own medicine. Besides, no community would like to encourage slyness and deceit as ways of survival.

EXPLANATORY/AETIOLOGICAL STORIES:

They are called why stories because they attempt to explain the origin of phenomena. These stories usually ends with "and they is why……"

It is important to clarify that they do not explain the origin of the universe and communities (myths) rather they pick on the specific trend or aspect of life and explain its origin. They may explain physical attributes of animals and nature and trace the origin of present relationships.

Examples – why the hyena limps, why the hare has a short tail, why the zebra has stripes, how the dog became a domestic animal, why women do not own animals, how the hawk and the hen became perpetual enemies.

OGRE/MONSTER NARRATIVES:

Ogres are characters that are half human and half animal. They are super to change from human characters that have the ability to change from human beings to animals. They feed on human beings and have the ability to devour everything that comes to sight. In many of the stories, they appear in human gatherings as perfect human being for example, very handsome young men but late they old turn to ugly man-eating creatures.

Ogres are an embodiment of evil that successfully camouflages as good among human beings only to reveal itself later. Ogre stories serve to caution human beings to be careful and on the look out for evil that could be camouflaged around us. Children were especially warned against strangers.

DILEMMA STORIES:

A dilemma is a situation where a character is torn between two things and cannot decide what to do and the listener or reader is left to look for the solution. The two or more choices that fact the character or community are usually of a moral nature requiring critical judgement.

The dilemma is meant to test our wit in critical issues of life, initiate debate among listeners or readers and to prepare us for such moments in life.

LEGENDS/HERO STORIES:

Legends are stories of human characters that lived in the past and exhibited extra –ordinary qualities. These characters are of super human nature and their exploits are of epic proportions. The belief among the respective communities is that these heroes are historical figures. What happens is that unique individuals are celebrated by society and with time, their prowess is exaggerated down the line to reach epic proportions.

There is a legend among the Kikuyu known as Wamugumo who was famous to eat volumes and volumes of food. A research I carried out on the same revealed that this man did exist like you and I; he was a very hardworking man and his food consumption was definitely commensurate with his volume of work. To ordinary mortals, this was too much food and his culinary tendencies spread from hill to hill with each making an addition to the abilities. Eventually what emerges today is a figure that could eat a whole will and ask for a second helping while performing work for a hundred ordinary men.

Legends provide us with heroes to copy or emulate for they excelled in various fields e.g. Wangu wa Makeri of the Agikuyu excelled in leadership which was previously a domain of men. Lwanda Magere of the Luo was ideal examples of bravery during the times of inter – clan and tribal wars.

MYTHS

Myths are creation stories that trace the origin of communities and the universe in general as having come through supernatural powers.

The difference between myths and legends is that myths involve the activities of the supernatural or gods while legends are main about human beings but who have super – human qualities.

The function of myths is to explain the origin of mankind and the Bio-physical universe. Thus, myths validate social systems and authority and educate or socialize community members. Each community has its myth though quite a number seem to be similar

OTHER STORIES:

Students should also familiarize themselves with the following other categories of oral narrative.

a) **FABLES.**

This is a story that involves the use of animals as the main character with the main with the aim of delivering a moral message.

There is a story about the hyena that went out looking for food during famine after many days of starvation he came across a carcass and ate and ate until he died. This story is neither of the six categories above it is fable.

b) **HUMAN TALES.**

These are the stories where human beings are the main character. Sometimes they may interact with animals but it is they (men) who are his focus of the story.

We have other stories about girls seeking beauty and becoming jealous of the most beautiful one among them whom the unsuccessfully try to eliminate leading to their punishments. Such is a human tale.

c) **STORIES ABOUT SPIRIT**

we also have stories that highlight the work of spirits among men; the way they live among men influence and control the lives men and generally their existence in the human world.

STYLE IN ORAL NARRATIVES

Oral narratives employ certain feature forms or qualities to deliver their message. Style has to do with the way language is fashioned or used artistically to communicate.

These features of styles includes: -

1. OPENING FORMULAE

this is when the story begins with word; along time ago, Long long time ago or once a upon a time. When a story begins this way it achieves certain effects or functions including.

i. It marks the beginning of the story.

ii. The person who utters those words is immediately identified as the narrator.

iii. These words call for attention from the audience as the story has started.

iv. The words clearly indicates that we are moving away from the natural world and entering the fictional world of the narrator since we are dealing with long time – ago the infinite past.

NB: However not all stories start with the opening formulae myths and legend for instance do not start with it for they are believed to be true by their respective communities.

2. CLOSING FORMULAE

This is when the story ends with the words; there ends my story and that is my story of similar words.

This kind of ending has its effects or functions.

i. It marks the end of the story.

ii. Since the story has ended the audience is removed from the narrative fiction world and released from concentration.

iii. The audience is also free to participate by reflecting on the story or asking questions.

iv. The present narrator makes way for another narrator or presentation

3. TIMELESSNESS

The time when the events of the narrative took place is not specified. The story is said to take place. Long time ago, one day, at that time, those days e.t.c.

Timelessness enhances the fictional quality of the narrative as there is no reference time. The story becomes believable since it did not take place yesterday but infinite past when those things were possible. So the narrative becomes time in the content of the time.

4. FANTASY.

This refers to elements, situations, events or happenings in the story that are impossible in ordinary day life. Fantasy is the opposite of reality. Example of such includes characters dying and coming back to life. Animals changing into human beings and vice versa: plants and the inanimate objects acquiring human nature e.t.c. However, the use of the animal characters not fantasy for it is nature of oral narratives. Animals are characters just like human beings. Fantasy is a source of humour in the story. It also helps to enhance plots by providing for the impossible.

5. PERSONIFICATION/USE OF ANIMAL CHARACTERS

Personification goes beyond the use of animal characters as other forms of life may be given human attributes as well. The use of animal characters is almost synonymous with oral narratives animals are in deed the characters in the narrative.

Why are animals characters used in the oral narratives?

(i) To create humour: - the imagination of why the animals are able to do is a great source of humour.

(ii) To achieve in direct castigation or to avoid directly attacking human beings. This is the principle purpose so as to make human beings see their folly in behaving as those animals do.

(iii) This leads to passing a moral message. Animals are used to teach us.

(iv) The universal nature of animals helps to universalize the issue at hand. The use of certain objects may tend to localize the

message but animals have a universe appeal and their use send the message across various divides.

6. <u>REPITITION:</u>

Words or phases may be repeated in a story. A common repetition is they went and went, they worked and worked, They ate and ate. Such repetition serves the following functions:

i. **It creates some rhythm or regularity.**
ii. **It is a source of humour.**
iii. **It emphasizes or stresses what is being talked about.**
iv. **It may serve to show a sense of continuation or cumulative e.g. They walked and walked indicates they walked for a long time and covered a long distance.**
v. **Repetition may also indicate a tone or set of moods of the narrative. When a sad phrase is repeated severally, it creates the mood of sadness.**

7. <u>RHETORICAL QUESTIONS</u>

This is a question asked but whose answer is not provided or needed rather it is left up to the audience to think in search of the answer. The function of such a song includes: -

i. **It entertains the audience and breaks the monopoly of narration. The song provides a good opportunity for the audience to participate in the narration.**
ii. **It enhances plot development by prolonging the story and joining up different episode in the story.**
iii. **It captures the mood of the moment as it can express joy or sadness. This cases or relief tension in the story.**
iv. **A song creates suspense in the story and can be used to anticipate the climax of the story.**
v. **A song may become a source of communication between characters in the song. E.g. a bird may deliver a message in a song. A song may help character development when it exposes**

aspect of character.

8. DIALOGUE:

This refers to a conversation between two or more characters in the story. Dialogue enhances plot development it may help in character exposition and bring realism into the story.

9. HUMOUR/COMIC RELIEF

Some elements of a story elicit light moments and laughter from the audience. Humour helps create interest in the audience and keep them glued to the story. Humour also breaks away tension among the audience.

10. FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE/FIGURES OF SPEECH.

These like imagery, refer in a narrow sense to the use of simile and metaphors. Similes are images that directly compare two or more things using words like as, than: as black as charcoal, black like coal, black than darkness itself. A metaphor is a comparison in which one thing is called another. She is peacock.

These comparisons help to create a mental image of what is being described by making what is abstract become concrete. Some comparisons can be source of humour. Note that figurative language or imagery can broadly include similes, metaphors, personification, symbolism and exaggerations.

11. EXAGGERATION/HYPERBOLE:

Some elements of reality are deliberated blown out of proportion such that they look large than life.

This creates humour and occasions help us to visualize issues through magnifying them.

12. SYMBOLISM.

This refers to the use of a person, animal or object to represent an ideal or something else. In life, we have come to see a cross as a symbol of Christianity. Some animals also seem to carry a certain idea e.g. a dove usually represents peace.
However, students should be cautioned against symbol hunting, the tendency to read symbols behind everything they read.

13. <u>SUSPENSE</u>
Like humour, it is both a style and effect of other style. Suspense is a state of poised anticipation or expectation. It arises from delayed activities that we look forward to a successful story should carry suspense throughout the story so as to whet the appetite of the audience as they eagerly look forward to what happens next.
14. <u>USE OF PROVERBS AND WISE SAYING.</u>
Proverbs can be used in oral narrative to convey a message. They carry both literal and metaphorical interpretations.

15. <u>IRONY</u>
This refers to a deliberate misrepresentation of the truth. A mode of communication where meaning is expressed through deliberately expressing the opposite of what is intended in the hope that the audience (or reader) will decipher the true meaning it can thus be called honest deception.
Irony also accrues from situations where what happens is the opposite of what seemed obvious. In a story a jealous step – mother puts poison in food expecting to kill a step-son but it is an ironic twist, the food is eaten by her own son who dies.

16. <u>IDEOPHONES:</u>
These are sound produced by man, Animals and nature that have been coded into words. The barking of the Dog gugugu!, the hissing of the snake sssh!, mooing of the cow Moooh!, Laugh, Kwa! Kwa! Kwa! Or hehehe! Or Waaah!.

To help create realism in the story, break monotony of story and may be a source of humour.

17. <u>ONOMATOPOEA</u>

Certain words or expressions are derived from their natural sound or ideophones. Consider the following

ONOMATOPOEIA	IDEOPHONE
Moo	Moooh! Moooh! Moooh!
Mew/miaow	Miaoh! Miaoh! Miaoh!
Howl	Hooo! Hooo! Hooo!
Bang	Ba! Ba! Ba!
Croak	Croo! Croo! Croo!
Zoom	Zoo! Zoo! Zoo!
Gong	Ngo! Ngo! Ngo!
Hiss	Ssssssh! Ssssssh! Ssssssh!
Boom	Booo! Booo! Booo!
hum	Mmmm! Mmmm! Mmmm!

<u>LESSONS LEARNT FROM NARRATIVES</u>

Each moral oral narrative is meant to pass a moral message to the audience.

In fact, at the end of the narrative the narrator is supposed to lead the group into deducing the moral lessons of the narrative

A moral lesson has a given structure.

1. **It is supposed to be positive when we want to teach something we put it positively as opposed to commandments that is put negatively.**

   We should not …….. (commandments not a moral lesson)
2. **A moral lesson should imply consequences. These consequences are either a reward or punishment. This means that when we advice we tell what to do and the benefits or the repercussions of doing so. E.g. we should be careful in choosing our friends for some can be deceitful and mislead.**

   The most ideal moral lesson is the fourth commandments. Unlike other commandments that are negative and do not imply

consequence. It is well formulated positively and with consequences for instance obey your father and mother so that your days on earth may increase.

3. **After stating a moral lesson it should be explained in the context of the narrative. This means that the relevance of moral lesson to the narrative must be traced. In a very simple language. The moral should be illustrated from the story. This is because the moral is derived from the story.**

   Sometimes a proverb can capture a moral lesson such a proverb must be both positive and implying a consequence. Examples of such proverbs includes:-

   a) Pride comes before a fall.

   b) Mtaka yote hukosa yote. (He who desires all loses all)

   c) Unity is strength.

   d) Mtegemea cha nduguye hufa maskini (whoever relies on his siblings dies poor).

However, it is important to know that each story has its own moral lessons and there are no moral lessons that can apply to all stories

ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES

These are activities through which a community meets its basic needs and wants as you listen to or read a story you notice activities that are geared towards meeting the needs and wants of the community.

They may include cultivation of crops, keeping of livestock, hunting, gathering, fishing, blacksmithing, trade or commerce wearing e.t.c.

SOCIAL-CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

This is the peoples way of life and as we listen to or read a story we get to see trends of a community set up in terms of religion rites of passage, division of labour, mode governance. Food, housing, education, solid set-ups, celebrations and festivals e.t.c

UNIT THREE

SONGS/ORAL POETRY

What is poetry? – Poetry refers to the message that is arranged in verse as opposed to prose. When these words are rendered in a musical form they become a song or oral poetry, in deed any poem can become a song if appropriate music or melodies are added.

PERFORMANCE OF SONGS

Man is a singing being. All is life is marked and permitted with song and dance. The African is particularly more musical and virtually all his life is accompanied by song and dance, working leisure, rites of passage, religion e.t.c.

Most of the singing is done in given rhythm and accompanied by dancing.

This dancing range from simple nodding of the head, tapping of the feet and clapping of the hand to vigorous body movements and group formations

The performance is usually led by a single person, the soloist or a group leads the rest. Sometimes instrumentation's accompanies singing and dancing. In some communities songs are performed according to age and sex though there are instances where all comes together in song and dance.

On the whole the versatile nature of songs allowed for a variety of performance and there seems to be no boundaries or limit of creativity.

CLASSIFICATION OF SONGS

In some communities, songs are classified along gender and age such that we have songs for boys, girl's e.t.c. But this classification

is a bit isolated and the more common one is done accordingly to the functions.

The main functions of songs, of course entertainment but each category has it specific functions. These classes are as follows.

1. **LULLABIES**

   These are songs that are sung by mother and by sisters to soothe babies to sleep or quiet crying babies

   Lullabies are simple songs that involve monosyllabic words that are constantly repeated. They have a soft tone and smooth rocking rhythm for effect.

2. **CHILDREN PLAY SONGS**

   Children everywhere in the world tend to have a variety of songs to enhance their play activity. These songs can further be sub-divided as follows.

a) **Singing games.**

   These are songs as part of the play activity. The singing is an integral part of the game. A common one is the song sung by small girls s the jump around a rope.

b) **Nonsense songs:**

   These songs pick on a particular petty thing or issue and sing about it and saying nothing in particular. They are used by children to bring out their childishness. In such songs children would sing about such things as frogs and cats.

c) **Naughty songs**

   each age has its secret naughty things that they want to do or say only in the context of their age-mates. For children they would taunt one another and occasional they may border on the absence. Sometimes nursery school children have naughty songs taunting their teacher though in a light note.

d) **Tongue –twisting rhymes/catch rhymes**

   These are songs based on attempts to articulate difficult sounds especially those sounds with similar pronunciation

e) Trick – verse.

This involves two groups engaged in a battle of wits using words in a song. Each group would represent an idea, object or specific group trying to prove to the other their supremacy. One group could represent cats while the other represents dogs and each would try to show the other how he is adored by men

f) Round songs.

Several groups would be singing the same song but in a rotational form such that while the first is singing in the second line, the second starts the first line and so on. Its intention is to ensure that the members of each concentrate so that they are not outdone or overshadowed by the other.

g] Nursery chants

This is a modern category of songs sung in elementary schools to enhance the learning process.

3. <u>INITIATION SONGS:</u>

These are sometimes narrowly perceived circumcision songs. They are sung when youngsters are being initiated into adults. Their function is to educate the initiate or such things are tribal history, immorality expectations in adulthood. Sometimes they can be used to encourage the initiates praise the fearless ones and ridicule cowardice.

4. <u>LOVE/NUPTIALS/WEDDING SONGS</u>

They express strong feeling of love and intention to marry. Besides expressions of feeling they also teach in morality and the expectations of the society in matter pertaining to marriage.

5. <u>FUNERAL DIRGES</u>

These are songs sung during burial ceremonies to express sorrow and hopelessness at man's liability to overcome death. These songs may be used to praise the dead and the legacy they have left behind

6. <u>WORK SONGS.</u>

They are sung to accompany work. They help those working to

relax as they do work, enhance the work, create harmony among workers, praise the virtue of hard-work and ridicule laziness and reflect generally on work.

There are quite a number of songs serving very specific purposes. Others include.

7. **War songs**
8. **Political songs/patriotic songs**
9. **Praise/epic songs**
10. **Beer songs**
11. **Satirical songs**
12. **Child-naming songs.**

<u>FEATURES OF STYLE IN SONG</u>

Consider the following work song or satirical song

<u>These men of Kaaria</u>.

He has hardly thrown into Jembes
when he says
aai! I want to go to the bush
I might have eaten a bad thing
in that village of Ndumbi
the people of Ndumbi
the people of Ndumbi cannot be trusted
they are frequent visitors of Gaturi

And he goes dragging his feet
these men of Kaaria
they all have steel backs

but very sweet words to cover
their inability to bend in the shamba
I ask
Where do they get food?

And when the women approach
with pots and Calabashes
he hurriedly rushes in from the bush
he has not even done his clothes well
to be the first to dip his hands there
aai. You men of Kaaria
don't you even have shame?
(Anonymous)

The following are some of the features of style in songs

1. **REPETITION.**
   It functions in the same way as in oral narratives only that in songs there is usually a lot of repetition for musicality.
2. **<u>DIRECT TRANSLATIONS.</u>**
   Songs are rendered in their original language and they have to be translated into English. Very thorough translation would lose the real meaning and humour of the song so a lose translation is given. Sometimes the translation is so direct that only those familiar with the original language can grasp the real meaning. Direct translation ensures that the translation text remains as close as possible to the original text. It also traces the origin of the song and can be source of humour. The first line of the above song is a direct translation from the Kikuyu version "Gukia icembe" where digging is referred as throwing a Jembe.
3. **<u>DIRECT ADDRESS</u>**
   Most of the songs have a specific target audience. The singer will

directly mention the address. This creates a dramatic effect since somebody is being referred to it also given the message context as the audience is known. In the sixth line of the third stanza there is direct address – "You men of Kaaria".

4. **<u>TRADITIONAL SETTING.</u>**

   The setting of the song in terms of social cultural traits may trace directly to traditional practices. You can clearly tell that you are dealing with practices of the pre-modern society.

   In the third line of the first stanza, the young man says he want to go to the bush for he must have eaten some bad food. This refers to going to the toilet which is traditional times was the bush.

5. **<u>CLASS MORAL JUDGEMENT</u>.**

   Under normal circumstances we judge individual moral conduct but occasionally a singer backing in the glory of poetic license. In the song, the young men of Kaaria are said to have no shame in the last line of the poem.

6. **<u>ELEMENTS THAT CAN BE DRAMATIZED</u>**

   It is said that there is no song without dance. As you look through the song, you notice that it has areas that can be rendered through action.

   In the last stanza of the song the young man is said to rush into be the first to clip his hand in pots. This can be brought out through action.

7. **<u>EXTREME CHARACTERISATION</u>**

   Again due poetic licence a singer can cast characters in the extreme for humour and to pass a moral message through ridicule.

   The young man of Kaaria are said to have no shame in the rhetorical questions appearing in the last line of the poem. They are also said to have steel backs in the second stanza implying that they cannot bend to do work. This is a bit extreme.

In other works of literature like prose and drama, messages are expressed in an implicit manner such that it is upto the reader or audience to deduce the message, but in songs this is done in didactic manner and so we have direct address, class moral judgement and extreme characterization.

8. **ANONYMITY**

   This feature of style refer to instances where in place of composer's name we have the word "anonymous" meaning that the composer is not known.

   An anonymous composition might indicate that the song is a communal property having been composed and transmitted orally by the community. So even as the singer sings, the message is communally owned giving it great validity.

9. **EUPHEMISM**

   This is a manner of expression that employs more socially acceptable and less direct language for something that would otherwise have been unpleasant, vulgar or taboo. In nursery schools, children are taught very basic euphemism. Instead of going to the toilet, it is, "may I go out".

10. **MORAL LESSON**

    As argued above, songs communicate in a didactic manner. The singer opts to preach his message directly. Where this happens it is a moral lesson.

    A singer, for instance would sing "work hard young men for hard work pays".

    This is a common feature of oral narratives where the message is put very explicitly.

11. **PARALLELISM**

    The use images to compare or contrast ideas. Such pair of images can be characters, expressions, experiences or ideas that stand out in the song as mutually exclusive.

12. **ALLUSION**

This refers to the use of names of people, place, things or Events that the listener or reader is automatically assigned to know about

or is familiar with. In choosing the word, the writer or singer makes the basic assumption that its implications are well known.
In the song above, the singer says the man of Kaaria could have visited Gaturi. This is a rude reference to use of poison. Gaturi among the Kikuyu was believed to be a place where people used witchcraft.

Other features include

13. **Imagery/ figurative language**
14. **Idiophones**
15. **Personification**
16. **Rhetorical questions**
17. **Irony**
18. **Use of proverbs and wise sayings**

UNIT FOUR
PROVERBS

DEFINITIONS

A proverb is a short statement of wisdom accepted by a community as an expression of truth and wisdom.
Overtime a community develops short statement that reflects its experience, belief, philosophy of life, world view and tested opinion.

This statement is passed down the generations in form of wise sayings or proverbs.

CLASSIFICATION OF PROVERBS

There are several ways of classifying proverbs. Some of these includes: -

1. **Alphabetic classification**
   In quite a number of books where proverbs are recorded this is done in alphabetical order. This is done in the realization that classification of proverbs is not as easy as obvious as that of songs and narratives.
2. **Classification according to the subject, matter, contents or themes**
   This way, themes would be grouped on what they are talking about. We would therefore have proverbs on poverty, family, patriotism, unity, religion, wisdom, readership, handwork, honesty, greed friendship, obedience, death, wealth and poverty etc.
3. **Classification according to style**
   This is a more complex academic exercise where proverbs are classified according to style they employ for example a certain experience event or story would be summarized to form a single statement that becomes a proverb. Such is an anecdote proverb. According to style, we would have proverbs like aphorisms, allusions, satirical, epigrams etc.
4. **Classification according to functions**
   For secondary school students this appears to be the most appropriate since it is simple. We note that a single proverb can serve several functions.

   The following are some of the functions of the proverbs and their classifications

   i) Advisory and advising proverbs

E.g. Mtaka cha mvunguni sharti ainame

(If you want something, you must work hard)

ii) Cautionary or cautioning or warning proverb

E.g. Bad Company ruins morals

iii) Educative e.g. Mtoto umleavyo ndivyo akuavyo

(The child grows up the way you bring him up)

iv) Satirical proverbs e.g. Nyani haoni kundule

(The monkey does not see its ugly buttocks)

v) Encouraging proverbs e.g. Success does not come on a silver plate.

vi) They are incorporated into ordinary conversation as sign of eloquence

vii) They are used in deciding a case e.g. among the Luos there is a proverb that says “blame both the world cat and the chicken” while the Kikuyu says “both the thief and the witness are equally guilty”.

viii) They express a worldview of a given people of issues of life like sickness, poverty, wisdom etc.

ix) Summarizing a situation e.g. Charity begins at home.

x) Proverbs also express or capture the contradictions of life e.g. if you want peace prepare for war.

It is important to note that classification according to function is not rigid since one proverb can be used for various functions.

<u>CHARACTERISRICS OF PROVERBS (STYLES</u>)

1. **Proverbs are usually short in form. In company with other genres like songs and narrative proverbs are short.**
2. **They are metaphorical or referential. The language of proverbs employs images and pictures to compare experiences. Therefore, a proverb has literal and metaphoric meanings.**

3. **They are compressed/compact/concise/pithy. The message of the proverb is delivered using very few words but which are loaded with meaning.**
4. **Proverbs are fixed/static**
   the statement does not change with time and remains the same as it is handled down the generations. However the relevance of the proverbs transcends the boundaries of time and space.
5. **Proverbs are situational and contextual.**
   The nature of proverbs is such that they have to be conceived in a particular context. One proverb can be used to contradict another.
   NB: at a more advanced level, the style of proverbs can be analyzed and found to employ such features of style as parallelism/juxtaposition, contrast. Imagery, idiophones, allusion, humours and sounds patterns.

UNIT FIVE
RIDDLES

Definitions

This is a simple form of phrase or statement referring to an analogy of some well- known objects or reality that a challenger pauses to the respondent.

In very simple language, a riddle is puzzle put forward by a challenger for the respondent to try and un-raffle.

PERFOMANCE OF RIDDLES

Traditionally riddles were performed in the evening, alongside other genres as a way of passing time although they were mainly passed down from older people. The performance of riddles was a domain of children.

Today riddles are performed in school as part of learning process. This means that they have become quite dynamic.

The process of performance of riddle normally takes the following form:

- **The challenger declares a wish to place a riddle**
  English : I throw a riddle
  Kiswahili : Kitendawili

- **The respondents accept the challenge**
  English : We take it
  Kiswahili : tega
- **The challenger poses the riddle.**
- **Respondents make the attempt until they get the correct answer.**
- **If the correct answer is not forthcoming the challenger proudly asks for a reward in order to reveal it. The reward is mere token applicable only within the context**

of the riddling process. The token/rewards depend on the creativity of the participants. So they offer rewards until the challenger accepts one.

- **Then the correct answer is given and the respondents marvel at the genius of the challenger.**

CLASSIFICATION OF RIDDLES:

There are several ways of classifying riddles. They include:-

1. **According to the imagery employed:**
   This classification looks at the object mentioned in the riddles and classifies them thus,
   example riddles on wild animals, plants, domestic, animals, people, natural phenomenon, traditional objects, modern technology, cooking, utensils e.t.c.
2. **According to style and structure.**
   Like other forms of literature, riddles also employ style to communicate the message.
   Accordingly we have:-

i. **Homologues / idiophonic riddles.**
   These rely on sound. The relationship between the puzzle and the answer lies in the ability to relate to the sound to particular objects.
   For example among the Kikuyu "Shi na Shi" refers to a needle. The sound "Shi" imitates the process of needling in and out

ii. **Declarative riddles**
   the styles employed are description. A description of the object is provided. They match so perfectly that the respondent can guess.
   Challenger : A European standing on one
   Respondent : a mushroom.

iii. **Interrogative riddles.**
   This is presence in a question form
   Challenger : Wanicheka nimekufanya nini (what have I

done that you may laugh at me)

Respondent : kioo

(mirror)

iv. <u>Epigrams</u>

the style is puzzling. This is done by presenting a series of logically connected puzzles that allude to a process or an object.

E.g.

Challenger : Ting ting kaleta tang tang na
tang tang kaleta ting ting
(Ting ting brings tang tang and
tang tang brings ting ting).

Respondent : Kuku kataga mayai na mayai huleta kuku.

<u>V. Analogue (coinage]</u>

This is a sub-group of the epigram. The style here is comparison. The riddle is a comparison between the object and the expected answer.

E.g.

Challenger : Two carrying two driving four to the paa.

Answer : A woman carrying the baby taking a
Cow to the river

vi. <u>Narrative riddle.</u>

The style is narration. The challenger begins by telling as short story that has elements of ambiguity or that which presents a difficult problem to be solved or that which underlies some hidden facts and that asks a question which requires an analysis of the story.

E.g. a man was going on a journey carrying the goat, a leopard and some sweet potato vines. He came he came to a river that he could only cross by a boat but only which could only carry two items at a time. How did he carry the three items across the river.

<u>FUNCTIONS OF A RIDDLE</u>

1. **Entertainment/leisure/amusement/passing time.**
2. **Test and develops Children's wit/intelligence.**
3. **They help children to be observant of the environment.**
4. **They enhance socialization. Sometimes children would exchange riddles with adults.**

SIMILARITIES BETWEEN RIDDLES AND PROVERBS

1. **They are both short in form.**
2. **They both employ metaphorical/figurative referential language.**
3. **They are used for the purpose of oral communication.**
4. **They embody the culture (values, beliefs, practices, artifacts) of a particular community.**
5. **They are distinct to a particular community or environment**

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN RIDDLES AND PROVERBS

1. **While a proverb is a short statement of wisdom, a riddle is a language game.**
2. **The proverb is a single statement while a riddle has a formula requiring a coders and decoder/challenger and a respondent. So they have a different form.**
3. **A proverb is a static statement that does not change in time and space but riddles are dynamic as they are influenced by time and space to change.**
4. **Proverbs are usually used by adults while riddles are a domain of children.**

UNIT SIX

TONGUE TWISTERS

DEFINITION

This is a phrase containing a number of words that are very similar in pronounciation and which are difficult to articulate in a single breath. A group of similar yet difficult words are systematically put in succession to provide a sound puzzle.

CHARACTERISTICS

1. **Tongue twisters rely on sound patterns like alteration, assonance, consonance, rhyme and repetition.**
2. **Meaning not a necessary component. The meaning of those statements is not considered since many of them are meaningless.**
3. **The main aim at auditory discrimination the ability to tell the difference between similar sounds.**

FUNCTIONS OF TONGUE TWISTERS

1. **They help to articulate words. They are said to 'lighten' the tongue.**
2. **They sharpen wits in an attempt to coin them or articulate them.**
3. **They enhance the harmony between what is heard and what is said.**
4. **Entertainment.**

5. **They can be said to have an educational value as they aid in language development**

EXAMPLES

1. **Wale watu saba walipewa siku saba kutafuta shamba lakini siku saba hazikutosha kupata shaba kwani shaba haiwezi kupatikana kwa siku saba**
2. **Faith faithfully facilitated fairly fort night for the fair at the former factory facing famous fairly fait.**
3. **Kwa sababu alikiwa shababu, shaaban alisahau kuwa maisha ya shababu ni hatari sana kwa sababu shababu isipochunga huweza kupotoshwa ma mashababu mengine bila sababu maalum.**

UNIT SEVEN
FIELDWORK

In spite of heavy classrooms, work load students are expected to have time for field work.

What is field work?

This is a systematic fact finding mission whereby students go out to collect oral material. This is done with a view of recording and analyzing this information.

TERMS USED FIELDWORK

FIELD- This does not refer to any physically designated area It is any place that a researcher (students) goes to collect oral literature material

RESEARCH – The process of gathering, recording and Analyzing oral literature material

DATA - Information gathered in a research.

INFORMANT - Any person who provides information to the researcher in the process of field work also known as the respondent.

INTERVIEWER –The researcher as he asks questions

INTERVIEWEE – The person responding to those questions (informant).

RAPPORT – a cordial relationship between the researcher and the informant

TRANSCRIPTION – Writing down oral material in the original language of performance exactly as it is rendered without any alteration or directly from a tape recorder.

TRANSLATIONS – Giving meaning in another language to what is said or recorder

IMPORTANCE OF FIELDWORK

Fieldwork is done with a very clear purpose or objectives. They include.

1. **Provide students with an opportunity experience oral literature. What is written in book becomes meaningful once students get first hand bit through seeing, hearing and participating in the performances in the field.**
2. **Students are able to relate what they learn with real life situations. What is learnt in class is no longer rote learning but reality.**
3. **Field work provides an opportunity to detect ant new trends even as students confirm what is there. Oral literature dynamic and students should be kept a breast of any change.**
4. **It helps students sharpen skills of observation, recording and analysis. Furthermore field work is a continuous process throughout academia.**
5. **Oral literature is a performed art that can only be fully appreciated in the context of a performance.**
6. **There is still a lot of oral literature material in the areas of songs, narratives, proverbs, riddles and tongue twisters that is yet to be collected recorded and analyzed. This is the work researchers like students.**

Field work provides students with a moment of relaxation and enjoyment outside the classroom situation. Students also enhance their ability to socialize and interact with people and also to make independent and important decisions.

STAGES IN FIELD WORK

The process of carrying out field work involves five stages:-

a) Preparations
b) Collecting data
c) Recording the data
d) Processing the data
e) Analyzing and interpreting the data.

1. PREPARATIONS

This involves the following:

i. Logically the first thing to do is to decide on what is to be researched.
ii. Researcher then identifies the catchment's area location of the study.
iii. It is important to seek official permission from the authorities.
iv. A pre-visit is important visiting before hand gives the researcher an insight into the physical and social environment of the field.
v. It is important to do library research on the topic of research so as to establish a research gap.
vi. Prepare material for recording and any necessary equipment.
vii. It is vital to work out an estimation of time and money required for a successful completion of the study.

2. COLLECTING DATA.

This is the process of gathering and acquiring the information being sought for. Here the main issue establishing contact with the informant, establish rapport and using certain techniques to get the information. These techniques are the methods of collecting information include listening, observation, participation, and

interview. These methods are not used in isolation. A good researcher will harmonize the use of several of these.

a) Listening.

A keen listener will gather lot information from what is a said.

b) Observation

The researcher stands aside and uses his eyes and ears to follow what is effective as one can get wrong perceptions of what is going on. Furthermore you cannot get insights into what is going on while you stand aloof.

c) Participation.

It is also called participant observation. The researcher becomes part and parcel of what is going on. He observes from within. This way first hand information is gathered without the prejudice of the respondents.

However there can be problem of getting answers to set questions. Interview can be used to get information even from illiterate people. The researcher guides the discussions towards getting answers to set questions.

Interviews can be used to get information even from illiterate people. The researcher has a chance to gauge the feelings of the respondents and probe further if needed be also important is that instant answers are provided.

But interviewees can put up a show thus mislead the interview suffer memory lapse or deliberately till lies when using a translate there could be distortions

d) Questionnaires

This is the set of prepared questions that a respondent id given to write down the answers.

The following questionnaire has been prepared by a researcher gathering information on the same.

SAMPLE QUESTIONNAIRE

BACKGROUND OF THE INFORMANT

Name ……

Sex …….

Age …….

Place of birth ……..

District ……

Province …….

Tribe ……

Marital status …….

Occupation ……

INFORMATION OF THE SONG

1. ***How did you learn the song that you are singing…… ……***
2. ***When were these songs usually sung and by who? …… ……***
3. ***What functions did they serve? …… …….***
4. ***Were there roles governing the way songs were sung? …… ……***
5. ***Have these songs undergone any change today? …… ……***
6. ***Comments on songs in general …… ……***

The questionnaires can cover a wide range of information using one or a few researchers. The researcher just gets the kind of information he seeks and the respondents feel free. But they are

limited to the literate people. No opportunity to probe further and the respondents can deliberately give misleading information.

NOTE:

To overcome these problems of inaccurate information, the researcher should use various methods to reinforce each other and also increase on the number of respondents so as to compare notes

3. RECORDING DATA.

In practice both data collection and recording goes on simultaneously. The two may be done by the same person but some methods require a different person for recording.

The methods of recording includes:- memory recording, writing, type recording, photography or filming or video recording

a) Memory recording

this is sometimes called foreteller method as it was the sole method through which our fore father stored oral literature for later transmission to the next generation.

However, a lot of oral literature faded out this way as it never got to the next person sometimes it was forgotten and distorted.

b) Writing.

This method is largely responsible for literally transmission. Written records are accessible to a wide audience across time and space. However it is only accessible for those who are literate furthermore this method is slow in recording a performance and may lead to inaccurate recording. It also leaves out the visual details of performance.

c) Tape recording

this accurately records verbatim. The proceedings of the performance. It can even be concealed to avoid interfering with the performance.

This can later be Tran scripted and translated

however, it is expensive as it requires at least a radio it also leaves out the visual details of the performance.

d) Photographing

photographs are also a means of keeping visual accounts of the

performance. Such physical detail as costume and décor. The performance and the setting can be captured.

But this is narrow for it only records a few details. Besides it is very expensive and requires some expertise.

e) Filming or video recording

it is an all round recording for it takes accounts all details; it is audio visual. But the cost can be prohibited while it might require somebody with technical know-how.

NOTE:

As in the methods of collecting data the recording methods can be combined where possible to improve efficiency.

4. <u>PROCESSING THE DATA</u>

in view of the variety of recording techniques it is important to make a written copy of the findings. Both transcription and translation will be carried out to produce a fair copy of the findings.

5. <u>ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE DATA</u>

after a fair copy is obtained the researcher can no classify the material into genres and make comments and conclusions based on the findings. Here the success of the mission is measured in view of the objectives laid down at the beginning of the research. Sometimes a researcher finds it important to point out areas left out that other researcher could venture into.

<u>PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED IN FIELDWORK</u>.

1. Language barrier

some respondents are only familiar with their vernacular which the researcher may to be familiar with. This calls for the use of interpreter.

2. **Unreliable informants**
   some informants may suffer memory lapse or provide untrue information. Sometimes this may be as a result of ignorance. The research has to use a lot of informants and also probe and ask supplementary questions to the informants.
3. **Failure to establish rapport.**
   Sometimes it is difficult to get the informants to corporate and provide information. Some will even be hostile. The researcher should make a pre-visit to do the ground work sometimes a researcher has to carry token gifts but it is good. Public relations on the part of the researcher that carries the day
4. **Transport and accommodation problems.**
   Some parts of the country are not easily accessible and accommodation becomes a problem. A pre-visit gives the researcher an insight into what to expect and prepare accordingly.
5. **Bad weather and environmental problems.**
   Researcher should be prepared for difficult conditions and adverse weather conditions.
6. **Breakdown of research equipment**
   in the course of transportation and movement the researcher may lose or damage some equipment. This calls for care and adjustment on the part of the research. If a radio breaks down, he may have to record everything in writing.
7. **Timing.**
8. **This happens if the researcher had not prepared well. You arrive in the filed to find that the performance is through or does not happen that season. A good example is the circumcision ceremony which only takes place at a certain time in the year. Failure to prepare well would have the researcher missing the performance**
9. **Cultural shock**
   cultures are different and have different stands. In some areas a man cannot alone interview a woman such situations calls for

creativity in complying with the standards and ensures that the research goes on. Researcher must be sensitive towards such practices as greetings, dressing, relationships across sexes and other sensitive cultural practice. A researcher goes out to understand and respect other cultures but not trying and challenge them or change them.

ORAL LITERATURE TODAY

Oral literature continues to be perpetuated today through the following ways

1. **School curriculum**
   the incorporation of oral literature in the secondary school syllabus is a very important factor in consolidating the bright future of oral literature. This is even more so as English subject under which oral literature is taught is a compulsory subject and tested in Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (K.C.S.E)
2. **Availability of resources**
   there are quite a number of resources in terms of written materials, video tapes, regalia e.t.c that have recorded oral literature ensuring posterity.
3. **Institutions**
   some institutions like the Bomas of Kenya museum e.t.c provide for presentation of oral literature materials.
4. **Inter-school festivals**
   the music and drama festivals provide an opportunity for exposure to oral literature
5. **Cultural festivals**
   some communities and institutions prepare very popular cultural festivals that help to perpetuate oral literature.
6. **Oral literature for public entertainment.**
   Songs, dances and narratives continue to be part and parcel of public entertainment in gathering and mass media