

Full Length Research Paper

An analysis of figurative languages in two selected traditional funeral songs of the Kilba people of Adamawa State

Emmanuel C. Sharndama^{1*} and Jamila B. A Suleiman²

¹Department of English and Literary Studies, Federal University of Wukari, Nigeria.

²Department of Management Technology, Modibbo Adama University of Technology, Yola, Adamawa State, Nigeria.

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Figurative languages are employed in performing arts as a medium of expressing thoughts, feelings and ideas implicitly rather than explicitly. This paper analyses rhetorical devices in two funeral songs of the Kilba people of Adamawa State of Nigeria. The two texts were subjected to analysis using the descriptive and discursive approach. The outcome of the analysis revealed that performing artists among the Kilba people use a lot of rhetorical device to dress the content of the message in the songs. Metaphors, smiles, rhetorical questions, imageries, symbolism, repetitions among others were found to be the common figurative languages used by the performing artists when composing funeral songs. Figurative expressions are used in order to create sad feelings and to let the people recall the positive qualities and achievements of the deceased.

Key words: Funeral, songs, figurative expressions, gwadang sal-sal, Mbaya.

INTRODUCTION

The Kilba people are found predominantly in Hong Local Government of Adamawa State of Nigeria. Kilba land is located on the Northern part of the State east of the road leading from Yola Grikida and Mubi. This ethnic group was called Høba before the codification of the name Kilba by the colonial masters. The name "Kilba" resulted from error of pronunciation of Høba by the Fulani ethnic group living around the tribe. The Kilba ethnic group has a very rich cultural heritages part of which are songs of different types performed on different occasions.

Of all the oral genres of the Kilba ethnic group of Adamawa State of Nigeria, sung-poetry is the most popular and frequently performed. There are many songs that the Kilba people perform and are accompanied by different musical instruments. They are performed at different occasions which determine the wordings, themes, contents, languages features, tunes and the types of instruments. The occasions for performance

include marriage ceremonies, installation of traditional office holders, funeral ceremonies, and initiation ceremonies among others. Most of the songs performed at these occasions have anonymous composers. The songs may have different wordings and performing styles but the themes and contents are always the same.

Generally, the Kilba ethnic group performs religious, funeral, occupational, educational songs, songs of social commentary and criticism, panegyric songs, initiation songs among others. The Kilba folk songs are distinctive as they are reflections of the people's culture and traditions. In every culture, songs are composed and performed for different purposes. According to Akporobaro (2006), songs assume a variety of forms. Some of the songs are rich, imaginative, and elaborate in the play of words, rhythm, and melody. They are also mostly performed to the rhythm of different musical instruments such as drums, flutes and lutes in order to

*Corresponding author. E-mail: esharndama@yahoo.com. 08026776862.

evoke emotions.

A traditional funeral song is a sub-genre of sung-poetry rooted in the history, culture and traditions of the various clans forming the tribe. Among the Kilba ethnic group, songs in this category are performed when a deceased is laid in state awaiting burial or at later organised funeral ceremonies such as *dlədəu* (grave cleansing ceremony) or *tiwi* (final funeral). These songs are composed using carefully selected words, phrases or sentences to create powerful and soothing effects. Funeral music enables relations and close associates of the deceased to convey feelings and messages that may be difficult to express in words. Choosing appropriate funeral songs can help to comfort the bereft and to express emotions during this difficult time. Funeral songs can be in a form of dirges or panegyrics. Most of the traditional funeral songs identify the individual clans forming the tribe. Those selected for analysis, however identify the tribe in general and can be performed at almost all funeral ceremonies especially the final funeral ceremony called *tiwi*.

Figurative language is a type of language that varies from the norms of literal language, in which words mean exactly what they say. Also known as the "ornaments of language," figurative language does not mean exactly what it says, but instead forces the reader to make an imaginative leap in order to comprehend an author's point. In other words, figurative language is parallel to plain language because of the underlying meaning that it carries. Figurative devices or figures of speech refer to the mode of expression in which words are employed to connote something other than the literal or conceptual meaning. Figures of speech normally add beauty, emotional sensitivity, or transfer the author's impression or thought through comparing or identifying a person or a thing with another one that has a meaning which the reader is familiar with. These devices are mostly used in poetry. In sung-poetry, performing artists use them to dress the content of their speech, idea, or thought. It involves any use of language where the intended meaning differs from the actual literal meaning of the words themselves. They are situational or context bound. Figurative languages are employed as a medium of expression of thoughts, feelings and ideas implicitly rather than explicitly. These techniques of language use, which can rightly be called figurative languages according to Babalola (1981), Ogbé (1997), Egudu (1981), Amali (1985) and Hananiya (1993) include metaphor, simile, hyperbole, personification, onomatopoeia, verbal irony, and oxymoron. The application of these devices by the performing artists varies from one performer to another.

The Kilba ethnic group uses a lot of figurative languages at different functions. Just like other ethnic groups of Adamawa State, Kilba ethnic group considers the ability of performing artist to use varieties of figurative languages in composing and presentation of songs as a mark of excellence in the language. Performing artists employ figurative languages either to entice a patron or to

express unpleasant feelings. Most of these figurative languages are passed from one generation to another. There are some, however, that are spontaneously developed from circumstances surrounding the occasion and moment of performing.

Aim and objectives of the study

The study aims to examine the use of figurative languages in the performance of the Kilba funeral songs. The specific objectives are:

To identify the common figurative languages used in the performance of the Kilba funeral songs.

To discuss the effects of the identified figurative languages used in the performance of the Kilba funeral songs on the audience.

To draw a conclusion as to how figurative languages varies from the ordinary or every day languages.

METHOD OF INVESTIGATION

This study adopted a descriptive discursive method in order to uncover how figurative languages are used to achieve the purpose of performance in a given context. The design was adopted in order to enable the researcher to give vivid account of the use of figurative languages in the performance of funeral songs. Yule (2006) opines that descriptive approach permits explanation of linguistic features as used in a given context. The corpus consisted of two funeral songs selected based on convenience and accessibility. These songs are performed at the funeral ceremony of any deceased adult member of the Kilba ethnic group. Figurative languages found in the texts were isolated as excerpts and the effects of the usage discussed.

Categories of the Kilba performing artists

There are many songs that the Kilba people perform and are accompanied by different musical instruments. They are performed at different occasions which determine the wordings, themes, contents, languages, tunes and the types of instruments used for composition. The occasions for performance include marriage, installation of traditional office holders, and funeral and initiation ceremonies among others. Most of the songs performed at these occasions have anonymous composers. The songs may have different wordings and performing styles but the themes and contents are always the same. Performance of songs among the Kilba people is not restricted to any clan. The performance is usually done by any verbal artist that shows interest in the art. Unlike other communities around the Kilba people, performing artists normally have their main occupations. Very few of them take performing songs as their only means of earning a living. The Mbalau performing group for instance puts back their drums and cane flutes immediately it is rainy season. The group performs mostly during the dry season. They perform during rainy season only at organized and mobilized farming festival called Tsakërta.

Mbalau performing group

This group performs at many social functions such as marriage,

installation of traditional title holders, festivals etc. Mbalau music is performed to the rhythm of shoulder drums and cane flutes called Mbalau after which this group is named. This performing group is led by a lead called *manaja* (manager). As a vocalist, the *manaja* sings a stanza after which the other cane flute players who serve as chorus group sing the refrain lines. In addition to the cane flutes and drum players, there are dancing maidens that also serve as chorus group. The girls are trained to display acrobatically especially the shaking and instant stoppage of the breasts in accordance with the rhythm of the drums and the cane flutes. The dancing maidens are popularly called *sarauniya* (a borrowed Hausa word). This performance is not done at funeral ceremonies but at social gatherings such as marriage ceremonies or any celebration of achievement/award to entertain the audience.

Zæmbæl performing group

Zæmbæl performing group like the mbalau performing group has a lead. The group also performs at different social functions just like the mbalau performing group. The lead plays a lute that is called *zæmbæl* after which the group is named. The group is called *njirr tsa* symbol translated as the lute players. The lead plays the lute and sings at the same time. He sings a stanza after which the chorus group or the audience sings refrain lines. Forming part of the chorus group is the *gædzæ-gædzæu* players. The back of a calabash is played artistically which produces sound that stirs or appeals to emotions. Accompanying the back of the calabash are two pieces of metal that are hit against each other or a stone to qualify the sound of the back of the calabash. Sometimes the lead sings alone especially when singing the praise of a patron. The audience or chorus group only shouts or passes comments in acknowledging the brilliant performance or ability to deliver the praise of the patron as expected. This group performs at funeral ceremonies where the panegyrics of dead are sung.

Gullum performing group

This group performs mostly at traditional marriage and funeral ceremonies. The group is led by a lead assisted by a chorus group. The songs accompanying the music are composed mostly by the lead. This performing group performs songs of social criticisms as well as praise songs. At a funeral ceremony, the songs performed have anonymous authors. The vocalist traces the deceased through his ancestors by enumerating the various positive deeds of the deceased's ancestors and links it to the deceased's personal achievements. Panegyrics of the dead dominate the songs performed by this group.

Ganggæla performing group

This group mostly performs for entertainments especially during moon lights in the dry season. Songs of love as well as songs of social commentary and criticisms are composed by this group. This performance is fast fading away because there are many Kilba people of thirty years above that have not witnessed real *ganggæla* performance. *Ganggæla* songs are sung to the music of shoulder slung drum. One or two drum players normally play the music and sing at the same time. *Ganggæla* dance is done mostly in an open arena where boys and girls especially the youths exchange dance. A love may dance towards her lover who will be expected to respond by reciprocal dance. If no response is given to a dance displayed toward or in front of a love or lover, it will be accounted as

hatred and not loving. Songs of love or songs of social commentary and criticisms are also sung to *ganggæla* music. *Ganggæla* songs are also sung at a marriage ceremony or during installation of traditional office holder where the performer sings the praises of the couple or the office holder or any important personality at the occasion. At funeral ceremonies, *ganggæla* songs may be performed but the real dance will not be displayed.

Brief on Gwadang sal-sal sung-sung poetry

Gwadang sal-sal is one of the ancient songs that the Kilba performing artists are still composing today. The song identifies the Kilba as a unique group. It gives an account of the performance of the Kilba as a unified community especially during the dark days of communal strives. The song also gives an account of the achievements of the great ancestors of the tribe. It is a praise song that recounts the numerous victories of the tribe over their foes.

Gwadang sal-sal is purely an exaltation of the brave and the adventure-some. The song which is sung to the rhythm of shoulder slung drums and a mother drum called *dæmbwal* stirs emotions and prompts actions. It is performed three times at a funeral ceremony called *tiwi* to usher in the ceremony. The eve of the ceremony is called *pæ dæfa*. Subsequent performance will be numerous on the following day as each dancing turn called *særu* cannot be complete without it. The dance is done with vigour and a nonsensical syllable '*pahl*' is sounded three times to mark the end of each performance. Various songs such as *mbaya*, *miya bæli'u*, *miya gullum* or *miya zæmbæl* may be performed after *gwadang sal-sal* till dawn.

Gwadang sal-sal is also performed in the morning to mark the beginning of the actual funeral ceremony. If it is a funeral of a man, a special ritual called *gædlæ takæu* (*mock hunting*) will be performed. It is strictly carried out by men only. The men will get armed early in the morning and set off for hunting in honour of the deceased. Any game killed will be tied on a traditional bier called *lægagau* and carried home on head just as the dead bodies were carried in those days to burial places. The men will perform a kind of *gwadang sal-sal* called *awawiiya* and then dance home with spears, corn stalks or any long stick raised up. On approaching home, the women will join them dancing to the rhythm of the home coming music. This ritual is done in remembrance of the home coming of the dead bodies of heroes killed at the battle field during the then communal strives.

Awawiiya is an exaltation of the brave and the courageous, especially those that died at the war front. The performance of this song ends at a funeral booth called *madlæba* where local beer called *mbadla* is brewed for the ceremony. The game tied on the traditional bier called *lægagau* will be placed on the top of the funeral booth. Other forms of *gwadang sal-sal* and *mbaya* will be performed to usher in the various activities. The ministering old women in the funeral booth called *mahii dza gidfa* translated as women of the jar side are free to roast or cook the game later.

The subsequent performance will now move to a tree that is identified by being rounded with an old zana mat as the funeral tree (*kida wu tiwi*). The movement to the funeral tree will usually be after a kind of war dance to the rhythm of shoulder slung drum by men called *pæsædi*. The dance is done with vigour. It involves running here and there, jumping, knelling, and shaking the body and other forms of acrobatic displays. One or two women will normally follow the man dancing so as to entice him to perform well. They will dance beside the man in order to evoke his emotion and prompt action. It is expected of any man performing this dance to move into an open arena three times. At the end of the third one, he will be expected to raise the spear close to the face of an elder or elders as a mark of complement. Another man will then take over. It will be regarded as an act of indiscipline, if a man is still dancing in an arena and a fellow runs in to the arena to begin his own dance.

Brief on Mbaya sung-poetry

Mbaya is a funeral song performed immediately after gwadang sal-sal. It is sung to the rhythm of the shoulder slung drum and a mother drum called *dlambwal* or *ngum*. Dancing of mbaya song is done vigorously. It involves raising and shaking the shoulder and moving round the singers and the drum players or the funeral tree. Men dance to mbaya song with a big quiver of hang in arms and bows raised up. The song is an account of the characteristics of the brave and the able bodied but castigates the weak and the laggard. The song castigates the laggard, the coward and the weak. It is full of juxtapositions and comparisons of the behaviours of the brave with the weak. In the sampled text, the performer juxtaposes the performance of the able bodied with weak. The able bodied is referred as a begotten son that surpasses hundreds, while the weak is referred as a dog that stands like a pregnant woman and looks into underpants of women.

ANALYSIS, FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Two funeral songs namely *gwadang sal-sal* and *mbaya* were subjected to analysis by using the descriptive approach. Samples of identified figurative languages were extracted and discussed. There were no statistical representations made as the study is purely descriptive. The following figurative languages were identified from the text and discussed under separate headings: Metaphor, simile, rhetorical questions, hyperbole and symbols and images.

Metaphor

A Metaphor is a figurative language which compares two different things directly. It makes reference to a thing as being another thing that it cannot literally be. Metaphorical expressions always make one thing to be another. The things compared are completely different since they do not have any related physical characteristics. In comparing one object, event, or place, to another, a metaphor can reveal new qualities of the original thing being compared to another. Metaphoric language is used in order to realize a new and different meaning. A metaphor functions primarily to increase stylistic effects of colorfulness and variety. Metaphor is a great contributor to the composition and understanding of poetry when the reader understands the physical relationships between the two essentially different things. In his *Poetics*, Aristotle claims that for one to master the use of metaphor is "...a sign of genius, since a good metaphor implies an intuitive perception of the similarity in dissimilarity" (*The Poet's Dictionary*). A metaphor may be found in a simple comparison or largely as the image of an entire poem.

It is a figure of comparison by way of illuminating or developing meaning. It makes a direct comparison that equates two things that are not the same. Metaphor enables one to emphasize qualities by transferring the quality of one thing to the other. Writers/speakers use

metaphor as a means of describing the quality of a thing or a person (Microsoft Encarta, 2009).

It is a figure of speech in which a word or phrase is directly compared to another in order to convey denotative meaning other than the literal meaning. Notable examples from the texts are 'A man is a *bloody male straw* that beats without missing; Ask *the hopping locusts* that do not ascend the sky "(extract from Mbaya song).

The two sentences above are juxtaposed. This is an exaltation of the warrior and the indomitable. The deceased hero being exalted is metaphorically referred to as a male straw and one that beats a man without missing. This description presents the deceased as a skilled warrior who is considered as indomitable. On the other hand, a weak character is described as hopping locust *that does not ascend the sky*. This castigating statement is meant to project the image of the deceased hero. Examples of other sets of metaphors from the mbaya song are:

*Behold the dog stood like a pregnant woman
If you talk, I'll kill you without vengeance
I am a begotten son that surpassed hundred
I am a male iron drum good for playing on water
I never feared since my mother gave birth to me*

The two metaphors in the above excerpt are self projections and exaltations. The performer points to his might/ability as even where people think to be impossible. This is obvious from the expression "I am an iron drum played on water". Literally, *drums played on water may have tendency of becoming wet and may not sound well*. Iron drum, however, cannot be so.

The performer with alluding to iron drum describes the deceased as a hero and a warrior that needs not even a horse to fight. He supported this with the statement, "*I salute you that ties the horse before fighting*". The statement is further qualified with a rhetorical question "*That has a pillar broken before its due time?*" It could be drawn from the statement also that the deceased died untimely. Making further reference, the deceased is referred to as a pillar. By comparing the deceased to a pillar, the performer draws the attention of the audience to the roles played by the deceased in his family and the society.

*I am a begotten son that surpasses hundred
I am a begotten son that surpasses thousand
I wish her funeral be performed vigorously
A man is a mother white hen that feeds in front of evil
'ngwara'
Oh, one hundred people may die; a thousand must remain
A man is a palm frond that is cut and Lands beyond*

The referent in the text above is presented as a hero,

indomitable and a daring person. The hero is one that can challenge hundreds and thousands. Using the statements 'a begotten son that surpass hundreds and a begotten son that surpass thousands, the performer draws the attention of the audience to exceptional performance of the deceased. On the other hand, it is meant to challenge the laggard or persons. He is a daring person that does not fear death. *Ngwara* worshipers among the Kilba ethnic group in those days use white hens for appeasing the god. The referent is also compared to the palm frond that flies away from the tree when cut and land at a distance. The uses made of the above metaphors present the referent as a fearless, risking and daring person.

Simile

Simile is another figure of comparison that is commonly found in the composition and performance of funeral songs by the Kilba performing artists. Unlike metaphor which compares two things directly, a simile compares two different things by employing the words "like" or "as". A simile can be used to explicitly depict the characteristics or features of a target or to vaguely depict an undetermined and open-ended body of features. Similes are more likely to be used with explicit explanations of their intended meanings. These offer some supports to the claim that similes are preferred if a user wants to associate an unusual or out-of-the-ordinary property with a target. A simile is a figure of speech which says that one thing is like another different thing. We can use similes to make descriptions more emphatic or vividly. From the texts subjected to analysis, the following are examples of the use of the simile by performers of funeral songs:

*Young women, do not cry with tears
I salute you a farm vessel that shouts like thunder
I inquire of the daughter farm vessel that shouts like lightning
If it were lance for lance, we would have gone down to the camp
I inquired of the grandson of king Maksha that shouts like thunder*

The above similes depict the power associated with the voice of the deceased hero. The deceased is traced through his grandfather king Maksha who was one of the renowned traditional rulers of the Kilba people. Comparing the shouting of the deceased in question to thunder and lightning creates the picture of a powerful subject. In order to evoke emotions, the performer reminded the audience about camping during the strife periods when he says "If it were lance for lance, we will go down to the camp." The audience are also reminded that gone were the days of strife where one ethnic group

faces another at the battle field. Colonial masters have put an end to that,

*Her funeral be performed losing skirts and under wears
Behold the dog flexed its hands like gowns
Behold the dog stood like a pregnant woman
If you talk, I'll kill you without vengeance*

The line of the excerpt above calls for a total involvement in the funeral activities especially dancing. One should not only watch but participate fully. Unlike the first set of similes used to exalt the deceased hero, the above set castigates the weak and the laggard. The laggard and the weak are referred to as a dog and compared to the relaxed hand of a gown and pregnant woman in order to heighten the castigation. These are intended to exalt the brave and wander-lust, while condemning the attitudes of the laggard who shun participation but prefer watching. Referring to similes as above results in the audience's shouts of acknowledgements and moving vigorously round the funeral tree.

Rhetorical questions

Rhetorical questions are asked not to gain information but to assert more emphatically the obvious answer to what is asked. No answer, in fact, is expected by the performer (Microsoft Encarta, 2009). In the performance of funeral songs, Kilba performing artists employ rhetorical questions for making emphasis, drawing the attention of the audience to a fact, and at the same time evoking emotion. Rhetorical questions are sometimes repeated not that performer lacks what to say but to challenge the audience and prompts action. The following are examples:

*I ask, "where are the sons of the settlement?"
I ask, 'where the settlement of the horse is?'
Her funeral be performed losing skirts And underwears.
Oh, the wander-lust prince, shall I lament?
Ya—wa—woo, shall I lament?*

The above rhetorical questions formed the opening stanza of gwadang sal-sal. It is a call to funeral performance. The first line calls upon the entire sons of the settlement, while line two specifies the settlement as a royal one by referring to it as *settlement of the horse*. Like in other communities, the horse is a symbol of royalty. In the context of performance, the reference to horse by the performer connotes war.

*Where are the young men only for street?
Where are the young men only for pot of beer?
Who gave tonngali a quiver of arrows?
Who gave a water bird an ostrich?
If you are a man, ambush me out there.*

You think a pillar broke before its appointed time?

The above questions are asked to castigate the weak and the laggard. The phrase 'youngmen only for street' connote cowardice (those make in but hide during out for a battle). The performer used the rhetorical questions to softly insult the weak and the laggard in the society. The weak and the laggard are referred to as tonngali and water bird (cursed birds). The performer heightened the insult by questioning the ability of the two to possess quiver of arrow and ostrich- what only the able bodied can possess,

*I ask, "is she a goat that she is hunted in the pen?"
" That is she a grass cutter that she is hunted in the reeds?"
Oh, is she a buffalo that she is hunted with arrows?
I have told you; a male spear counted on stream
Should a man be initiated and made to watch over millet farm?*

The above questions draw the attention of the audience to striving heroes that spent most of their lives fighting and should not be expected to die at home like ordinary people. The hero at whose funeral the song is performed is metaphorically referred to as a male spear counted on screaming. The performer also drew the attention of the audience to the then Kilba local army which was made up of all initiated males. He warned against being initiated and will not join the group of warriors when he says "Should a man be initiated and made to watch over millet farm?"

Imagery

Imagery involves the application of vivid description, which is rich in sensory words, in order to create pictures, or images, in the mind of the reader. Composing folk-songs involves description of persons, animals and objects to create a mental picture in the mind of the reader; to create special feelings and evoke emotion. The use of imagery enables the performers of funeral songs to achieve emotive descriptive effects through associating words with mental pictures or impressions. Imagery involves one or more of the five human senses (hearing, taste, touch, smell, sight). It can also refer to the "pictures" which we perceive with our mind's eyes, ears, nose, tongue, skin, and through which we experience the invisible world created by poetic language. Imagery evokes the meaning and truth of human experiences not in abstract terms, as in philosophy, but in more perceptible and tangible forms.

The performers of Kilba sung-poetry employ a word or phrase and apply it with the intention of stimulating one or more of the five senses. The application of images contributed to the depiction of the mood of the mourners.

*I asked the daughter of a lame lion Is the time ripe?
I asked of the daughter of a hard-edged canoe
That did not go to Yola by foot.
I ask, "is a goat that she is hunted in the pen?"
That "is she a grass cutter that she is hunted in the reeds?"
Oh! Is a buffalo that she is hunted with arrows?
I have told you, a male spear counted screaming
Oh! Should a man be initiating made to watch over millet farm?
Behold a median leprosy I learnt chases a man*

The excerpt above is full of visual images. A lion is a strong animal and is said to be the king of the jungle. It is a belief among the Kilba ethnic group that a lame lion is more dangerous, and hot tempered than those not deformed. In the text, the performer creates the picture of a cantankerous being, wander-lost that does not fear death. The performer by referring to the patron as 'a hard edged canoe' that never went to Yola on foot creates the picture of a brave person that could not be subjected by the colonial masters. Yola which was pronounced by the Kilba as *Eula* is an analogy to prison where the subjected and war liking heroes were kept by the colonial masters. The then Kilba local soldier in those days prefers to be killed to be taken to Yola. It is from this history that the performer of the song picked the praise 'a hard canoe that never went to Yola on foot'

The text that follows just posts the qualities of the deceased patron with goat and grasscutter. These were hunted only by laggard hunters or the non daring. More of the visual images were created when the performer questioned if the deceased was a buffalo hunted with poisonous arrows. Above all, the performer created vividly, the picture of an indomitable person by referring to him as a male spear counted on scream. The images created by description of the animals and objects presented a warrior, a daring and wander-lost person.

Symbolism

Symbolism is when the author uses an object or reference to add deeper meaning to a story. Symbolism in literature can be subtle or obvious, used sparingly or heavy-handedly. An author may repeatedly use the same object to convey deeper meaning or may use variations of the same object to create an overarching mood or feeling. Symbolism is often used to support a literary theme in a subtle manner (Dictionary literary symbols by Michael Ferber) .According to Furniss (1999), symbolism refers to the association of animals, birds, or any other natural phenomenon to the patron.

A symbol is a character, an action, a setting, or an object representing something else. Symbolism differs from one community to another. Symbols are mostly used in the performance of songs to achieve effective

description by ascribing a patron's character to natural phenomena (Sharndama, 2004). Most often, a symbol in a story is an object that represents its owner's character or situation, or both. Symbols are usually recognizable by the amount of emphasis they receive. Objects intended to be viewed as symbolic may be described in detail, be included in the title, be referred to frequently, or emphasized at the beginning or end of the story. When we recognize a symbol and understand its meaning or meanings, we see more clearly what the writer chose to emphasize. Actions can also be symbolic, such as washing hands to indicate non-involvement. Some symbols are universal, with generally accepted meanings, such as a crown to mean superiority or the color red to mean danger. Some are specific to a particular work of literature, such as the white whale in Moby Dick. Symbols, especially specific ones, often mean more than one thing. In Kilba performing arts, many of these symbols abound. Some of the symbols represent clans while others represent the entire Kilba ethnic group. Performing artists among Kilba ethnic group employ symbols to stir the emotions of their patron in order to get good gratification. But when performing on funeral occasions, symbols are employed in order recount the positive performances of the deceased. The excerpt below is always used as a symbol of royalty:

*Who gave tonngali a quiver of arrows?
Who gave a water bird an ostrich?
If you are a man, ambush me out there
Let her funeral be performed with shoulder Raised high
I ask, "where are the sons of the settlement?"
I ask "where the settlement of the horse is?"*

The excerpts above consist of various symbols used to represent truth conditions. Some of the symbols are clan based, while others tend to be conventional among the Kilba ethnic group. *Tongali* is a cursed bird. The performer uses the bird to refer to the cursed and laggards in the community who could not own quiver of arrows which qualifies a person to be referred to as a man. Two birds are contrasted 'the water bird and ostrich. A water bird is a cursed bird while an ostrich is a precious bird owned only by the royal families. Horse is a symbol of royalty, hence the settlement of the horse.

Repetition

Some singers employ a lot of lexical or structural repetitions not to bore the audience or an indication of the lack of new ideas but to create effects. Singers use repetition to gather momentum in order to bring a brighter idea in the next stanza, to emphasize a point or to authenticate a claim. Through repetition, singers stir the emotions of the audience. When performing at a funeral ceremony, panegyric of the dead is always sung. The

performing artist traces the deceased through his ancestors, enumerates their good deeds and achievements and links it to those of the deceased. Structural repetitions are most featured in the texts subjected to analysis.

*Where are those that climb their father's wives?
Moths of the vagina that boast!
Where are those that climb their father's wives?
Moths of the vagina that boast!
Where are those that climb their father's wives?
Moths of the vagina that boast!*

The texts are an example of structural and lexical repetitions. The repetition of interrogative sentences and the exclamatory are meant to stir the emotions of the audience in order suppress cowardice and promote brevity. Moths are believed to be fearless since they throw themselves into fire and get burnt. The brave is likened to them. The moth in the text is one of the vagina-mouth. Semantically, it stands for a coward and who dares not follow war warriors to the battle field but remains indoor or in hiding while the brave ones go to war. Another example of structural repetition is as in the following two sentences: *Where are the young men only for street? Where are the young men only for beer pot?*

The two sentences above are synonymous and are repeated for the purpose of castigating the fearful or the laggard. The gentlemen inquired through repetition are those that roam the town streets drinking beer or works hard only during communal farming where a farmer brews beer and mobilizes friends and well wishers to assist him on the farm. The gentle men in question work well when mobilized for the sake of beer but do not own a farm.

Conclusion

The outcome of this study has revealed that figurative languages such as metaphors, similes, imageries, symbolisms, rhetorical questions among others abound in Kilba traditional funeral songs. The use of figurative expressions enabled the Kilba performing artists to express feelings and thoughts implicitly rather than explicitly. Figurative expressions, in other words, serve as a means of dressing the content of messages being conveyed. The analysis of the two texts revealed that figurative expressions used in the composition of the songs are rooted in the history, traditions and culture of the Kilba people. The ostrich and the horse for instance are recognised as symbols of royalty among the Kilba people. Used in juxtaposition with these are the water bird and *tongali* used to castigate the laggard and hopeless members of the royal family. The applications of the figurative languages are means through which the positive qualities of the deceased are recollected so as to

soothe the minds of the relations of the deceased. It has been observed that most of the elements of the figurative languages used are derived from the social and physical environment of the people in which the deceased lived his life. Figurative Languages as applied in the composition and performing of funeral songs serve as means of expressing feelings about the passing on of a person and comfort the relations and close associates of the deceased by recalling the achievements of the deceased. Through the application of figurative languages, recollection of positive qualities of the deceased are recalled thereby comforting the mourners.

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