

FIGHTING HIV/AIDS THROUGH PERFORMING SONG: BENGA ORAL POETRY IN HOMABAY AND RANGWE SUB-COUNTIES IN HOMABAY COUNTY, WESTERN KENYA

Billy Odhiambo Ochieng¹, Dr. Kesero Tunai² and Dr. Felix Orina³

¹Department of Languages, Linguistics and Literature, Rongo University,
P.O. BOX 103-40404, Rongo, Kenya
Email: billyodhiamboo@gmail.com

²Department of Languages, Linguistics and Literature, Rongo University,
P.O. BOX 103-40404, Rongo, Kenya
Email: kestunai@yahoo.com

³Department of Languages, Linguistics and Literature,, Kibabi University,
P.O. BOX 1699-50200, Bungoma. kenya
Email: orinafe@yahoo.com

¹ **Corresponding Author**

Published: 31 October 2020

Copyright © Ochieng et al.

ABSTRACT

This study examines the relationship between the artist, the performance and the audience. It examines the audience's interaction with the oral performances and analyzes the impact that these performances have on the audience with regards to behavior change and HIV/AIDS. The main objective of this study is to examine the effectiveness of the HIV related messages deriving from the performance of Benga oral poetry. The study was carried out in Homabay and Rangwe Sub-Counties of Homabay County, Kenya. Through this study, it has come to fore that Benga oral poetry performances have an enormous potential in communicating matters on HIV and AIDS and that the oral performances can be used as an effective tool to reach the masses easily to spread the HIV/AIDS messages. It is therefore the study's conclusion that oral performances need to be used more as tools aiding the fight against the spread of HIV/AIDS.

Keywords: Performance, audience, HIV/AIDS, Benga oral poetry.

Abbreviations:

FGD	Focus Group Discussion
RF	Rangwe Female(Female respondents from Rangwe sub county)
RM	Rangwe Males(Male respondents from Rangwe sub county)
HBF	Homabay Female(Female respondents from Homabay)
HBM	Homabay Male(Male respondents from Homabay sub county)
CA	Club Administrators.

1.0 Benga oral poetry performance and HIV/AIDS related subjects

1.1 Introduction

Many studies have been carried out on the performance of oral pieces and their rich memorable styles popular with audiences in Western Kenya, their effectiveness as tools in the fight against HIV and AIDS has remained largely under-investigated. This is the area that the present study will dwell in. This chapter looks at the performance of Benga poetry and how its themes relate with its audience and their societal issues.

1.2 HIV subjects in Benga oral performances

Graham (2020) puts Homabay County ahead of all the other Counties in Kenya in terms of prevalence to HIV. Homabay happens to be one of the counties where Benga music is very popular. As explained earlier, this is one of the reasons why the study sampled Homabay for the study. Kariuki (2006) says artist tailor their music to respond to their environments. Benga has adopted the HIV themes in order to resonate with what is happening in the region and resonate with its audience base.

Our study analysed the song *Dunia mbaya* done by Princess Jully. This song carries a lot of HIV/AIDS messages and on closer look appears like a whole lesson on what causes HIV, how to keep away from HIV and even ends up advising those who already have it on how to live with it.

Dunia mbaya	The world is bad
Ukimwi mbaya	AIDs is bad
Utawacha watoto	You will leave your kids behind
Pekee yake	Lonely and desperate
Utakufa mbaya	You'll die a painful death
Kama umbwa	Like a stray dog
Utahara	You will diarrhoea
Tumbo nauma	Your stomach will ache
Kichwa nauma	You'll suffer headache
Baridi baridi	You will feel cold
Utakonda	You'll lose body weight

In this song, Princess Jully issues a warning to her audience telling them that the “world is bad.” That HIV is here and it has no medication. She advises the youth to remain faithful to their spouses for the consequences of unfaithfulness are diarrhea, headache, temperature fluctuations, loss of body weight and eventual death. To take her message home, she says that “you’ll die like a dog and leave your children as orphans. The HIV messages in this song are so clear and they are packed in an entertaining way that the audience ends up learning without realizing.

Wood Logar and Riley (2015) stated that most learning occur as a result of witnessing another person and performing the same action later. According to their position in the 2015 study, vices can be shunned through what they call behaviour avoidance. That one observes a neighbour suffering negative consequences as a result of his action. That such a person will avoid the vice. When princess Jully enumerates the consequences of unfaithfulness and reckless sexual behaviour, her audience is expected to avoid the risky sexual behaviour that she castigates. Our interview with the key informants confirms the above. The informants agree that the HIV/AIDS messages packed in the songs they had either listened to or watched in a live performance, were package well and communicated effectively to them. That the warning and pieces of advice they got from the performances made them change their behaviour. It emerged from the interviews that Oral performances were very effective vehicles for carrying the HIV messages as the messages reached people from where they are. That one does not have to attend a live dance in a club in order to hear them. That Benga is played even in the vernacular radio stations making the messages on HIV reach people even from the comfort of their Bedrooms. Below are samples of the responses from some of the respondents when we asked them how long they have been watching or listening to Benga and whether the HIV messages in the oral performances were effective. These interviews with the club administrators were done between the 1st of April 2019 and 30th February 2020.

CA₁(male): “Ummh!...I started watching Benga performances a long time ago...eeeh say from early 90s. This is because I like their way of performances, dress code ...I love the way they shake their ... (you know what)...I never miss watching Benga oral poetry performances every weekend during night hours upto now...It’s an entertainment program to me... they also give out direct content and advise on the way we can fight HIV/AIDS.”

CA₂(female): “ Oooh hard question to me...but I can recall I started attending these performances when my friend took me out for a drink in one of the night club about seven years ago....I admire the strength these people performing have. Their huge bodies, shoulders, muscles, wow. I love watching these performances...i love their deep message regarding HIV/AIDS they do

communicate...I don't only love them because they bring customer to our club, I love them for their attempt to communicate issues affecting the society the way they are. They sing against corruption and poor leadership. The political songs please me more. When they sing about love...wacha tu..

CA₃(male): *`` I have been watching this for a long time...I think up to now it's around fifteen years of watching the live performances in this club. Many artists have come to perform here. Some stay for long some play for a weekend and go....my father was a great fan of Benga. I was even told it was even more popular among our elders during their time''... i like their way of performances.....smooth sound...you know how sweet it is when seeing Benga performance after long day of hustle...you seem to forget you was tired...sometimes I do watch depending with my schedule...not frequently as such...but I love their message on advising people mostly youths on how to curb the spread of HIV/AIDS... ''*

CA₁ and CA₂ confess that they admire the performers courtesy of their physique and dressing codes. The performers therefore become their “significant other.” In social learning theory, Bandura (1977) says, the significant other is very important. That we learn from our heroes. People we adore. That behaviour is learnt by observing, retaining and imitating. The two are likely to have copied a thing or two from the artists. These vital lessons, the study deduces, are not limited to these two whom we sampled for the study. They are representative of many others who could not, because of numbers, participate in the study. The study therefore took the position that, many Benga audiences represented by **CA₁** and **CA₂** end up learning and adopting new behaviour from their preferred artists. **CA₃** on the other hand loves Benga because his dad did. He also says he finds it psychologically soothing after a long day. Many others like him find the Benga music playing clubs as appropriate venues to wind up their day. Being an administrator, the study believes he talks from experience. All the administrators mention the important role that Benga music plays in educating the audiences in their premises. That apart from the entertainment they come to get, they end up learning sub consciously and carry vital messages home.

1.3 Benga oral performances and the audience

Respondents in this study from the focus discussion groups agree that Benga is popular in their communities. That Benga is widely listened to and that the Messages they carry will reach a wide audience. That the question is, whether the audience will heed to the advice given by the artist or get entertained and fail to adopt the behaviour change messages packed in the songs. On the choice of lewd words, a number of the respondents again say that it's propelled by the desire to make money. That what sells today is sex and therefore incorporation of lewd lyrics would make them sell their ware. Orina (2014) says, of the oral performers among the Kisii people in western Kenya, that the Gusii composers combined traditional pattern with modern musical trends in order to remain relevant. Priscilla (2009) concurs with Orina's position saying, to remain in business since music has become a full time employment industry, and the artists have taken to composing what the audience wants to hear and that sex sells more than anything else. This probably is the reason behind what has been viewed as subversion in Benga. The majority however, were of the position that openly talking and singing about HIV and sex would help send the HIV message home more effectively. The subverted form makes the songs popular. It is therefore the position of this study that this subverted form of Benga oral rendition that is already popular can help reach many people.

It can be used to benefit the society instead of condemning it. This form would allow the organizations fighting HIV and sex related maladies to talk about sex, reproduction and disease openly using the songs as tool or vehicles to carry the messages to the masses. HIV/AIDS related messages are common in most oral poetry performances and have been for a long time (Bekalu, *et al.*, 2015).

From both our key informants and focus discussion groups, the study gathered that the HIV/AIDS messages always reach the audience. Bajpai (2017) points out that, while oral poetry's HIV/AIDS messages are not necessarily visually explicit, they often provide information youths may not find elsewhere. Through their performances and dialogue the actors present youths with numerous verbal and visual examples of how they can fight HIV/AIDS. These findings were corroborated by Suwarno, (2017) who observed that youths consistently refer to the oral performances as the most important source of HIV/AIDS related information. Otwack, (2015) established that oral poetry contains a high, growing and increasingly explicit dose of HIV/AIDS related messages which is directed towards youth. The implication of this finding is that the more the youth have access to oral poetry the more they are likely to come across scenes with HIV/AIDS content. After witnessing an elder sibling suffering punishment for stealing sugar, one would want to stay away from such act. This is what social learning theory is about so after watching Kamaliza Majengo's performance or listening to it over the radio or recorder, one would want remain faithful to their spouses. The HIV messages carried in the songs are whole lessons on how to stay alive for the youths. The FGD carried out in Rangwe center on 18th August 2019, brings this out very clearly, the after scrutinizing their contributions find common grounds. They say that after listening to a particular warning many times, one would fear repeating a mistake. Five members confessed to have watched live performances. Those who had not visited clubs still had a lot to say from their experiences with those who had.

RF₁: *I have danced to many songs talking about HIV. I visit clubs because I ride by pikipiki at night and most customers are found in the clubs. Most songs like of Okach and even Kabaselle teach us that HIV is there and has no medicine. I nowadays keep condoms on my pikipiki....*

RF₂: *I love Atomy sifa. I make my hair like this because I saw his. I like it... ive also heard songs on HIV in clubs. They warn us but their dances can make one do bad things... Okach and Jully sing good songs. I once went to Homabay and danced to Kulundeng Vibrators band sing their songs.*

RF₃: *My elder sister worked in "aWhatmaksee" club in Sinema Rangwe, as a waiter...she caught HIV. I saw her suffer and eventually die...I fear night clubs...I believe though the performances carry good information.*

Previous research concurs with this position as they indicate that Oral poetry plays a major role in the socialization of HIV/AIDS related knowledge, attitudes and behaviour (Ntshwarang *et al.*, 2015). One of the participants in one of the FGDs stated that HIV/AIDS related messages especially in Benga oral poetry programmes are presented in a way that is friendly and young people learn without realizing they are learning. The participant argued that the messages reach audiences from wherever they are. That, when one listens to the radio at any time that these songs are played, the messages reach them without necessarily going for a formal sitting in order to be taught. When asked about the effectiveness of HIV/AIDS related subjects, participants said the following;

HBM₁: “Mmmmh...I think Benga oral poetry is able to bring out real life issues in an entertaining way especially for the youth to get HIV/AIDS related messages in an effective way. It particularly portrayed the “evils” young people become entangled in and the ways in which they try to get out of these situations. Just like in real life it shows how some people get “unstuck” from the situations they face and how others are unable to get out”. I am a social worker and I’ll tell you the use of oral performances are cheaper and less cumbersome than organizing formal class lessons in the community.

RF₄: “I think Benga oral poetry contributes a lot in terms in a teenager’s life because they like doing things that cautions themselves against HIV/AIDS ...”

HBF₁: “With such HIV/AIDS related themes in Benga, the youth are able to see and understand what they go through and the consequences of the choices they make as well as the opportunities for reforming in attempts to curb HIV/AIDS...”!

HBM₂ who is a social worker based in Homabay gave the study a lot of insight regarding the trends in HIV and behavior change among the youths in the Two sub counties. She was sampled for the study because she has worked in both sub counties and therefore has vast knowledge in the subject. From her contribution, the study learns that it would be more effective to use mediums like oral performances to pass the HIV information to our young people. Her contribution confirms the study’s position that oral performances are very well suited for the fight against HIV. And that lessons learnt socially would hit the youth harder so that they change their behavior. **HBF₁** and **RF₁** are in support of her statements.

In our documents analysis, we looked at the music of Princess jully, who incorporated a lot of HIV messages in her work. Even though Mboya (2009) describes her song “*Dunia Mbaya*” as preachy, her fans readily identify with it despite the broken Kiswahili in which the song is sang. Her fans still love her song and performance style. The hit song catapulted her to national stardom. She soon became a sensation. In 1999, during the Benga extravaganza held in Nyayo National stadium, Nairobi Kenya, she emerged the best Benga artist playing her song *Dunia Mbaya* (Amos, D.N. 1999). This is what the Daily nation of June 4th 1999 had to say about Jully’s popularity then.

“The sensational Princess Jully of ‘*Dunia Mbaya*’ fame moved the crowd With her lyrics and was declared the winner of the top cash prize of Ksh. 100,000. ...The judges said, Jully had carried the day particularly in terms of audience captivation and stage presentation.” (Amos, DN, 1999 pg 4)

Jully’ popularity courtesy of her music cannot be gainsaid. It’s obvious she was a crowd puller. It is this ability that this study finds important as a tool in the war against HIV. The HIV messages packed in her lyrics can reach many people at ago. Her message is very clear; she had set out to use her singing ability, her talent to help fight the scourge that was ravaging her community. In the song, she chooses her words to suit her purpose; that of enlightening her fans about the dangers of HIV. When she asks her fans to “*tumia*” condom (use condoms) and *wacha raha* (stop irresponsible behavior), she is directly to be campaigning for behavior change. The greatest question here is how her audience received her messages. Do they follow her advice and changed their way of life? Did they just dance to the captivating and sizzling beats and ignored her messages? This song is a true testimony that Benga oral poetry and indeed other oral performances can be and should be packaged to aid in passing of informative messages to the masses. There are a

lot of lessons that can be learnt from the performances as the artists draw inspiration and purpose from the audience and vice versa. (Mckee, 2000).

Another artist whose music was sampled in this study is Elly Okach, better known as Okach Biggy in musical circles. The early 1990s were defining times for Benga music in the country the genre was revolutionizing very fast. There was a remarked shift in the mode of performance, style and even the theme. HIV was at its peak. Very little was known about HIV then. All that people knew was that, it came with irresponsible sexual behavior. With this in mind, then one would understand why Mboya (2009) criticized this new breed of Benga poetry and its performers. He described Okach as a disaster in waiting. He mentions in his study on Okach Biggy's music, that Okach was glorifying the very ills the government, the church and other stakeholders were working around the clock to control. Most of Okach's songs carry messages on behavior change. He sang about the risks of unprotected sex and the ravages of HIV. He composed pieces outlining the symptoms of HIV, how to stay away from the disease and even the stigma and psychological torture that victims of HIV faced in the society. In his song *Okach pod angima*, he sings;

Yawa jogi landaga ni atho to pod angima.

(These people are spreading rumors of my death yet I'm still alive.)

Meyer (2003) posits that, new behavior is heavily dependent on values carried from a role model. The many people who thronged Donna Inn and Junction Inn to savor the flavor of Okach's songs must have been his fans. He was therefore their "special one." In social learning theory, Special one refers to the person one would readily copy and want to behave like. A role model. These fans therefore must have taken Okach's lyrics seriously when he sang about his enemies who were spreading rumors of his death when he was still alive. They could not only have sympathized with their idol but must have as well learnt some lessons on the daily suffering that people living with HIV go through. In the song "*Okach pod Angima*," he sings about alienation, gossip and stigma that PLHIV go through. In this song he sings that his death was even announced over the radio when the truth is that he was very much alive and performing in Siaya at the show ground. He appeals to his audience in general to change their behavior towards the PLHIV. Alvero (2004) says that an observer's behavior can be influenced by the positive or negative stimuli s/he is exposed to.

In yet another song, *Dorina*, Okach warns his audience against promiscuity encouraging them to remain faithful to one partner. He sings about a girl called Dorina, whom he loved well, but who turned out to be promiscuous and would be seen in clubs at night with other men drinking and at times fighting other women over their men.

Nyath maber isandaga nango? Beautiful one, why are you breaking my heart?

Achopo yo bondo tayudo ionge you were not in Bondo when I came looking for you
Achopo siaya tayudo ionge you were not in siaya when I came looking for
You.

Isandaga nango? Why are you tormenting my heart?

Nyocho neni yo Bondo You were seen in Bondo

West end oneni kikalo You were also seen in west end club

Kata ka ngato osekawi? Tell me if you are already married.

Nyiri masanigi kara ti uwuondowa Girls' of today, you are liars

Kata ka ngato oseheri tichako iwuonde You lie even to the one who loves you

Kara to ihero ji adi How many people do you love?

<i>Company love atamora</i>	I refuse to share my love with anyone.
<i>Company love neko.</i>	Sharing of love leads to death
<i>Nyathini tinde chodo</i>	you've become a prostitute
<i>Trust nochangiewoni</i>	I even bought for you condoms

Through this song, Okach laments about beautiful girls who go cheating on their loved ones. He seems to be campaigning for the use of condoms in this song. He sings about buying trust condoms for Dorina. Through this song, Okach creates a scenario that his audience would very readily identify with. He sings about troubled relationships which he says in the song leads to death. He refers to it as company love. In yet another hit by the same artist, *Hellena wange dongo*, he sings about almost the same topic castigating sexual promiscuity and hailing faithfulness in relationships. He sings about changing his way of life and joining the church. Two denominations are mentioned here: Legio maria and catholic. He says he has changed his way of life. At this point, it's left to our imagination how many people he inspired to change their ways and joined the religious faiths following his rallying call. When he says he has left all the beautiful women with big buttocks for salvation; his message of behavior change and salvation is expected to carry his many fans and audience along, so they travel the same road choosing salvation and ending the behavior of following women with big hips.

<i>Awarora aseweyo chode alemo</i>	I'm now saved I've stopped prostitution
<i>Awarora aseweyo kongo owara</i>	I'm now saved, I've stopped taking alcohol
<i>Mon mabeyo aweyo</i>	I've stopped seducing beautiful women
<i>Sianda gi dongo aweyo</i>	I've stopped following the big hipped women
<i>Kata dongo kata ngielore,</i>	Even those with huge and swaying buttocks
<i>Jo catholic olemo kiloso kara</i>	The catholics have saved me
<i>Chode tinde aweyo</i>	I've stopped prostitution
<i>Pamo sianda mon ema ketha gi jolemo</i>	Slapping women's buttocks was drawing me away from my Christian faith.

Okach, however, in "*Okach pod Angima*" sings lyrics that one would imagine are countering the messages on behavior change. He seems to be castigating women who stick to their men faithfully asking them what they expect other females to do. Where do you expect other females to get lovers? He asks in the song *Okach Pod Angima*. The same question is thrown to the males as well. If you stick to that woman and keep saying she is your alone, where do you expect other men to get love? It would be interesting to see in which direction Okach's audience would be persuaded. This song drew a heated debate among the FGDs. Some argued that the artists are hypocrites who are only interested in money and fame. This study holds that the interpretation belongs to the audience and the audience alone. (Terence, 2010)

Nyako isiko ka chuori to nyiri wadu sero ango?

Young girl, you've stuck at your husband's, where do you expect other girls to seduce from?

Kijana isiko ma giri to nyiri wadu sero ango?

Young man, you've stuck with your wife, where do you expect other men to seduce from?

Nyathini ibernaga nyere kikwal ilosie koda kajalemo.

I find you so beautiful, girl. Create some time and talk to me, like a Christian.

Okach summarises all these lessons in his song Caleb Doctor where he sings about a doctor advising his patient to stay away from alcohol and *chode* (prostitution). The doctor whom he

reverently refers to as *Nyasaye mar ariyo* (the second god) apparently treats him and advises him to eat well, exercise and avoid negative lifestyle habits. The doctor gives him hope in life as he sings the words of the doctor; *ka ok mar tho to kare athiedhi* (if it's not meant to kill you, then Biggy ,I'll cure you)

The position of this study is in line with Daphne and Cynthia (2013), who posit that, oral genres have specific functions. The performances of Okach have a big role to play in the society. Every audience will draw their own meaning from the performances. From our interviews of key informants and also from our FGDs, we gathered that, revelers enjoy the songs when they are laced with the sex lyrics.

HBF₃: *Music is never complete if it does not mention those parts you know....*

RM₁: *Most performances I've watched talk about private parts like buttocks and breasts. You know nowadays if a musician does not employ beautiful dancers people get bored.*

RF₅: *Many songs sang nowadays cannot be played when children are around. I took my children to tourist for a fun day and the songs played embarrassed me.*

The audience should be fed on what they love most according to Maina (2014). Give them those lines carrying sex but throw in the messages therein. It's easier to learn from what one enjoys (Tim, 2010).

Kamaliza majengo, in their song '*Teresa*', just like in Okach's *Dorina*, sing about troubled relationships. Teresa is loved by the spouse who claims to give her all that she wants but she goes ahead to cheat on him. He describes her as *lando makwar chalo ombulu* (brown like a bead), *lekene okom angela chalo gi oganda mokom e puodho*. (her teeth are evenly spaced in her jaws like beans in the garden.) *Yie wiye mora kochung gi chien*. (I love the look of her hair style even from far). Just like Okach's *Dorina*, Teresa is loved but still isn't settled with her man. The man says he's been looking for her everywhere to no avail. He hears rumours of Teresa being sighted in various clubs and market centres. Herein comes his warning to his audience through Teresa whom, he now calls "Angang."(wayward girl).

Angang chama maonge luoro

A wayward girl will eat your money without fear

Angang oruma ne tin

Wayward girls have no mercy

Angang pimo oruma gojiko

They serve mercy in very tiny potions

jomoko riembo ka paro mondgi to moko riembo ka paro mond ji

Some drivers work thinking about their wives while others think fantasize about others' wives.

Jomoko lendo to paro mondgi moko lendo to paro mond ji

Some broadcasters work thinking about their wives while others fantasize about other's wives.

Kamaliza through their compositions echo the common everyday life of their society. In their next song *Achieng nyar imbo* whom they say is engaging in "*Gonyo yudhe*"(gives other young men sex generously). In this song, just like in *Teresa*, *Achieng* is loved but at some stage starts the wayward

behaviour of sleeping with other young men out of her marriage betraying the husband's love. They sing about the consequences of such behaviour among the youth.

Gima noduogo ochwanya gi nyathigi Awinoni nogonyo yudhe

(What later annoyed me was your habit of sleeping around with young men)

Gima nowango iya ni iuso love iluwo jo gari

(What annoyed me was your habit of following car owners)

Agwelo gita tokara herana to gonyo yudhe

(I'm playing guitar while my love is sleeping around with young men)

My lover we kelo aibu

(My lover, stop embarrassing me)

Piny olokore Sodom

(The world has turned in the Biblical Sodom)

Iparo ni itimo ni inyala kare in ema iketho ngimani

(You think you are hurting me, you are ruining your life)

Ibiro diewo midhi off

(You'll diarrhoea till you die)

Weche gonyo youth werigo

(Stop sleeping around with young men)

Kamaliza says God created love and it was meant to be sweet but money and alcohol is destroying everything. Like princess Jully and Okach, they teach about the consequences of infidelity. That one would diarrhoea till he or she dies. That the love of money is the beginning of all problems in relationships and that promiscuity leads to HIV and eventually death. They emphasize the need for behaviour change. In their song Aluoch, they sing that "*ohand nyama mbichi nokel ni tho.*" (Selling your flesh will lead to your death.). It may therefore be true that HIV messages can best be passed through popular Kenyan music lyrics like Benga.

Ochieng kabaselle in his song, *Awino Zainabu*, appears to summarize his love-life story. This song in two parts tells the story of a beautiful woman he falls in love with. As fate would have it, he gets imprisoned. When he comes out of prison, Zainabu is missing from home. He has to look for her. He thinks of visiting Ugenya, her maternal home. The sad but captivating love story brings out the tribulations men suffer in the name of love. Ochieng does not want to lose her at whatever cost. Perhaps still smarting from the loss of previous "loves", he ponders how to reach Ugenya to see her parents. He must get there safely and bring her back home. He says, in the song, that he fears using a boat for it may capsize and kill him before seeing his love one. Air and road travels are similarly ruled out as options. He wants to reach Ugenya alive to see his *Zainabu*. The only option left which he says he'll take is that of going on foot all the way. It's the safest according to him.

Okana idh kata ndiga dipo konega nono

I won't use a bike, it may crash and kill me before I see you

Kata nyamburko be dipo kogoya piny monega nono kapok achopo neni

Even a motor vehicle can crash and kill me....

Kata mana yie dipo konyuma....

A boat may capsize and drown me...

Kata helikopta dipo kogoya piny...

A helicopter too might crash

Kata mana kanyina dipo kogweya....

I won't use even a donkey, it might kick and kill me

Gari ya mosi nyaka ugenya onge...

There is no train to Ugenya

Ochuna nyaka awuoth mana gi tienda kale. Eka dipo kachop salama nenieee

I'll have to come on foot if I am to arrive safely and see you.

Ochieng stresses on faithfulness in relationships in this song. He builds this theme preparing the audience for the anti thesis in *Rapar Zainabu*. Ochieng sings about the theme of unfaithfulness in marriages and their attendant consequences in a very entertaining and captivating way. He urges Zainabu not to lie to him. He promises to remain true to her too. *Rapar Zainabu* continues with the Ochieng-Zainabu love story. It begins in a conversational tone. Though the song is done in Luo, This part is done in English. He says; "Prevention is better than cure." This opening line done in English probably was meant to summarize the whole body of the message in the song. In an apostrophe, he proceeds to address questions to Zainabu (now late) he asks in Dholuo;

Ango ma notimore?

What happened?

Nobedo nade?

How did it happen?

Awinjo ni nokoni ni iti kod kondom

I'm told you were advised to use condoms.

Koro neye wich teko mari okelo tho.

Now see what your obstinacy has caused death

The mood is no longer that of romance and nostalgia. It has transitioned into sadness. The beats though similar, the rhythm has changed. It's now slower and dull depicting sadness and the gravity of the new theme. Awino Zainabu is dead. Millicento, Rosa Aoko and Atieno nyar Sakwa are also dead. Other male friends are also reported to have died. Friends and foes. They have died of HIV/AIDS. Ochieng mourns Zainabu sadly in this song. He now sings of death, obstinacy, recklessness. He pities his community. In this song, he warns and advises his listeners of the best practices to stay safe from the killer disease. He advises his audience to stop wife inheritance, a practice that is said to have catalyzed the spread of the disease.

Wek tero mon

stop wife inheritance

Ti gi condom

use condoms

Anyisou joluo duto

I'm telling you my fellow Luos

Ayaki matieka tieko kothwa

HIV is finishing us

Hera mit sana lakini lit ndi sama koro iiki ni ayaki ema onegi

Sex is sweet but it's painful to be buried that you've died of aids

En tuo ma kata yadhe bende onge

It's a disease that has no medicine

Lakini condom to adieri nyalo genge

But a condom can help prevent it.

He blames Zainabu for cheating on him with people like Jasitima. He goes ahead to warn his audience of the existence of the killer disease. He says AIDS is real and people should take care. They should be faithful to their partners and stop wife inheritance 'Wek tero mon'. Wife inheritance is seen as one of the leading catalysts of the disease. He urges his fans to go for HIV test first before engaging in raw sex. He says the best way to protect one's self is to use Condoms.

1.4 conclusion

This chapter has analysed the potential of Benga oral poetry performances as a tool for communicating on the fight against HIV/AIDS among the youth in Homabay and Rangwe Sub-Counties in western Kenya. The social learning theory that the study adopted has aided the analysis of this sub chapter. It has become apparent that behavior is shaped by both personal and environmental factors. This study has also analyzed the songs as performed in the clubs using the reader response theory and the social learning theory. The study has sort to demonstrate that meanings vary from one person to another. It has also stated that there is not just one meaning 'the meaning' of a musical performance but rather meanings are multi dimensional and relative from one individual to another (Meyer, 2003).

References

- [1] Alvero A. & Austin, J. (2004). The Effects of Conducting Behavioral Observations on the Behaviour of the observer. *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis*, 37(4), 457-468.
- [2] Amos, N. (1999/6/4) Benga Music Extravaganza to Remember. *Daily Nation*. pp.5 retrieved from <https://www.nation.co.ke>
- [3] Bajpai, L. (2017). An insight into the very first Bengali language text books: *A visual and historio-graphical understanding*. SAARC Cultural center. Colombo. Srilanka.
- [4] Bandura, A., (1977). *Social learning theory* (Vol. 1). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-hall.
- [5] Bekalu, M. & Eggermont, S. (2015). Aligning HIV/AIDS communication with the oral tradition of Africans: *A theory-based content analysis of songs' potential in prevention efforts*. *Health communication*, 30(5), pp.441-450.
- [6] Daphne & Cynthia (2013) Children's Oral Poetry: *A Reflection on the Role of Imilolozelo (lullabies) as Art Performance in Zulu*. University of Natal. Durban.
- [7] Graham K. (2020/2/21), 'Homabay has highest HIV prevalence.' *Standard Newspaper*. Retrieved from www.standardmedia.co.ke.
- [8] Kariuki, P. (2006) *Style and Meaning in Oral Poetry Performances*. Kenyatta University.
- [9] Maina M, (2014). *The village and town in mugithi and one man guitar performances in Kenya*. University of Florida, USA.

- [10] Mboya, (2009) *Sex, HIV/AIDS and “tribal” politics in the Benga of Okach biggy*. Moi University. Kenya.
- [11] Mckee, K. (2000) *The Theatre of Teaching and the Lessons of Theatre*. Lexington Books. Amazon .com
- [12] Meyer, D. *et al* (2008) *Organizational Behavior and Human decision Processes*. University of Central Florida. USA.
- [13] Ntshwarang, P. & Malinga–Musamba, T. (2015). Oral communication: a gateway to understanding adolescents' sexual risk behaviour. *International Journal of Adolescence and Youth*, (vol1), p100-111 retrieved from [https:// doi.org/10.1080/02673843.2013.778206](https://doi.org/10.1080/02673843.2013.778206)
- [14] Orina, F. (2014) *Analysis of the symbolism and transience in the oral literature of the Abagusi of western Kenya*. University of Nairobi. Nairobi.
- [15] Otwack, J. (2015). Sexual objectification of the woman’s body: An analysis of selected popular Benga songs among the Luo community, Kenya. *Global Journal of Arts Humanities and Social Sciences*, vol 3 (No.6), 46-56. European Center for Research Training and Development. UK. (www.eajournals.org.)
- [16] Priscilla G. (2009). Music as social discourse: *The contribution of popular music to the awareness and prevention of HIV/AIDS in Nairobi*. Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University. SA.
- [17] Suwarno, P. (2017). The importance of oral performance: what makes a successful proficiency-based foreign language program. *isllac: Journal of Intensive Studies on Language, Literature, Art, and Culture*, 1(1), 1-18. Fakultas Sastra Universitas Negeri Malang. Indonesia.
- [18] Terence, P., (2010) *A reader Response Approach to the Initial Training of Maltese Literature Teachers*. University of Birmingham.
- [19] Tim, J. (2010) *Why should you study what you love*. University of Chicago Press. Retrived from www.masterstudies.com
- [20] Wood, A., Logar, C., & Riley, W. (2015). Initiating exporting: the role of managerial motivation in small and medium enterprises. *Journal of Business Research*, 68(11), 2358-2365. James Madison University. <https://researchgate.net>