

ORAL LITERATURE NOTES. PART 2**INSTRUCTION.**

1. **Copy the notes in your exercise book.**
2. **Explanation will be done when schools resume.**
3. **Provide proof of complete work through WhatsApp photos.**
4. **Deadline is Monday 22nd June 2020**

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 his 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.

Assignment.

Provide two examples of each category below.

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 as they 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 abuse. 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. INITIATION SONGS:

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. LOVE/NUPTIALS/WEDDING SONGS

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. FUNERAL DIRGES

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. WORK SONGS.

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.

FEATURES OF STYLE IN SONG

Consider the following work song or satirical song
These men of Kaaria. 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. **DIRECT TRANSLATIONS.**

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 loose 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. **DIRECT ADDRESS**

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. **TRADITIONAL SETTING.**

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. **CLASS MORAL JUDGEMENT.**

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. ELEMENTS THAT CAN BE DRAMATIZED

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. EXTREME CHARACTERISATION

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.**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.

CHARACTERISRICS OF PROVERBS (STYLES)

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 handed 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.

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 poses to the respondent.

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

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	:	tenga

- ✚ 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. Epigrams

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.

V. Analogue (coinage)

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.

Narrative riddle.

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.

FUNCTIONS OF A RIDDLE

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.

TONGUE TWISTERS

DEFINITION

This is a phrase containing a number of words that are very similar in pronunciation 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.