

# ORAL LIBATION OF THE FAREFARI TEXT: LITERARY AND STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS

## **ABSTRACT**

Libation is seen as a significant rite and a component of the Farefari people's sociocultural existence (Mabia language). Due to the significance associated with libation and the fact that it is kept for the more mature members of society, the language used for its contraction is wrapped in complex jargon that uses literary devices. The paper analyzes the text's structure and literary devices using the pragmatic and Relevance theory (RT) frameworks. This study's descriptive qualitative study design was carefully chosen. The findings revealed that, the literary devices used in Farefari libation texts include appellation, personification, proverbs, euphemism, parallelism, repetition/anaphora, and others. The words are beautiful and loaded with literary tricks. Therefore, it is verified that Farefari libation text has a unique structure from other African languages. The libation text is likewise jam-packed with literary devices, as we discovered. Based on the findings, The researcher recommends that future researchers investigating on farefari text: literary and structural analysis may focus on folktales

**Keywords:** Farefari, literary analysis, libation text, structure, oral literature

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION:**

Among the Farefari, libation is a cultural practice that involves praying to the Supreme Being through one's ancestors and major deities (God). The ongoing communication between the visible (alive) and unseen (our deceased ancestors), major deities, and the Supreme Being is one of the libation text's sociolinguistic significances. African oral literature and culture both heavily rely on the libation ritual. This demonstrates that libation is both a cultural practice and a form of oral literature. According to Finnegan (2015), oral literature is reliant on a performer who

expresses it verbally on particular times, with verbal artistry playing a key role. Without oral performance, there is no other way for oral literature to be realized as a literary work.

## **2.0 REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE ON FAREFARI LIBATION GENRES**

There are numerous oral genres among the Farefari. The majority of these genres are currently in decline. Due to oral transmission from generation to generation and lack of documentation, the majority of these libations are vanishing. Another explanation is that the rise of Islam and Christianity has posed a serious threat to libation. Other traditional oral genres are constantly disappearing from the Farefari people's language and culture, save from the music business and a few other genres that are documented in recording studios and can therefore be easily recovered.

An examination of the literature shows that numerous studies of Farefari culture have been conducted. Although researchers have studied Farefari culture, ( Nsoh & Adjei (2010 : Rattray 1969: Meyer 1945: Cardinal 1920,)), libation text analysis has received little to no attention. Gurene proverbs are a type of oral literature that Ababila (2006) studied. The proverbs have poetic qualities, as demonstrated by Ababila (2006), and their ideas are communicated through a variety of literary devices including metaphor, simile, alliteration, rhyme, rhythm, personification, symbolism, and euphemism. Any of these According to preliminary examination, libation texts also make use of all these different literary devices to enhance their aesthetic appeal. Just a few pages of libation in different languages all around the world. One of them was Adam (2010), who focused on the beauty of the language used in the Nae Wulomo performance. His work focuses a lot on the content, explicatory, supplication, and invocation, which is more sociocultural examination of the text's language. More information about occasions where libation prayers are given, including as naming ceremonies, weddings, and funerals, is the major discussion in

Aku-shika (2016). According to Agbedor (1996), prayer is a way for a person to ask a higher power for favors or protection from evil, as well as a way for him to express gratitude for the advantages gained.

Mensah and Ekawan (2016) talked about libation ceremonial language in relation to traditional Efik marriage. Their focus was on the libation prayer's structure (morphology and syntax), which contains a coded cultural message, as well as the form and style of language utilized. They said that Efik libation performances use ritualized and symbolic language that is typically solemn, poetic, less manipulative, and not structurally open-ended. Given their culturally shaped meaning and metaphysical assumptions, they have pragmatic connotations that can be broadly contextualized and understood in terms of the values and belief system of the Efik despite the conventional language they use in everyday narration. Consequently, the goal of this study is to discuss the literary use and structure of Farefari libation texts. In order to show that Farefari libation has a three-structured form and makes use of a variety of literary devices, the researcher used descriptive analysis.

## **2.1 AREA OF THE LANGUAGE'S HISTORY**

The name Faráfará, which Nigerian soldiers gave their Gurensi comrades-in-arms between 1914 and 1918, is unquestionably the one that is most well-known across the rest of Ghana, claims Dakubu (2003). The name Farafara was derived from the greeting fara, which means "well done" or "fará," which indicates thanks. The language and its speakers are referred to as farefari. The group of dialects, including Taln, Nabt, Booni, Gurenε, and Ninkarε, is referred to as Farefari, which is frequently anglicized as Frafra. Geographically speaking, Farefari speakers are found in Ghana's Upper East Region. Out of the fifteen districts in the area, seven speak the language. These, including the districts of Bolgatanga municipal, Bolgatanga East, Bongo, Talensi, Nabdam, Kasena-Nankana East, and Kasena-Nankana West.( Nsoh 1997: 2011: Dakubu 1996 & Atintono 2011; Naden & Schaefer, 1973);

### **3.0 THE STUDY'S PURPOSE,**

The goal of the study was to determine the text's structure in the Farefari Libation. The study also looked into the implications of using literary devices in oral writing as well as the literary devices that were frequently utilized in the libation language.

### **4-0 RESEARCH QUESTION**

The research essentially addressed the following questions:

1. How is the Farefari libation text structured?
2. What literary devices are prevalent in the text of the Farefari Libation?
3. What effects do literary techniques have on peoples' everyday oral language?

### **5.0 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

The study provides information about Farefari libation texts. The study is intended to assist language teachers and learners, particularly those who teach or learn farefari language, in appreciating literary methods and libation texts. It will also benefit other researchers with an interest in oral literature. It is hoped that this work will assist students who are having trouble analyzing oral genres in terms of literary devices and help them understand the significance of libation in our culture.

### **6.0. METHODOLOGY**

The study used a qualitative ethnographic research approach. Farefari libation is a literary genre or kind of literature distinguished by a specific aim, structure, content, length, or format. The primary data for the study was gained from in-depth observations at diverse ethnographic contexts. Secondary data was also gathered. Only the senior men in the community, the clan, or the home are qualified to make libation, so the researcher purposefully chose 10 men with ages ranging from fifty to seventy-five. The farefari dialect of the local ninkar was used to make the

libations, however for the purposes of this study, the researcher has provided an English translation for each line to confirm its veracity and adherence to ethical standards.

## **6.1 DATA COLLECTION PROCEEDURE:**

The majority of the data gathering in this study was done through participant observation. The researcher took part in the study as an observer participant. The resident is familiar with the culture and the idea of libation because they have lived in the area since they were little. In fact, the researcher has seen various libations conducted since she was a youngster, not just while conducting fieldwork. Twumasi (2001) asserts that in order to minimize any hassles, more qualified informants must be enlisted to help with data collection in the area of operation. As a result, the researcher, who was acting as a participant observer, reduced danger on the ground by traveling with two experienced field assistants to assist in recording libation devices. I was able to participate fully thanks to this. The remaining data comes from secondary sources.

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## **7.0 DATA ANALYSIS**

The analysis of the data is descriptive. After the libation text was recorded, it was translated into English and organized into different stages, such as the invocation (starting/beginning) stage, the explanation of the occasion (reason/purpose), and the blessing and cursing stages (conclusion).The texts used for libations are divided into three groups, including "sduma koka'are" (family-based libations), "Yaabeduma" clan-based libations, and "tingana koka'are". The translator had taken great care not merely to translate the text but also to convey as much of the Farefari culture and the genuine meaning of the libation texts into the English language as was practical. Numerous literary methods were used, such as euphemism, parallelism, appellation, personification, proverbs, and translations of idiomatic expressions.

### **7.1. Rituals of clan libation:**

The clan or sectional leader performs this libation. Long ago, the section or clan consisted of a man and his wife or wives, along with their children. However, the family grows to become a clan as time goes on. Some clans contain upwards of fifteen to thirty households. All clans' activities, such as performing libations, are led by the clan's oldest male.

## **7.2 Community's Libation:**

The tindaana, or "land priest," performs the communal libation. People from the generational line of the tindaambuuri (the priesthood family), who are considered to be the only ones with the exclusive privilege to offer libation to the land goddess of that land, are said to be the tindaambuuri (the priesthood family). The tindaana performs the libation prior to sod being cut for national problems like establishing a school, opening a market, opening a police station, etc.

## **7.3 DATA ANALYSIS , RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

To analyze literary devices, this study applies the Pragmatic Approach (PA) and Relevance Theory (RT), which Sperber and Wilson (1986) and (1995). The pragmatic approach is concerned with how ideas are transmitted from one person to another. Speakers encode their thoughts by using coding and encoding; as a result, the listener receives the message and decodes it to determine the speaker's intended meaning. The Relevance Theory (RT), a sub-strand of the pragmatic approach used in this study, holds that receiving communication involves sorting through the available input to identify the communication that is most relevant. According to relevance theory, the speaker will utilize devices only when they are absolutely necessary and will try to be as sparing as feasible. According to relevance theory, what makes an input stand out from others is its relevance to the recipient. As a general rule, Wilson and Sperber (1989: 252) state that the more relevant an input is to a person at a given time, "all things being equal, the higher the positive cognitive benefit achieved by processing that input." This idea served as the foundation for this study because literary devices utilized in libation language stand out from all other structures, which forces listeners to absorb and understand the speech critically. It is thus pertinent to them.

Every literary work has a style and a structure. Stylistics is a study and analysis of text. Stylistics is therefore a method of textual interpretation in which primacy of place is assigned to

language (Burk. 2014). According to Agyekum (2013), the structure of the phrases, clauses, and sentences is dealt with by the syntax. The initial, middle, and final elements of each piece are typically the three main parts that make up the structure. From Engmann (1961), Adam (2010) cited, who identified the introduction, invocations, narration of purpose, supplications, and conclusion as the five structural components of the Ga libation text.

Three main stages can be distinguished in farefari libation texts. A critical analysis of the libation text under examination reveals that, like Agyekum (2012) noted, the Farefari libation comprises three primary portions. Lines 1-2 of the sample libation, for example, show that the invocation stage. calling, inviting, and welcoming the gods or the ancestors. Lines 3–7 describe the stage or reason for calling on ancestors or gods. Lines 8 through 15 make up the final and supplication stage; during this time, pledges, vows, curses, blessings, and other supplications are offered. The example text being studied is a libation text, which includes supplications, a conclusion, and was performed by a father to save his extremely ill child.

#### **Lines 1-2 of the invocation (Beginning/Starting):**

The invocation, or summons of the gods and ancestral spirits, comes first in the farefari libation text. The performer starts the invocation by calling for the ancestral spirits in order of their might, from the weakest to the strongest. The main deities, who are thought to have greater authority than the ancestors spirits, are then invoked. The last and final person mentioned in the invocation is the Supreme Being, Almighty God. Making libation simply means "call and send" in Farefari. Invoking the younger ancestral spirits first and sending them to the eldest ancestral spirits, who are then invoked and sent to the major spirits, allows the ancestral spirits to communicate with the Supreme Being on behalf of the living together with the principal spirits (Almighty God) for address. Water is always given to them as a traditional greeting by the Farefari people. The invocation message is more poetic and filled with the first names of the

Supreme Being, the Principal Spirits, and the Ancestral Spirits. Sometimes the invocation is supplemented with praises and laudations.

This is an invocation of the sample libation text below, very poetic.

*N so Aduŋɔ, isege saazuo to'e ko'om wa tari pae yaaba Agambarɛ*

1SG father, Aduŋɔ get up take water DEM take reach grandfather, Agambarɛ

*Ti ya pae yaaba Amilema ti ya sige tinganen*

that 2SG reach grandfather Amilema that 2PL go down river god

*ti ya lagum taaba zom pae Wine.*

that 2PL together EMPH climb reach God.

My father *Aduŋɔ*, wake up, take this water, and go to Agambarɛ (an ancestor) so that you can reach Amilema (an ancestor who is more powerful than the previous one), and you both descend to the river god so that you both ascend to the ultimate God together. The libation was given to the performer's father (the less powerful ancestor) to be taken to Agambarɛ (the senior to the first ancestor) so they go to Amilema (the senior to the first two ancestors) before they reach the river god (principal deity), and they all go up together to the Supreme Being, God, with the request of the living.

### **Lines 3- 7 of the Purpose Statement (Middle)**

The performer now explains the purpose of the beverage. In a narrative form, for example, it is frequently the message or the reason of the summons of the ancestors.

*La de la guum n ka giser-i goone wa puan bala ti mam*

it is FOC sleep PRT NEG sleep-PROG wall DET POSTPOS why that 1SG

*bo'or-a fu ko'om wa*

give HAB 2SG water DEM

### English Translation:

I am offering you this water (libation) because there is no sleep in this residence. In other words, there is a sick person in the house, and the performer is asking the ancestors for help or guidance.

*Tumam buvɔa ka mi sɛla, la de la yamam n mi Wuntɛɛŋa la yu'uhɔ ɛɛreba*

1PL living NEG know anything it is FOC 2PL PRT know afternoon and night roamers

*peŋe A- aniteem basɛ fɔw.*

do away pain leave far.

### English Translation:

“We the living know nothing, it is you who know both day and night issues, do away of pains!”

This implies that while we as humans have finite understanding, our forefathers had limitless knowledge. They are aware if someone caused this illness throughout the day or at night. The artist then asks them to let their illness or suffering vanish and be replaced by good health.

Although the tale serves as the major message, proverbs and metaphors are often incorporated.

### Lines 8–15 of the conclusion (curses, vows, and blessings)

The text of the libation is always followed by a pledge to the ancestors to be fulfilled upon satisfying their heartfelt request, such as: curses to those who don't want the performer's wellness, blessings to those who do, and lastly, curses to those who don't want their welfare.

*Basɛ ti beere ta yileger-a la ti balum-miŋa lebege yoore Ko-ma'aseg*

Leave that tomorrow PRT break- HAB FOC that sperm -EMPH change pot Water ADJ

*ti fu beene zɛ' mɛ.*

that 2SG animal stand-HAB COMPL.

### English Translation:

“Let tomorrow, by the breaking of day, this sperm will change to be like a cold water pot and your animal will be ready for you”.

The performer is daring his ancestors to immediately intervene and heal the sickness of the ailing child so that he gives them their pledge of an animal.

*Fu san sirum dɛna la bumbeo kɛ muen kan leme zaŋa la, basɛ ti guum gise*

2SG if actually, are FOC wicked enter forest NEG return empty FOC let that sleep sleeps

*goone wa puan dee to'e fu lgers.*

wall DET inside and take 2SG things.

The English version

"Let sleep sleeps at my house so that I can offer you your goods (thanksgiving) if you are really such a strong man who goes on hunting expeditions and returns with plenty of loot".

This indicates that the performer is still daring his forefathers. "Let us see good health in this house or let this child get healthy and collect the pledged stuff," he remarked, "if you are really such a powerful man who does not go hunting and come home empty handed.

**Research Question 2:** What literary devices are frequently used in texts of the Farefari Libation?

Hough (1969:8), cited in Agyekum (2007:40), asserts that when we discuss style, we are referring to the decision between various lexical and syntactic resources of a given language. The topic, the setting, the speaker or performer's attitude and temperament, as well as the occasion, may all influence the choice. The use of literary devices by the author to achieve particular effects in the language, such as metaphors, proverbs, idiomatic expressions, euphemisms, personification, parallelisms, etc., is often referred to as "styling."

The words in the libation text have a variety of morphological structures, from simple lexical items to intricate inflectional words. Some of the words are essentially common nouns, proper names, and basic sentences when viewed at the level of the lexicon. E.g.

*N sɔ, Aduŋɔ isege saazu to'e ko'om wa*

1SG father name get up collect water DEM

"My father, Aduŋɔ wake up! Take this water".

The living do not literally see spirit beings, but they do perceive the living. It is an honor to advise you to get up from sleep and drink this water. Awaking also denotes an urgent demand for attention.

### **Repetition and anaphora are literary devices:**

Repetition is a technique that serves practical functions in the overall structure of the oral performance in addition to adding a touch of beauty or attractiveness to a piece of expression (whether it be a song, a story, or another type of statement) (Okpewho 1992).

Anaphora is the term used to describe the recurrence of a word or phrases at the beginning of two or more subsequent clauses or verses, usually for the purpose of creating a theoretical or poetic impact. The word "ti ya" is repeated numerous times in the opening lines of the Farefari libation text, as shown in the example below.

*Ti ya pae yaaba Amilema*

**so that** you go to Amilema

*Ti ya sige tinganen*

**so that** you go to the river god,

*Ti ya lagum taaba zom pae Wine*

**so that** you together get to the Almighty God

### **English Translation**

This indicates that the process of consultation continues from the closest ancestor to the most powerful ancestors or deities until the word to ask the Almighty God for prosperity reaches Him (the superior deity). The use of anaphora puts pressure on their demand

### **Literary Device: Euphemistic Names:**

The study also found instances of euphemistic names in the Farefari people's language of libation texts. Literary Device: Euphemistic Names Euphemism, according to Agyekum (2013), is a verbal art form that a speaker uses to enliven his or her speech in an effort to demonstrate their command of the language and compliance with sociocultural communication standards. e.g.

Farefari ordinary names	Euphemistic names	Gloss.
<i>Yire</i> “house”	<i>goone</i> “ wall”	house
<i>Bia</i> “chld”	<i>balum</i> “sperm”	child
<i>Duŋa</i> “animal”	<i>beene</i> “animal”	animal
<i>Guum</i> “sleep”	<i>guum</i> “health”	health

### Literary Device: Parallelism:

In the Farefari libation text, the study also found some parallelism (semantic parallelism). According to Finnegan (1979, p. 98), parallelism consists primarily of a repeat (often a binary pattern) in which one element is modified while the other—typically the syntactic frame itself—remains unchanged. According to Saanchi (2002) and Shipley (1960, p. 297), parallelism is the balanced return of structures. Agyekum (2013, p. 91) defined semantic parallelism as the situation in which two sections of a text have parallel meanings. A structural parallel must be the foundation of the majority of semantic parallelism. Semantic parallelism is the interpretation of two sections of a text as being in opposition to one another. e.g.

*Tuma bunvɔɔ-si ka mi sɛla. La de la yamam n mi yu’uŋɔ la wuntɛɛŋa yele*

1PL living-PL NEG know anything. it is FOC 2PL PRT know night CONJ day problem.

‘We the living don’t know anything. It is you who know both day and night problem’

Parallelism: ‘We the living don’t know....., you know .....’.

### Writing Technique: Appellation

This is a title for someone in a position of authority. According to Abadzivor (2007:117), cited in Amekpordi (2012), some functions of appellation include "expressing opinion on issues and the

casting of insinuation." Other functions include "showing pride in personal achievements, praise, positive living, describing experience of people, counseling or warning people about dangers."

The performer challenged the ancestors to help him by using words in the line below. He began by mentioning the ancestor's nickname, "the strong man who does not go out hunting and returns home empty," and further urged him to act in accordance with that nickname in order to restore the child's health.

*Fu san sirum dɛna la bumbe'o kɛ' muen kan leme zaŋa, base ti guum gise goone wa*

2SG if EMPH is FOC wicked enter forest NEG return empty, let PART sleep sleeps wall  
DEM

puan dee to'e fu lɔger-ɔ.

inside CONJ take you thing-PL.

"Let this child recover from her/his disease and take your stuff (thanksgiving) if you are really such a powerful man who does not go on hunting and do not return empty."

### **English Translation:**

"If you are really such a great man who does not go on hunting and do not return empty, let this child heal from her/his illness and take your stuff (Thanksgiving)."

For example;

*Guum gise goone wa puan.*

Sleep sleeps wall DEM POSTPO

### **English Translation :**

Sleep snoozes in this home, in English.

'Sleep' has been personified as having eyes and being able to sleep in this context.

**literary device: the use of idioms.**

The Farefari libation text also contained idiomatic terms. Idioms are words or phrases that have a meaning that cannot be understood from the words alone; they are words or phrases that cannot be translated literally into another language Agyekum (2013). which are

a) *Peŋe a ani teem base fɔw.*

let 3SG is pain leave away.

Do away with pain (sickness).

b) *Ti balum miŋa lebege yore ko-ma'asega.*

That sperm itself become pot water-cold.

So that the child her/himself become completely healthy.

c) *Ze'ele ba du-ma wuntεεŋa puan.*

stand 3PL owner-PL sun POSPO

'Let them stand in the sun

English translation:

Get rid of illness. Make this kid strong. Punish those responsible for this child's illness.

**Literary device: Proverb:**

According to Ababila (2006), Guren proverbs are not just creative sayings; in a few simple phrases, they sum up profound meaning by symbolizing real-life circumstances. Proverbs offer a variety of morals and wisdom. which are

*Zalε a daana bugum. Dee fum nεre-mina n zal-i mia bugum nyɔger-a yo-im*

Hold 3SG owner fire. For 2SG person-who PRT hold-PROG grass fire catch-PRO ant

*a san paε dɔgi'a bugum fu kan base.*

FOC if gets wood fire    you NEG leave

**Translated into English:**

"Put fire in her/his hands." Anyone making a fire out of grass to capture ants wouldn't stop if they found a fire made out of wood".

The proverbs in the above section "to put fire in someone's hands" and "For anyone who uses grass fire to catch ants, if he receives wood fire he will not depart" are warnings not to underestimate your adversaries, respectively. The performer's child was unwell in the libation text, and he vowed to the gods that he would remain by his side even if the person afflicting his child succeeded in killing him (the parent). He prayed to the gods to punish the foe for this reason.

**Research Question 3 :** What effects do literary devices have on peoples' everyday oral language?

The use of literary devices serves as a thorough gauge of Farefari values. Devices deal with real-world situations and ideas that are realistic and practical. They contain the collected wisdom, cultural convictions, and life experiences of the Farefari people. This suggests that African oral literature's literary devices cannot be disproved.

**8.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

The paper sought to examine how different is Farefari libation text from that of other languages in Africa, the literary devices that are prevalent in the libation text and the effects literary devices have on people's everyday oral language. The study involved the all the literary devices used in libation text analysed. The commonly used devices in the text are appellation, personification, proverbs, euphemism, parallelism, repetition/anaphora, and others. The libation text is also poetic in nature. They contain the collected wisdom, cultural convictions, and life experiences of the Farefari people. This suggests that African oral literature's literary devices cannot be disproved. The researcher recommends that future researchers investigating on farefari text: literary and structural analysis may focus on folktales.

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| 7) Dee darena yamam n boti sɛla Zalɛ a<br>daana bugum dee fum nɛremina n<br><br>zali mia bugum nyɔgera yo-im la<br><br>san paɛ dɔgi'a bugum fu kan base | but not your will, put fire in<br>that person's hands, for he who<br><br>is catching ants with fire from grass when<br><br>he gets fire from wood, he will not leave |
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### BLESSING AND CURSING STAGE (CONCLUSION)

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|--|---|
| 8) To'e ko'om mea, to'e  | collect the water, collect.   |
| 9) Base ti beere ta yilegera la<br><br>Ti balum miɲa lebege yoore koma'asega<br><br>Ti fu beene ze' me | let by tomorrow comes with the sperm<br>(child) becomes cool water from the pot<br><br>so that you will take an animal. |
| 10) Fu san sirum dɛna la bumbeo ke muen  | if you are actually, that powerful man who  |
| 11) kan leme zaɲa la,  | goes for hunting and will never come back<br>empty handed,  |
| 12) Base ti guum gise goone wa puan<br><br>dee to'e fu logero  | let sleep come to this wall(home) and<br>take your things   |
| 13) Base ti nyanɛ la vi di ba duma   | let shame and disgrace be their portion   |
| 14) Ze'ele ba duma wuntɛɲa puan  | put them in the sun   |
| 15) To'e fu ko'omma'asega miɲa n bala<br><br>La fu zɛke na'are paɛ Tinganɛ la Wine                     | collect, this is your cold flour water, collect.<br><br>and quicken your steps to tinganɛ<br>(principalities) and God   |
| 16) Ti tu da le wum zuo la pua goone wa puan<br><br>fever  | so that we 'll no longer hear head and<br>in this house   |























