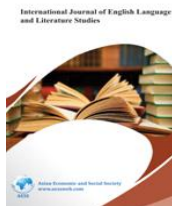




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PERFORMANCE AND THE TECHNIQUES OF THE AKAN FOLKTALE

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ABSTRACT

The Akan Folktale (AF) or Akan oral narrative commonly known as Anansesem (literally meaning Spider Story or Stories) is a most popular verbal art form. This paper analyses performance and the techniques of the AF based on examples drawn from the book published by the author (Mireku-Gyimah, 2011a), 50 akan folktales from Ghana: English and akan versions. Saarbrücken: Lap Lambert Academic Publishing GmbH, which captures the performance dynamics of the AF. The performance of these tales was captured on video and audio cassettes, transcribed in Akan and translated into English. The study shows that the AF has unique techniques of performance: there is a literary presentation constituting a structured pattern, namely an extradiegetic introduction that sets the ground rules and calls for co-operation of narrator and narratee(s), the main body of the story that enjoins the participation of both narrator and narratee(s), and a decisive conclusion that invites a willing narratee to provide another story. Throughout the introduction, the main body of the story and the conclusion, there are laid down formulas and both narrator and narratee(s) are free to make comments, ask questions, sing mmoguo or even dance. It is concluded that the AF has a unique structured pattern of literary presentation and techniques of performance that attract and sustain interest as well as serve as a powerful tool to drive home moral lessons.

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Keywords: Akan folktale, Techniques, Performance, Literary presentation, Oral narrative, Narrator, Narratee.

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Contribution/ Originality

This study contributes to the existing literature on the performance process and the techniques of the Akan Folktale

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1. INTRODUCTION

Among the Akans of Ghana, the oral narrative or folktale commonly known as *Anansesem*, which literally means Spider Story (singular) and Spider Stories (plural), is a most popular verbal art form. The Akan Folktale (AF) owes its popularity to many factors including its foremost character, *Kwaku Ananse* the Spider, who is an arch-trickster; its terse nature (see (Mireku-Gyimah, 2011b)); its didactic quality and relevance to the modern world (see (Mireku-Gyimah, 2010a)); its informative value via the literary device of allusion (see (Mireku-Gyimah, 2011c)); and its entertainment value which is sometimes comparable to that at the ringside (see (Mireku-Gyimah, 2010b)).

Even though the tales can be committed to paper, they are best appreciated when performed (Finnegan, 1970). Indeed, the best results are realised at the performance session where other forms of phatic communion and body language count. Within a few minutes, a good performance yields almost all desired results, providing entertainment, information and education. An example in written form can be seen in one major work by the author: *50 Akan Folktales from Ghana: English and Akan Versions* (Mireku-Gyimah, 2011a) in which some attempts have been made to capture the performance dynamics of the AF as far as possible. What then are the techniques employed in the performance of AF to sustain the interest of the audience and therefore convey its ethical message through entertainment? The current paper examines the performance process and the techniques of performance of the AF: the various stages, role-players, artistry and protocols.

2. METHODOLOGY

The paper uses two (2) sample tales selected from the book titled *50 Akan Folktales from Ghana: English and Akan Versions* (Mireku-Gyimah, 2011a). All the tales in this book were performed and captured on video in the Ashanti Region of Ghana. They were transcribed from the video into the Akan Asante Twi and finally translated into English as texts for critical analysis, carefully keeping the local linguistic flavour in the English texts and still making them understandable. The Akan script captured the Akan language as was spoken by the people. The selected tales are Tale 1 (pp. 1-5) and Tale 37 (pp. 225-235). They are reproduced as Appendices to this paper for ease of reference, except that the footnotes in them are presented as Notes and re-numbered sequentially. Tale 1 (Appendix 1) is entitled “It Does Not Pay to be so Greedy” (in English) and “*Adufudepe bebrebe wɔ hɔ yi enye*” (in Akan). Tale 37 (Appendix 2) is entitled “The Origin of the Human Tongue” (in English) and “*Sɛ Ɛyeeɛ a Tekrema a eda Nnipa Anomu Ebae*” (in Akan). Some portions of the Akan text are sometimes used for illustrations in the main text.

3. THE ESSENTIAL PARTS OF THE AF

The AF displays a preponderance of formula which makes it draw attention to itself as a work of art. This artistic self-consciousness is unique to each of the tales. The essential parts of the AF are three and identified as the introduction, the body and the conclusion forming the stages of literary presentation. In performance, each stage of the tale contains carefully laid out

procedures constituting the techniques, which help attract and sustain the interest of the audience.

4. THE INTRODUCTION OF THE AF

The introduction of the AF performance basically serves as the introductory part. It consists of formulas unique to itself, namely a call to order by the narrator, and a response by the narratees (or the audience/audience participants) as a group pledging co-operation with the narrator to ensure a successful and enjoyable performance. In Genettean metalanguage, this stage will correspond to the extradiegetic level of narrative discourse because it does not form part of the intradiegetic level, that is, the main story (see Genette (1983)). What this means is that the performance is usually preceded by extradiegetic procedure, which seems to be integral to the main tale.

4.1. The Opening Call by Narrator

The opening call by the narrator is couched in the following short statement (as in Tale 1): “*Anansesem se se o!*” This statement may translate as: “The *Ananse*/Spider story says so!” It is a very significant statement because it prompts one that the performer is reminding his or her audience about the fact that the tale is not factual but fictive. There are several corrupted versions of this statement, the most prominent of which is: “*Yense se nse se o!*” - (as in Tale 37)

The literal meaning of the corrupted versions of the opening call could be any of the following:

- As the folktale says;
- So says the folktale o!;
- According to the folktale; and
- This is what we have been saying.

Apart from serving as a reminder to the audience that the tale is in the realm - of make-believe or fantasy, the opening call has three other purposes. First, it reminds the audience not to expect a static story told exactly as in times past, but rather to accept the incorporation of some aspects of modern life. It also calls for co-operation of the audience to play their part in making the story-telling performance a success. The third and final purpose is to seek the permission of the narratees to start the story.

4.2. Response by the Narratees (Audience/Audience Members or Participants)

The response by the audience is given in the form of a chorus as: “*Yesesa soa wo!*” (as in Tale 1) or “*See soa wo!*” (as in Tale 37). “*See soa wo!*” is a corruption owing to rapid speech and is most commonly used by young audience participants. Literally, these responses could be translated as:

“We load it on your head”, and could mean any of the following:

- We ask you to carry the responsibility and tell the story;
- We give you the floor to tell it (a tale) to us;
- We charge you to tell the tale;
- The onus is on you to tell the story; and

- Let it roll.

The response by the audience is significant because it gives the narrator permission to begin the story. What is more, it amounts to a vow on the part of the audience to co-operate with the narrator to ensure the success of the performance. It must be emphasised that the success or otherwise of the whole AF performance depends a lot on the effectiveness of the opening call by the narrator and the response by the audience in the extradiegetic introduction stage.

5. THE BODY OF THE AF

The body of the AF presents several sub-stages, namely launching into the story itself (“the story proper”) by the narrator; comments, interjections, questions, answers and other reactions by the audience in response to the narrator; and teaching and learning choruses, refrains of songs and musical interludes (*mmoguo*).

5.1. Launching into the Tale by the Narrator

The narrator launches straight into his or her narration with the words: “*Yense se*” Thereafter, he or she proceeds with the starting formula: “*Enye ... na ... na*” (as in Tale 1) or in some cases “*Nye... na/enna ... [na]*”. It is important to state that sometimes the formula “*Yense se*” is omitted altogether (as in Tale 37). The literal translations of the above formulas are:

(*Yense se*) ...: Don’t we say that.../The tale has it that.../The story has it that.../It says that...

(*Enye/Nye... na/enna ...*): Was it not ... who/that ...

(*Yense se, enye ... na/enna ... na*): Don’t we say that/Was it not ... who...

In each case, it must be noted that the narrator’s words are always in consonance with the first formula. Hence, in Tale 1, for example, the launching becomes the following:

“*Enye Agya Kwaku Ananse na ekom sii ne kurom na ...*” (p. 4).

This literally translates as:

“Was it not Father *Kwaku Ananse* in whose hometown ... a great famine once broke out ...” (p. 1)

In the example taken from Tale 37, the launching reads:

“*Tete mmere mu no enna ekom keseɛ bi baeɛ ...*” (p. 231)

This is literally translated as:

“In the olden days it happened that there was once a great famine ...” (p. 225)

“In the olden days” (as in Tale 37) may also be expressed in other ways such as “Once upon a time”, and “Long, long ago”.

Launching into the story itself by the narrator means that we are now at the main level of the story - what Genette calls the intradiegetic level. At this stage, the narrator who is invariably omniscient emerges from the past, as it were, (considering that the tale is a cultural heritage-something from the past), lands in the present, and starts the recounting of the tale, which is now “the story proper”.

It is interesting to observe that the “launching stage” is also the actual or real opening of the particular story at hand: in it, the role of our omniscient narrator consists of providing the setting and the main characters, including the protagonist(s) and antagonist(s) sometimes with their families. The setting and the cast or *dramatis personae* are furnished as in a piece of drama. The narrator launches into Tale 1 as follows:

Enye Agya Kwaku Ananse na ekom sii ne kurom na akaa se arekape aduane ama ene ne yere ne ne mma nyinaa abedi (abedi). Enti onenam mu aa (ara) na akotoo se abotan bi wo ho a ewo ani, wo anintan nwi na afu abodwese. (p. 4)

Literally meaning:

Was it not Father *Kwaku Ananse* in whose hometown it happened that a great famine once broke out making him decide to go into the forest in search of food to feed himself and his family. While searching through the forest, he came across a stone, which had eyes, eyelashes and a beard. (p. 1).

The initial circumstances or “initial situations” (Propp, 2005) incorporating the conditions, atmosphere, mood, and other situations in which the characters find themselves, are also established. Thus, continuing, the narrator of Tale 1 tells the audience the following:

Enna Ananse, a n'ano pe asem, ohunuie a obemua n'ano no, ase, “Eei! ebos a ewo ani akese mmienu, wo abodwese, wo anintanwi ben ni?... N'ano ansi na biribi kukuruu no koo soro na asoo dua mu, na ase, “Eye, nye hwee” (p. 4)

Literally, this means:

Then the inquisitive *Ananse*, who would not keep silent over anything, instead of keeping his mouth shut on seeing the spectacle, (he) just opened his mouth and wondered saying, “Really! What kind of stone is this that has two big eyes, a beard and eye lashes?” ... Hardly had *Ananse* completely uttered his amazement than an unknown force lifted him up but he managed to cling to the branch of a tree and survived. He said, “That was terrible, but never mind....” (p. 1)

On his part, our narrator of Tale 37 also states these as in the following:

... Na ekom no ano yee den na na yedi nkokoraa. Enti Kwaku Ananse, agya, yedi nkokoraa no, ene ne yere Okonorɔ Yaa na etee. (p. 231)

Literally meaning:

... The hunger was severe to the extent that people were feeding on wild yam. In those days when wild yam would pass for food, *Kwaku Ananse* lived with his wife, *Okonorɔ Yaa* (p. 225).

The narrator continues with the initial circumstances:

Kwaku Ananse yi, onam ho saa ara na, agya, arepe kakra bi. Onam mu nam mu ara na okopiee kokoraa no bi so. Dyee n'adwene se aretu ara, obehwe a, kokora no nkyen, abofra ketekete bi beye se kokromotie. Ananse, ohunuu akodaa yi pe na, agya, omaa akodaa no so hyee n'apretwiwa mu na, agya, arepe kokora no bi na obaa fie. (p. 231)

Literally, this means:

This *Kwaku Ananse*. He was walking around trying to look for some of the wild yam to take home for a meal. He combed through the forest till he found some. Just when he made up his mind to harvest it, he noticed a little child as tiny as the human thumb standing right beside the wild yam. Immediately *Ananse* saw the child, he lifted it and put it into his hunter's sack, then harvested a small quantity of the wild yam and brought home (p. 225)

The foregoing foreshadows the mood of each story and helps the audience to follow the plot, the character and the actions that build up all the way to the conflicts and their resolution in the end. The launching pad then has the ability to grab the attention of the audience, enkindle their imagination and deepen suspense in the narration. The onus, therefore, lies on the narrator to do this launching stage well.

The major pieces of information given at this stage concern the initial circumstances surrounding the story and the main characters (and their families). In Tale 1 as in Tale 37, we observe that the initial circumstances reveal a very difficult time ("a great famine"), the date is unspecified and can therefore represent any such hard time anywhere, for example, Ghana in the year 1983, when bushfires and the like caused a great famine in the country.

Again, it would be observed that, in each story, the main character and protagonist is Kwaku Ananse. In Tale 1, reference is made to his unnamed wife and children. Apart from the Ananse family members, another important character, the strange stone around which the plot revolves, is also introduced. In Tale 37, Ananse's wife is introduced, this time, by name as *Okonorɔ Yaa*. Besides her, the strange child as tiny as the human thumb and around whom revolves the story of Tale 37 is also presented.

5.2. Audience Participation

Flowing naturally through the telling of the tale are the comments, interjections, questions, answers and other reactions by the audience in response to particular situations of the unfolding story. Sometimes, however, some of these are digressions, but they still add to the quality of the entertainment provided by the stories. At other times, they also provide useful information. Examples from our sample tale texts are indicated in bold type in the following extracts from Tale 1 and Tale 37 respectively:

Tale 1:

(*Ɔtofoɔ: Enna Ananse a n'ano pe asem, ohunuie a ebemua n'ano no, ase, "Eei! ebɔɔ a ewɔ ani akeseɛ mmienu, wɔ anintɔn nwi na afu abɔdwese , ben ni?"*)

Atiefoɔ: Eei! (p. 4)

Literally, this means:

(*Narrator:* Then the inquisitive *Ananse*, who would not keep silent over anything, instead of keeping his mouth shut on seeing the spectacle, (he) just opened his mouth and wondered saying, "Really! What kind of stone is this that has two big eyes, a

beard and eye lashes?")

Narratees: Indeed! (p. 1)

Tale 37:

(*Otofoɔ*: “Tete mmere mu no enna ekom kesse bi baeɛ ... Na ekom no ano yee den na na yedi nokoraa. Enti Kwaku Ananse, agya, yedi nokoraa no, ɔne ne yere Okonorɔ Yaa na etee.”)

Otieni bi: Kwaku Ananse yi.

Literally translated as:

(*Narrator*: In the olden days it happened that there was once a great famine. The hunger was so severe that people were feeding on wild yam. In those days when wild yam would pass for food, Kwaku Ananse lived with his wife, Okonorɔ Yaa.)

A Narratee: This Kwaku Ananse!

In addition, we find the following in Tale 37:

(*Otofoɔ*: Kwaku Ananse yi, ɔnam hɔ saa (ara) na, agya, ɔpɛ (ɔrepɛ) kakra bi. ɔnam mu, nam mu aa (ara) na okopiee kokoraa no bi so. ɔyee n’adwene se ootu aa (ɔretu ara), ɔbehwe a, kokora no nkyɛn, abɔfra ketekete bi beye se kokromotie. Ananse ohunuu akɔdaa yi pɛ na, agya, ɔmaa akɔdaa no so hyee n’apiretwiwa mu na, agya, ɔpɛ kokora no kakra na ɔde baa fie.)

Otieni bi: Ananse yi. (Atiefoɔ no sere)

Otieni foforoɔ: ɛ?

Otieni foforoɔ biem: Kwaku Ananse, ɔɔdene (ɔye dene).

(*Otofoɔ*: Kwaku Ananse, obeduruu fie sei pɛ na ɔmaa ne yere Okonorɔ Yaa de esii so.)

Atiefoɔ: Eei!

Otieni bi: Yɛɛbɛwe (Yɛrebɛwe) kokora apesie!

Otieni foforoɔ: Nana, na Okonorɔ Yaa no na Ananse deen ne no?

Otofoɔ ne atiefoɔ no bi: Ne yere.

Otieni no: Ne yere?

Atiefoɔ: Eeei!

(*Otofoɔ*: ɔde kokora kosii gya so. Aduane yi beneɛɛ a maame no yii beema yi deɛ besii hɔ aa (ara) na ɔyii akɔdaa no firii n’apretwiwa mu de sii hɔ. Kwaku Ananse yii kokora no tam baako na odwidwaa mu de guu akɔdaa no “teeburu” (borɔfo kasa: table) no so hɔ. Akɔdaa no te hɔ aa (ara) ɔse, “Hee.” Kwaku Ananse se, “Aɛn?” ɔse, “Emmee me.” Akɔdaa a ɔte se kokromotie no oo!)

Atiefoɔ: Eei!

Otieni bi: Abakomasɛm!

(*Otofoɔ*: Ananse se, “Di ɛ, na se ammee wo a, mema wo bi aka ho. Akɔdaa no sɔre gyinaa hɔ...)

Literally meaning:

(*Narrator*: This Kwaku Ananse! He was walking around trying to look for some of

the wild yam to take home for a meal. He combed through the forest till he found some. Just when he made up his mind to harvest it, he noticed a little child as tiny as the human thumb standing right beside the yam. Immediately Ananse saw the child, he lifted and put it into his hunter's sack, then harvested a small quantity of the wild yam to take home).

A Narratee: This Ananse!

(The other participants laugh)

Another Narratee: Indeed!

A Third Narratee: Kwaku Ananse, he is strong!

(Narrator: As soon as Kwaku Ananse arrived home, he asked his wife Okonoro Yaa to make fire and get the wild yam boiled.)

Narratees: Is that true?

A Narratee: We are going to chew boiled wild yam for a meal of ampesie.

We are yet to chew boiled wild yam!

Another Narratee: Nana (Grandfather/Teller), what is Okonoro Yaa to Ananse?

Narrator and Some Narratees: His wife.

Some Other Narratees: The wife?

Narratees: All right.

(Narrator: She went to have the wild yam boiled... Ananse removed the child from the sack. Kwaku Ananse took a big slice of the wild yam and chopped it into smaller pieces and then served the child's portion on the table. The child sat there and grumbled saying, "Hee". Kwaku Ananse asked, "What's the matter?" The child said, "The food is not enough for me; it will not satisfy me." Note that this is coming from a tiny child the size of a human thumb!)

Narratees: Indeed!

A Narratee: A spoilt child that he is!

(Narrator: Ananse said, "Go ahead and eat it first, if it does not satisfy you, I will give you some more." The child stood up...)

From the excerpts of both sample tales, it is realised that the body of the tale contains not just words but also humour and information. For instance, in the first, Tale 1, the narratee create humour when they remark of some events being narrated that "it is the truth" (p. 2), and "it is true" (p. 3). Similarly, in Tale 37, a narratee's comment, "We are going to chew boiled wild yam for a meal of ampesie. We are yet to chew boiled wild yam" (p. 225) is to provoke laughter. Also, the comments "Indeed", "Is that so?" and "It is the truth", (p. 2) along with "it is true" and "If you administer poison, you surely get a taste of it yourself" (p. 3), which the audience throw in either as individuals or as a group at various points in the narration, go a long way to provide various forms of humour or entertainment as well as knowledge. The knowledge acquired becomes extended as correct answers are given to questions posed. For example, in Tale 37, the narrator, together with some of the narratees, provides an answer to a question posed by a narratee about the relationship of Okonoro

Yaa to Ananse. The narratees, especially those who are unsure about the answer, get to know, or reminded that *Okonorɔ* is Ananse's wife.

Comments from audiences on Ananse at AF performances point to how well known he is to most people, especially Akans, who are conversant with Akan cultural heritage. Interestingly, the audiences of our selected tales are much informed, considering their comments on him immediately his name is mentioned. A comment like, "This Kwaku Ananse!", which is quickly repeated by the narrator before continuing the narration, and is again re-echoed by another narratee, is pregnant with meaning. Among other things, it brings to mind that the trickster is around. The audience is therefore ready to listen, indeed, actively participate in the session till the end of the story to see how things will go for this big character called Ananse, who is cunning, "wise", "clever", "strong", etc. It is as if to add that "we have a good story here". No wonder the narratees have a good laugh in preparation for what is to come. The narratees may also fill in gaps left by the narrator as a result of forgetfulness (see a typical example in Tale 22 "*Akyekyedeɛ* the Tortoise was the Fastest Runner" in Mireku-Gyimah (2011a)).

5.3. Teaching, Learning and Singing Choruses of Songs

In the course of the storytelling, the narratees are compelled to join the narrator to sing a song or sing the chorus or refrain of a song forming part of the narrative. In this instance, the narrator indicates to the narratees how to do that. The narrator's role at this point is therefore to spare a minute or two to teach the narratees. It is often the case that only a few of the narratees know the particular song in the narrator's particular story.

The significance of this part is that it enhances the liveliness and success of the performance by keeping the narratees "awake" till the end of the story. It also allows members of the audience, particularly the younger ones, who know little or nothing about the cultural heritage to learn more songs in the folktale repertoire of the community. This is advantageous to the community at large as the narratees would be enabled to remember or memorise the stories or tales and thus enrich the cultural repertoire, since a song or refrain has the capacity to trigger a particular folktale in a person's mind. Further, it builds team spirit. The significance of this is also noticed in its potential to sensitize and transform individuals into a team, whose members actively work together for the success of a project, in this case, a successful AF performance session.

There is no song in the body of Tale 1, so none is taught, learnt or sung. However, a simple example of the current stage in the performance methods of the AF from Tale 37 is boldened and given in parentheses by way of stage directions (*You must respond "panko" when I say "ɔpanko"*). After the narrator has taught the song, he leads the narratees to sing the learnt part. All these manifest as follows:

(Narrator: Ananse said, "Go ahead and eat first I will give you some more. The child stood up).

(*You must respond "panko" when I say "ɔpanko"*)

Then:

Narrator: ɔpanko

Narratee: "Panko"

Narrator: ɔpanko

Narratee: "Panko"

Narrator: Herede!

Sometimes, a narrator adds that the narratees should add hand clapping to the singing (see a typical example in Tale 39 "How *Sasabonsam* the Forest Devil Multiplied in the World", (Mireku-Gyimah, 2011a)). At other times, a narrator will not wait till the onset of the song to teach it or the chorus/refrain. Hence, it is not unusual at a performance session to hear the narrator announce right at the start that his or her tale contains a song and that the narratees are to respond in such and such a way, that is, sing the refrain or chorus as the narrator shows them how.

At the end of the song, the narrator continues with his recounting. The song may be repeated many times in the same story. There is no such song in Tale 1, but in the particular example of Tale 37, the song "ɔpanko" is repeated three times before the end of the story. It must be added that it is repeated at various points in the narration to create a certain picture in the minds of the narratees. Thus, it actually establishes, illustrates and reinforces the little greedy child and the unthinkable fast way in which he swallows almost everything from food to plates, pots and other containers in which food is served him. After the singing (and clapping, etc.), the narrator resumes the telling, with the narratees interjecting, throwing in comments, questions, etc. as before. This can also be observed in Tale 37 each time after the singing of the song "ɔpanko". For example, after the first singing of that song, the narrator resumes his narration and his narratees also interject as follows in bold:

Narrator: Instantly *Kwaku Ananse's* table and cooking utensils were all gone!

A Narratee: Then here was a child magician!

Narrator: Yet this child was still complaining of hunger. He had swallowed the whole of the table and the cooking utensils; they had all gone into his belly. What else could *Ananse* do about this? He placed the child beside *ɔkɔnorɔ Yaa's* own ration (of the food). Then the child said, *Hee*. "What is the matter?" *Ananse* inquired. The child said, "It is not sufficient for me." *Ananse* said, "Keep quiet, if it does not satisfy you, I shall give you some more." Then the child stood up:

Narrator: ɔpanko

Narratees: Panko

Narrator: ɔpanko

Narratees: Panko

Narrator: Herede!

After this song, which is the second singing of it, the narrator and the narratees continue to interact as in the following example in bold:

Narrator: The child had hurriedly swallowed everything into its belly (by the time we finished saying these words): Ananse's utensils, aluminium pans and even the earthenware!

A Narratee: Then the child we have here is an "instant swallower".

Narrator: Kwaku Ananse realised that the situation was becoming unbearably critical; he had brought a real problem home.

A Narratee: He actually asked for it.

Narrator continues: At that time it was Nana Nyankopɔn the Skygod who (pp. 226-227)

A Narratee's musical interlude or *mmoguo*:

Narratee Leader: Aged Father's musical interlude

Audience: Play him a musical interlude (3 to 5x)

Narrator: At this point they went for a white stool, covered it with calico and took the child along with it into the forest. Thirteen, "delegated hunters" stood before the child.

A Narratee: Were they wielding guns?

Narrator: No. No one carried a gun. They ("We") were going to kill and bury the child else it would invite disaster into the town.

Narratees: Terrible!

...

5.4. Musical Interludes by Narrator and by Narratees

Unlike the songs forming integral part(s) of the narratives, the musical interludes or *mmoguo* are often common and therefore known by most of the participants. *Mmoguo* may come, right at the beginning or at the tale end of the narration. The one who raises it usually leads the singing (as the cantor). The narrator may raise it but, mostly, it is a narratee who does that from among the audience. The chorus of the particular interlude, especially the not-so-common, is taught and learnt and then sung repeatedly, usually between three and five times. In Tale 1, the narrator raises no musical interlude.

However, in Tale 37, the narrator brings up one with the not-so-common chorus, "*Tammiriwa shiny, shiny, shiny tammiriwa*" right after the singing of the narratee's *mmoguo*, "*Aged Father's musical interlude, play him a musical interlude*" (a rather common one). The chorus of the narrator's *mmoguo*, "*Tammiriwa shiny, shiny, shiny tammiriwa*", being uncommon, the narrator quickly instructed his narratees to sing the response or chorus as he taught them after which he led them to sing the musical interlude, repeatedly, some three to five times. The narrator's musical interlude is reproduced here as follows:

Narrator's musical interlude:

Narrator: *Tammiriwa shiny, shiny, shiny tammiriwa*

It sleeps in the forest-oo-

Narratees: "*Tammiriwa shiny, shiny, shiny tammiriwa*"

Narrator: It sleeps in the forest-oo-

Narratees: "Tammiriwa shiny, shiny, shiny tammiriwa"

Narrator: It sleeps in the forest-oo-

Narratees: "Tammiriwa shiny, shiny, shiny tammiriwa"

Narrator: It sleeps in the forest-oo-

Narratees: "Tammiriwa shiny, shiny, shiny tammiriwa"...

(3 to 5x)

In Tale 1, for example, we have one *mmoguo*: "*Wo na wonim toɔ, Sɔre kɔ to ɛ*" literally meaning "[If you think] You are the better narrator, Get up and perform [a story]". *Sɔre kɔ to ɛ* literally meaning Get up and perform (a story) is the chorus.

We have noted that in Tale 1, there is no narrative song; the narrator does not sing any song which forms part of his story. Meanwhile, there is a musical interlude, *mmoguo*, which is sung after the whole story has been told. Led by the narratee who raised it, this short *mmoguo* is also sung three to five times. Now, coming right at the dead end of the story, it is used, ostensibly, to warm the audience up before the next story-teller takes up the narration and continues with the session.

As the story proceeds, a narratee may also cut in with a musical interlude, as already hinted at. For the same reasons as the narrator's, the narratee leader will always find it important to teach or remind the gathering of the refrain or chorus to sing. In order to enforce politeness procedure, there is a formula to use when a narratee wants to cut in the narration. First and foremost, he/she must employ that formula for cutting in politely, which is: "Hold on". Next he/she must obtain permission to do so by the narrator's response which is: "I am holding on".

This procedure is based on the fact that the narrator is considered to be a *primus inter pares*, first among equals, who must be respected. He or she is *Agya* (Father), *Awo* or *Eno* (Mother), or a *Nana* (Elder or Grand parent). In other words, he/she is like a very elderly person, experienced and wise with much knowledge and experience to impart or share. Therefore, whether young or old, the narrator - performer - will have to be shown respect. As a result, discipline is expected at the performance venue from all the narratees, who cut across the social strata. This is why the narratee gives the narrator the signal by using the formula: "Hold on", after addressing him or her respectfully, for example, as "Nana": "Nana, hold on". The narrator's response is usually: "I am holding on". There is no such thing in Tale 1 but this can be illustrated with Tale 37 as follows in bold:

Narrator continues: At that time it was Nana Nyankopɔn the Skygod who ...

A Narratee: Father, hold on (hold on to your gun).

Narrator: I am holding on tightly. (p. 227)

(There is a break during which this narratee starts a musical interlude; the response/chorus is: "Shining like a ripened pineapple").

Narratee's Musical Interlude:

Narratee Leader: Shining like a ripened pineapple, Royalist

Narratees: "Shining like a ripened pineapple"

Narratee Leader: Royalist

Narratees: "Shining like a ripened pineapple"

Narratee Leader: Royalist

Narratees: "Shining like a ripened pineapple"

(3 to 5x)

Sometimes, however, the narratee about to interrupt the narrator and start an interlude wants to impress, and the narrator about to be interrupted also wants to impress; such narratee and narrator actually add a few embellishments to the existing formulas for cutting in politely and for granting the permission (see a typical example in Tale 44 "Why Hens are Slaughtered During End-of-Year Festivities or at Christmas", (Mireku-Gyimah, 2011a)).

In the body of the AF performance, it would be observed that there can be many interruptions from among the members of the audience to sing a musical interlude amidst clapping and, sometimes, dancing, during the course of a single story.

This observation is also made by Sutherland-Addy in the introduction to *Trilingual Anthology of Akan Folktales*, Volume II (see (Owusu-Sarpong, 2002)), who recounts how the narrator, *Eno Sikayena* is interrupted many times in the course of her story-telling with "Mother, hold your whisk" to which she responds "I'm holding tight". Sutherland-Addy observes further that she could not help sympathizing with *Eno* since the *mmoguo* interruptions heralded by the words, "Agoo! Attention please" were too frequent. Owing to the frequency, we also read from the editor, Owusu-Sarpong, who is incidentally a French woman, that she felt *Eno's* audience "must have been an unruly one!" but then, she quickly adds, quite correctly, that this audience "had its merits however and must have been having great fun (xvi). The first part of Owusu-Sarpong's thinking could be understood, considering that she is basically outside the Akan culture. What is correct is that the audience was "having great fun" and not just being "unruly". More importantly, however, Sutherland-Addy also suggests that we are enabled to feel this dynamic interaction between a particular teller and his or her audience.

It must be emphasised that, after the musical interlude(s) also, the narrator resumes the telling of the story/tale, once again. The narratees also continue giving their remarks, comments and what have you. This is absent in Tale 1 because the story finishes before the musical interlude.

Unlike Tale 1, Tale 37 is rich in songs, both narrative and musical interludes (*mmoguo*). The musical interludes are raised by not only the narrator, but also the narratees. Sometimes, the narratee cuts in the narration as well, using the laid down procedures. In addition to the narrator's song which is repeated three times at different times, there are three different musical interludes also intervening in the course of the same story. Let us, therefore, consider the following extracts from Tale 37, which come at different points in the narration. The first extract – "It was *Nana Nyankopɔn* the Skygod ... *Nana Akwamuhene* in addition." - appears after the first musical interlude, "*Shining ...*" which is raised by a narratee, and the second – "At this point, ... more food." - appears after two other musical interludes: "*Aged Father's musical interlude....*" and

“*Tammiriwa ...*”. “*Tammiriwa* is raised by the narrator himself (in addition to his narrative songs, “*ɔpanko*”). The narrator raised his musical interlude right after the second musical interlude, “*Aged Father ...*” which is also raised by a narratee:

Musical Interlude:

“*Shining like a ripened pineapple. Royalist*”

(p. 227)

First Extract:

Narrator continues: ... It was *Nana Nyankopon* the Skygod who was the chief of the town. *Kwaku Ananse* went and told him about his predicament.

Narratees: Actually!

Narrator: So God Our Father should help him because things were going bad; he was in real trouble, yet he could not throw away the child in question. Skygod assembled all his people through the town crier. Then he told them the news. Some of the elders stood up and, given the circumstances, made several suggestions. Some first expressed the need to tread cautiously because *Kwaku Ananse* was very crafty. Maybe he had plans to play tricks on them and carry away every food they have in the town to eat alone. They said, “*Kwaku Ananse* can be dangerous and so should be feared very well”. *Kwaku Ananse* said, “Well, this is serious. But, if this is the case, I beg you and your elders for one thing, oh *Nana* Skygod, Your Excellency. If I bring the child and you realise that I am telling a lie, you should tie me up and leave me to lie down helpless for forty days before setting me free.” Skygod commanded all the women in the town to use every available foodstuff and cook some meals for him. Together, they prepared for him meals out of the small quantities of food stuff they had left in their barns.

1st Narratee: So was the child not growing up at all? ...

Narrator: ... “My Goodness! What a spectacle! wondered *Nana Nyankopon* the Skygod. “Really, this is amazing! Now, if we should tolerate this child, it might even swallow all the buildings in this town. Given the gravity of the situation, let us find a place somewhere and dump him”, Skygod noted.

2nd Narratee: Or it may even swallow up *Nana Akwamuhene* in addition. (The narratees laugh because the member’s reference is actually to none but the present narrator, who is also the real *Nana Akwamuhene* of the town, *Onwe*). ...

(*A narratee starts a musical interlude*; the response/chorus is “Play him a musical interlude”):

Musical Interlude:

Aged Father’s Musical Interlude.... (p. 228)

Musical Interlude:

“*Tammiriwa*” (p. 229)

Second Extract:

Narrator continues: At this point they went for a white stool, covered it with calico and took the child along with it into the forest. Thirteen, “delegated hunters” stood before the child.

3rd Narratee: Were they wielding guns?

Narrator: No. No one carried a gun. They (“We”) were going to kill and bury the child else it would invite disaster into the town.

Narratees: Terrible!

Narrator: The “delegated hunters” formed a queue. They formed a straight line and the child sat in front of them. (*Narrator stretches forth his hand to indicate this position using the seating arrangement at the venue for the tale or story telling*). Any one of them who pointed his gun at the spectacle died as the child uttered the magical words *see kɔɔ* (literally meaning “pass away”). Anyone who would point his gun at it, the child would say those words, *see kɔɔ* and then the person would die.

4th Narratee: He was killing the delegates on top of his crime.

Narrator: Out of thirteen delegates, the strange child had finished seven.

5th Narratee: Too bad; unbearable!

Narrator: So the remaining delegates said, “In fact, as things stand, we have to point the gun and shoot at the same time (“at once”) otherwise the child would kill all of us, one by one.” So they all pointed their guns at the child at the same time. When they made the move to pull the trigger and fire at it, the child chanted, *see kɔɔ, see kɔɔ, see kɔɔ* (“pass away, pass away, pass away”). All of them died. The child had killed all the thirteen.

6th Narratee: The delegates were all dead?

7th Another Narratee: They were all dead.

Narrator: All the thirteen people; he had killed all of them!

8th Narratee: You mean all the delegates died?

9th Narratee: They had all been killed.

10th Narratee: Then it was left with only the chief of the town himself to face him.

Narrator continues: A hunter who knew nothing about what had happened in the town came by. He had been wandering in the forest all night. To his bewilderment, he saw a tiny child clothed in white with dead bodies scattered in front of it. In an attempt to utter his amazement - by opening his mouth to say, “Who is this tiny child with calico hanging around its neck and having all these corpses scattered before it?” - all that happened next was, *pakan*; the child had hurriedly jumped into the hunter’s mouth! That is how the human tongue came into existence, together with its greedy character of being never satisfied with the food you feed it with. Even when it has had too much to eat, it will still take food of all sorts and eat and go on to ask for more and more food.... (p. 230)

From the above-noted examples, this particular stage in the body of the AF performance is significant, for it draws attention, once again, to the fact that the narrator and the narratees are working together to ensure the success of the performance. It is also significant in the sense that it reveals the few but important modifications, which the individual performers bring to bear on the tale for its development and relevance to the contemporary situation. In other words, the dynamism of the tale as a social construct becomes clear. There is therefore no doubt that the body of the tale contains such richness and substance that make its performance so interesting and educative,

enabling speaking, memorization and sharp thinking and also provoking humour and social cohesion, not to talk of the team spirit it generates and the perpetuation of the cultural heritage through formulas and reminders. In addition, it is seen that the detailed nature or richness of this section is the major cause of difference in length between our two tales.

6. THE CONCLUSION OF THE AF

The conclusion of the AF comprises two parts: The resolution and the final stage of the Performance.

6.1. The Resolution

The Resolution is what signals the end of the story. But it covers three major characteristics of the AF, namely; one, rewards for good actions of a character who is usually the protagonist (hero); two, punishment for the evil done, usually by the protagonist with negative character traits (the anti-hero); and three, closure. The resolution as closure is the real terminal point of the AF and it directly or indirectly hints at the moral didacticism or ethical point of the tale. This level is told as part of the story by the narrator. It is also significant in the way it sometimes restates the title as an affirmation of a cultural belief, a concept, an observation, or the general world view of the Akan people.

Moreover, it provides for the condemnation of wrongdoing and negates an immoral topical issue. What is to be affirmed, for example, a cultural belief, a concept or an observation may also be spoken as a restatement of the title, given as a proverb or sung as a song. The lesson is to the audience and channelled through the success or failure of the character in relation to his or her actions and inactions. It is what is taught to the audience as the outcome of the totality of decisions taken and consequent actions performed by the characters in the course of the story as the plot progresses. The closure is given as a kind of summary by the narrator. The following examples are taken from Tale 1 and Tale 37 respectively; the moral didacticism or ethical point (Tale 1), and the etiological issue (Tale 37) are highlighted in the citations:

Tale 1:

Narrator: ... Hardly had *Ananse* completed the deadly statement than he was whisked into the air and flung back to the ground with a thud, *puu*. *Ananse* was dead! Then Squirrel said, "Everyday, as you stayed there killing the animals, I was also up there on the tree ... watching you and studying your tricks. It does not pay to be so greedy." (p. 3)

Tale 37:

Narrator: A hunter who knew nothing about what had happened in the town came by.... To his bewilderment, he saw a tiny child... In an attempt to utter his amazement by opening the mouth to say, "Who is this tiny child ...", all that happened next was, *pakan*; the child had hurriedly jumped into the hunter's mouth! That is how the human tongue came into existence, together with its greedy character of being never satisfied with the food you feed it with. Even when it has had too much to eat, it will still take food of all sorts and eat and go on to ask for

more and more food. (p. 230)

From the extracts, we observe that, in Tale 1, there is punishment for the bad character, Ananse the protagonist with negative character traits, or the anti-hero. He is paid back in his own coin as he is outwitted by Squirrel, the real hero, to drink the same cup of poison- the poison which Ananse had been administering to his unsuspecting victims. Apart from Ananse's punishment which is his humiliation and death, there is condemnation of wrongdoing: "It does not pay to be so greedy". Incidentally, this altruism is expressed as a restatement of the tale's title and given through the popular Akan proverb – "*Adufudepe bebrebe wo ho yi, enye.*" (literally meaning "It does not pay to be greedy") - which is aptly quoted as a moral lesson by none other than the good character, Father Squirrel.

However, unlike the Resolution in Tale 1, that of Tale 37 centres not on a moral but an explanation of an observation of a phenomenon in nature, being the human tongue, its location, small size and great capacity for consuming food and drink of all sorts. The resolution in Tale 37 is thus only etiological.

6.2. The Final Stage of the AF Performance

Even though the story terminates with the Resolution, the real ending of the tale performance has to wait for the signing off by the narrator as to indicate the very last part or stage of the performance. Here again, the method or formula to follow is spelt out for the narrator. In fact, failure to end a performance with the formula may not be pardoned by the participatory audience as was once observed during the fieldwork to collect the tales.

The significance of the narrator's signing off formula is that it also includes the choice of a successor to continue the performance session and it is mostly those who are willing to perform who are called upon to do so. Therefore, the ending stage of the AF performance interestingly points to a highly democratic arrangement. Once the choice is made, all are obliged to assist to ensure success of the performance session with the next narrator playing the role of a leader.

The final part or "Conclusion of the Story" is usually indicated in the following formula as in Tale 1:

Na m' Anansesem a metoee yi, se eede (eye de) o, se enye de o, ebi nkɔ na ebi mmra. Mede soa asemasi anaa obenten/dee obetoɔ. (p. 5)

Literally meaning:

Narrator: And now, this *Ananse* story that I have narrated to you, whether it is sweet or not sweet, take some away and let some stay. I call upon so and so or whoever is ready to narrate the next story (I, in turn, load it on the head of so and so or whoever is ready to perform or tell a tale. (p. 3)

It can also be the following, as in Tale 37:

Na m' Anansesem a metoee yi, se eede (eye de) o, se enye de o, ebi nkɔ na ebi mmra, mede soa Agya Ananse. (p. 235)

Literally meaning:

Narrator:

And this *Ananse* story that I have narrated, whether it is sweet or not, let some go away and let some stay. I call upon Father *Ananse*/the one who is ready to perform the next tale. (p. 230)

It is observed that, instead of “*asemasi anaa obenten*” – “so and so” - meaning “whoever is ready”, the real name of a narratee is often called out as many hands may be raised. Sometimes, however, the narrator will prefer to call the name of *Ananse* but the meaning comes to the same: the one who is prepared to take it up since *Ananse* does not refer to anyone in particular.

The significance of this very last stage in the performance of the AF is that it sensitizes the audience to imbibe only what is socially right and discard what is socially wrong in all that has transpired during the telling of the tale. It also ensures that the performance continues by choosing democratically the one who should continue with it and perform the next tale, each time. Where a real name is not mentioned, the floor is open to the one who is prepared to take up the role of narrator. Once someone takes it up, the narratees will enthusiastically respond to his/her *Anansesem se se o!* with *Yesesa soa wo* and co-operate with him or her to have another cycle of successful AF performance. Indeed, it is very uncommon to find any “elected” or volunteer narrator, who has been dismissed by the narratees, right from the start. The whole session will therefore, hopefully, start again and again. Even if it happens that the narrator is not doing too well, the narratees will most likely help out as they pledge at the beginning to do, by filling in gaps with forgotten details, singing *mmoguo*, clapping their hands and dancing, passing comments and injecting humour, among other things.

7. CONCLUSION

This study has examined the literary presentation and techniques of performance of the Akan oral narrative otherwise known as the Akan Folktale. The literary presentation and techniques of performance involve a well-structured pattern to introduce the tale and set the ground rules, to allow both the narrator and the narratees to participate in telling the story and to conclude decisively with a moral lesson. The use of musical interludes, *mmoguo*, delights the audience and sustains their interest as their imagination is crystallized to absorb the ethical message of the story.

One may finally conclude that the structured pattern of literary presentation and the techniques of performance essentially allow both narrator and narratee to interact for the successful rendition of the tale. The laid down techniques for introducing and ending the tale are also observed to be such that the narrator is enabled to attract and sustain the interest of the narratees and also ensure the continuity of the performance session. The narratees, on the other hand, are enabled to participate freely but politely and with decorum. It must be added, however, that a single tale or story may not comprise all the features outlined and discussed in this study. In sum, the AF is observed to be intrinsically artistic in structure and form as well as in performance.

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APPENDIX 1: TALE 1

(English Version; Mireku-Gyimah (2011a), pp. 1-3):

IT DOES NOT PAY TO BE SO GREEDY:

Narrator: This is what the *Ananse/Spider* tale/story says o!¹

Audience: We load it on your head² (We ask you to carry the responsibility and tell it to us/perform it for us).

Narrator: Don't we say that³ (The tale goes like this):

Was it not Father *Kwaku Ananse* in whose hometown it happened that a great famine once broke out making him decide to go into the forest in search of food to feed himself and his family.⁴ While searching through the forest, he came across a stone, which had eyes, eyelashes and a beard. Then the inquisitive *Ananse*, who would not keep silent over anything, instead of keeping his mouth shut on seeing the spectacle, (he) just opened his mouth and wondered saying, "Really! What kind of stone is this that has two big eyes, a beard and eye lashes?"

Audience: Indeed!

Narrator continues: Hardly had *Ananse* completely uttered his amazement than an unknown force lifted him up but he managed to cling to the branch of a tree and survived. He said, "That was terrible, but never mind...."

While he was returning home, he met Mr. Duiker⁵ and asked him hastily, "Mr. Duiker, where are you going?" Mr. Duiker answered, "I am going to look for food. Are we not in the same village suffering from this same famine?", he asked. *Ananse* invited Mr. Duiker convincing him about where to find food saying, "Let me show you something". *Ananse* took Duiker to where he found the strange stone. When Duiker got there, he too, as inquisitive as he was, (he) could not just ignore the stone and keep quiet. He shouted his surprise, "I say! What kind of stone is this sporting two big eyes, eye lashes and a beard!" Instantly, something of a mighty force lifted him up and smashed him

on the ground with a thud making the sound *puu*: Duiker was dead!

Ananse's happiness knew no bounds and he expressed it to himself saying, "My troubles are all over now. Today, my wife's soup tasty." Then he dragged and dragged the carcass of Duiker away *yirididididi* for food.

Audience participant: Is that so? He is clever.

Narrator continues: Then he came back again and managed to trap Mr. Bull. He asked him: "Father Bull, where are you going?" Mr. Bull answered, "I am going out to look for some food for my wife and children to eat."

Audience participant: It is the truth!

Narrator continues: *Ananse* said, "Let me show you something". Immediately Mr. Bull sighted the stone, he exclaimed, "What! A very strange thing indeed! What stone is it that has a beard, eyelashes and two big eyes?" Immediately he said these words, a force lifted him up and hurled him to the ground, *puu*. He too died instantly. Excited, *Ananse* quickly and eagerly dragged the carcass of Bull away, *yerededede*.

Almost every animal that was met was tricked and killed for food in the same manner by *Ananse*. However, while *Ananse* was all the time doing this, Squirrel was also hiding on a tree and watching but *Ananse* did not know this. Squirrel said, "This bastard *Ananse* is causing the extinction of the various animals in the forest and I will not sit down unconcerned. I will get down and kill him in return."

When Squirrel got down, *Ananse* saw him and shouted, "Father Squirrel, where are you going?" "Am I not in the same village with you and in same famine situation and struggling together in search of food to eat?" Squirrel answered. *Ananse* said, "Come, let me show you something." When Squirrel arrived and they walked to the scene of the wonderful stone, Squirrel stood still and kept quiet. *Ananse* also stood still and kept quiet. Then *Ananse* said to Squirrel, "Aren't you going to say it?" Squirrel also said to *Ananse*, "Aren't you going to say it?" *Ananse* then said to Squirrel, in a rather insulting tone, "The way you stand there quietly, you are blockheaded; you are thick in the head, not clever at all".

Squirrel also replied, "So are you; you are also not clever at all".

Audience: It is true.

Narrator continues: *Ananse* said again, "Didn't you attend school?" Squirrel also repeated that insult to *Ananse*, "Didn't you also attend school?" Then *Ananse* said, "Say it?" Squirrel replied, "Say what?" *Ananse* said, "By Jove! Honestly! A st-stone which has grown a beard, eye l-la-shes and two-big eye-s?" Hardly had *Ananse* completed the statement than he was whisked into the air and flung back to the ground with a thud, *puu*. *Ananse* was dead. Then Squirrel said, "Everyday as you stayed here killing the animals, I was also up there on the tree (*Narrator looks up and points to the sky*) watching you and studying your tricks. It does not pay to be so greedy."

And now, this story that I have narrated to you, whether it is sweet or not sweet, take some away and let some stay. I call upon so and so or whoever is ready to narrate the next story⁶ (I, in turn, load it on the head of so and so or whoever is ready to perform or tell a tale).

Some Participants: “If you administer poison, you surely get a taste of it yourself.”

(A Participant starts a musical interlude; the chorus or audience response is “Get up and perform”).

Musical Interlude:

Participant Leader:

(If you think) You are the better narrator

Audience: “Get up and perform” (3 to 5x)

APPENDIX 1: TALE 1

(Akan Version; Mireku-Gyimah (2011a), pp. 4-5):

ADUFUDEPE BEBREBE WƆ HƆ YI, ENYE:

Ɔtofo: Anasesem se se o!

Atiefo: Yesesa soa wo!

Ɔtofo: Yense se:

Enye Agya Kwaku Ananse na ekom sii ne kurom, na okaa se okope (orekope) aduane aba ama one ne yere ne ne mma nyinaa abedi (abedi). Enti onenam wiram no ara na okotoo se botan bi wo ho a ewo ani, afu abodwese, wo aninton. Enna Ananse a n'ano pe asem, ohunuie a obemua n'ano no, ose, “Eei! Ebo a ewo ani akese mmienu, wo abodwese, wo anintonnwi ben ni?”

Atiefo: Eei!

Ɔtofo toa so: N'ano ansi na biribi kukuruu no koo soro na ooo dua mu, na ose, “Eye, nye hwee ...” Oko aa (oreko ara) na ohyiaa Otwee. Enna ose, “Agya Twee, woko (woreko) he?”

Ose, “Meekope (Merekope) aduane aba. Nye me ne wo nyinaa na ete kuro yi mu ha na ekom aba?” Ananse daadaa no se onim dee aduane wo na ose, “Bra na menkyere wo adee bi”. Agya Twee duruu ho aa (ara) ono nso n'ano pe a epe asem, ose, “Eei! Ebo a ewo ani akese mmienu, wo anintonnwi, na afu abodwese”. N'ano ansi na biribi kukuruu no koo soro na obehwee fom sei, puu! Agya Twee awu. Ananse se, “Enne m'awie, me yere nkwan beye de.” Na watwe no yiridididi, na ode no ko a wanya aduane.

Otieni : Saa? N'adwene mu abue.

Ɔtofo toa so: Na wasan aba, obaee na obenyaa Nantwie, na ose, “Na Agya Nantwie, woko (woreko) he? Ose, “Meekope (Merekope) biribi (aduane) abre me yere ne me mma ama woadi (won adi).

Otieni: Ampa o.

Ɔtofo toa so: Na Ananse se, “Bra menkyere wo adee bi.” Nantwie de n'ani bo so aa (ara) na ose, “Eei! Asem ni! Ebo a afu abodwese, ewo anintonnwi, ewo ani akese mmienu”. Na biribi akukuru Agya Nantwie na wabehwe fom sei, puu! Na Ananse atwe no yerededede na ode no ko. Afei aboa biara a obehyia no biara na ode ayi no. See ooye (oreye) nyinaa na Opuro nso te soro eehwe (rehwe), na Opuro se, “Akoa yi, ooye (oreye) ahye mmoa yi ase. Me nso menhwe mma no nhye mmoa yi ase. Mesi fom na me nso makokum no.” Oduruu ho no ose, “Na Agya Puro, woreko he?” “Nye me ne wo nyinaa na ete ho na ekom asi yen kuro mu na yeebere (yerebere) aduane akodi?” Ose, “Bra

mennkyere wo adee bi.” Oduruu ho ara na Agya Opuro agyina dinn. Na Ananse nso agyina dinn. Ananse se, “Na wonka?” Ono nso se, “Na wonka?” Ose, “Wogyina ho yi wotiri awu!” Ono nso se, “Wotiri awu!” Ose, “Woankɔ sukuu?” Ono nso se, “Woankɔ sukuu?”

Atiefɔ: Ampa.

Otofo toa so: Ose, “Ka e!” Ose, “Mennka sen?” Ose, “Ka se-ε-bo-ɔ a-afu abɔ-dwe –dwe se wo anintɔnnwi, wo ani akese mmie-nu.” Ananse ano ansi, na biribi kukuruu no kɔ soro behwee fom sei, puu! Ananse na awuo yi. Na Opuro se, “Daa daa, wode sei te ha eekumkum (rekumkum) mmoa no, na mete soro ha (ɔma n’ani so tene ne nsa de hwe soro) ehwε (rehwε) wo. Adufudepe bebrebe wo ho yi, enye.”

Na m’Anansesem a metooe yi, se eye de o, se enye de o, ebi nkɔ na ebi mmra. Mede soa asemasi anaa obenten/dee obeto.

Atiefɔ no bi: “Woto adu bone a ebi ka w’ano.”

(*Otieni bi hye mmoguo ase. Nyeso ne “Sore koto ε”*)

Mmoguo:

Otieni: Wo na wonim to

Atiefɔ: “Sore koto ε”

Otieni: Wo na wonim to

Atiefɔ: “Sore koto ε”

Otieni: Wo na wonim to

Atiefɔ: “Sore koto ε”

(3-5x)

APPENDIX 2: TALE 37

(English Version; Mireku-Gyimah (2011a), pp. 225- 230):

THE ORIGIN OF THE HUMAN TONGUE:

Narrator: The *Ananse* story/Spider tale has it that...

Audience: We load it on your head.

Narrator: The *Ananse* story goes as follows:

In the olden days it happened that there was once a great famine. The hunger was severe to the extent that people were feeding on wild yam¹. In those days when wild yam would pass for food, *Kwaku Ananse* lived with his wife, *Ɔkɔnorɔ Yaa*.

Audience: This *Kwaku Ananse*!

Narrator continues: This *Kwaku Ananse*. He was walking around trying to look for some of the wild yam to take home for a meal. He combed through the forest till he found some. Just when he made up his mind to harvest it, he noticed a little child as tiny as the human thumb standing right beside the wild yam. Immediately *Ananse* saw the child, he lifted it and put it into his hunter’s sack, then harvested a small quantity of the wild yam to take home.

A Participant: This *Ananse*! (*The other participants laugh*)

Another Participant: Indeed!

A Third Participant: *Kwaku Ananse*, he is strong!

Narrator: As soon as *Kwaku Ananse* arrived home, he asked the wife *Ɔkɔnorɔ Yaa* to make fire and get the wild yam boiled.

Audience: Is that true?

A Participant: We are going to chew boiled wild yam for a meal of *ampesie*². We are yet to chew boiled wild yam!

Another Participant: *Nana* (Grandfather/Teller), what is *Ɔkɔnorɔ Yaa* to *Ananse*?

Narrator and Some Participants: His wife.

Some Participants: The wife?

Audience: All right.

Narrator: She went to have the wild yam boiled. As soon as the woman finished preparing the wild yam meal and served the man, *Ananse* removed the child from the sack. *Kwaku Ananse* took a big slice of the wild yam and chopped it into smaller pieces and then served the child's portion on the table. The child sat there and grumbled saying, "*Hee*". *Kwaku Ananse* asked, "What's the matter?" The child said, "The food is not enough for me; it will not satisfy me." Note that this is coming from a tiny child the size of a human thumb!

Audience: Indeed!

A Participant: A spoilt child that he is!

Narrator: *Ananse* said, "Go ahead and eat it first, if it does not satisfy you, I will give you some more." The child stood up. (*You must respond "panko" when I say "ɔpanko"*) Then:

Narrator: *Ɔpanko*

Audience: "Panko"

Narrator: *Ɔpanko*

Audience: "Panko"

Narrator: *Herede!*

Narrator: Instantly, *Kwaku Ananse's* table and cooking utensils were all gone!

A Participant: Then here was a child magician!

Narrator continues: Yet this child was still complaining of hunger. He had swallowed the whole of the table and the cooking utensils; they had all gone into his belly. What else could *Ananse* do about this? He placed the child beside *Ɔkɔnorɔ Yaa's* own ration (of the food). Then the child said, *Hee*. "What is the matter?" *Ananse* inquired. The child said, "It is not sufficient for me." *Ananse* said, "Keep quiet, if it does not satisfy you, I shall give you some more." Then the child stood up:

Narrator: *Ɔpanko*

Audience: "Panko"

Narrator: *Ɔpanko*

Audience: "Panko"

Narrator: *Herede!*

The child had hurriedly swallowed everything into its belly (by the time we finished saying these words): *Ananse's* utensils, aluminium pans and even the earthenware.

A Participant: Then the child we have here is an "instant swallower".

Narrator: *Kwaku Ananse* realised that the situation was becoming unbearably critical; he had brought a real problem home.

A Participant: He actually asked for it!

Narrator continues: At that time it was *Nana Nyankopɔn* the Skygod who ...

A Participant: Father, hold on (hold on to your gun).

Narrator: I am holding on tightly. (*There is a break during which this participant starts a musical interlude; the response/chorus is: "Shining like a ripened pineapple"*).

Musical Interlude:

Participant Leader: Shining like a ripened pineapple

Royalist

Audience: "Shining like a ripened pineapple"

Participant Leader: Royalist

Audience: "Shining like a ripened pineapple"

Leader: Royalist

Audience: "Shining like a ripened pineapple"

(3 to 5x)

Narrator continues: ... It was *Nana Nyankopɔn* the Skygod who was the chief of the town. *Kwaku Ananse* went and told him about his predicament.

Audience: Actually!

Narrator: So God Our Father should help him because things were going bad; he was in real trouble, yet he could not throw away the child in question. Skygod assembled all his people through the town crier. Then he told them the news. Some of the elders stood up and given the circumstances made several suggestions. Some first expressed the need to tread cautiously because *Kwaku Ananse* is very crafty. Maybe he had plans to play tricks on them and carry away every food they have in the town to eat alone. They said, "*Kwaku Ananse* can be dangerous and so should be feared very well". *Kwaku Ananse* said, "Well, this is serious. But, if this is the case, I beg you and your elders for one thing, oh *Nana* Skygod, Your Excellency. If I bring the child and you realise that I am telling a lie, you should tie me up and leave me to lie down helpless for forty days before setting me free." Skygod commanded all the women in the town to use up every available foodstuff and cook some meals for him. Together, they prepared for him meals out of the small quantities of foodstuff they had left in their barns.

A Participant: So was the child not growing up at all?

Narrator: A variety of dishes! They brought the foods there. Skygod asked, "And where is that child?" They brought the wonderful child out and it went, *Hee*. "Why?" asked Skygod. The child said, "It will not satisfy me." Skygod said, "Eat and if it does not satisfy you, I will add some more to it for you." On hearing that, this child stood up beside the dishes. Then:

Narrator: ɔpanko

Audience: "Panko"

Narrator: ɔpanko

Audience: "Panko"

Narrator: Herede!

“My Goodness, what a spectacle!”, wondered *Nana Nyankopɔn* the Skygod. “Really this is amazing! Now, if we should tolerate this child, it might even swallow all the buildings in this town. Given the gravity of the situation, let us find a place somewhere and dump him”, Skygod noted.

A Participant: Or it may even swallow up *Nana Akwamuhene* in addition. (*The audience participants laugh because the member’s reference is actually to none but the present narrator, who is also the real Nana Akwamuhene of the town, Onwe*).

Narrator: One of the elders stood up and contributed to the discussion saying, “Indeed, let us go and dump this child in the bush.”

(*A participant starts a musical interlude; the reponse/chorus is “Play him a musical interlude”*):

Musical Interlude:

Participant Leader: Aged Father’s musical interlude

Audience: “Play him a musical interlude”

Participant Leader: Aged Father’s musical interlude

Audience: “Play him a musical interlude”

Participant Leader: Aged Father’s musical interlude

Audience: “Play him a musical interlude”

(3 to 5x)

Narrator (Nana Akwamuhene) continues his narration with a song - a musical interlude - as follows (the response or chorus is “*Tammiriwa shiny, shiny shiny tammiriwa*”):

Narrator’s musical interlude:

Narrator: Tammiriwa shiny, shiny, shiny tammiriwa

Narrator: It sleeps in the forest-oo-

Audience: “Tammiriwa shiny, shiny, shiny tammiriwa”

Narrator: It sleeps in the forest-oo-

Audience: “Tammiriwa shiny, shiny, shiny tammiriwa”

Narrator: It sleeps in the forest-oo-

Audience: “Tammiriwa shiny, shiny, shiny tammiriwa”

(3 to 5x)

Narrator continues: At this point they went for a white stool, covered it with calico and took the child along with it into the forest. Thirteen, “delegated hunters” stood before the child.

A Participant: Were they wielding guns?

Narrator: No. No one carried a gun. They (“We”) were going to kill and bury the child else it would invite disaster into the town.

Audience: Terrible!

Narrator: The “delegated hunters” formed a queue. They formed a straight line and the child sat in front of them. (*Narrator stretches forth his hand to indicate this position using the seating arrangement at the venue for the tale or story*) telling). Anyone of them who pointed his gun at the spectacle died as the child uttered the magical words *see kɔɔ* (literally meaning “pass away”). Anyone who would point his gun at it, the child would

say those words, *see kɔɔ and* then the person would die.

A Participant: He was killing the delegates on top of his crime.

Narrator: Out of thirteen delegates, the strange child had finished seven.

A Participant: Too bad; unbearable!

Narrator: So the remaining delegates said, “In fact, as things stand, we have to point the gun and shoot at the same time (“at once”) otherwise the child would kill all of us, one by one.” So they all pointed their guns at the child at the same time. When they made the move to pull the trigger and fire at it, the child chanted, *see kɔɔ, see kɔɔ, see kɔɔ* (“pass away, pass away, pass away”). All of them died. The child had killed all the thirteen.

A Participant: The delegates were all dead?

Another Participant: They were all dead.

Narrator: All the thirteen people; he had killed all of them!

Yet Another Participant: You mean all the delegates died?

Another Participant: They had all been killed.

Another Participant Still: Then it was left with only the chief of the town himself to face him.

Narrator continues: A hunter who knew nothing about what had happened in the town came by. He had been wandering in the forest all night. To his bewilderment, he saw a tiny child clothed in white with dead bodies scattered in front of it. In an attempt to utter his amazement by opening the mouth to say, “Who is this tiny child with calico hanging around its neck and having all these corpses scattered before it,” all that happened next was, *pakan*; the child had hurriedly jumped into this hunter’s mouth! That is how the human tongue came into existence, together with its greedy character of being never satisfied with the food you feed it with. Even when it has had too much to eat, it will still take food of all sorts and eat and go on to ask for more and more food.

And this *Ananse* story that I have narrated, whether it is sweet or not, let some go away and let some stay. I call upon the one who is ready to perform the next tale.

APPENDIX 2: TALE 37

(Akan Version; Mireku-Gyimah (2011a), pp. 231-235):

SE ƐYƐƐƐ A KƐTREMA A ƐDA NNIPA ANO MU ƐBAƐƐ:

Otofoɔ: Yɛnse sɛ nse sɛ o!

Atiefoɔ: Sɛɛ soa wo (Yesesa soa wo)!

Otofoɔ: Tete mmere mu no enna ɛkɔm kɛsee bi baɛɛ. Na ɛkɔm no ano yɛɛ den na na yedi nkokoraa. Enti Kwaku Ananse, agya, yedi nkokoraa no, ɔne ne yere Okonorɔ Yaa na etee.

Atiefoɔ: Kwaku Ananse yi.

Otofoɔ: Kwaku Ananse yi, ɔnam hɔ sa aa (ara) na, agya, ɔɔpɛ (ɔreɔpɛ) kakra bi. Ɔnam mu, nam mu aa (ara) na okopiee kokoraa no bi so. Ɔyɛɛ n’adwene se ootu aa (ɔretu ara), ɔbehwe a, kokora no nkyen, abɔfra ketekete bi beye se kokromotie. Ananse ohunu akɔdaa yi pɛ na, agya, ɔmaa akɔdaa no so hyɛɛ n’apiretwiwa mu na, agya, ɔpɛɛ kokora no kakra na ɔde baa fie.

Otieni bi: Ananse yi.

(Atiefow no sere)

Otieni fofow: e?

Otieni fofow biem: Kwaku Ananse, wadene (ɔye dene).

Ɔtofo: Kwaku Ananse, obeduruu fie sei pɛna ɔmaa ne yere Ɔkonoro Yaa de esii soo.

Atiefow: Eei!

Otieni bi: Yɛɛbewe (Yerebewe) kokora apesie!

Otieni fofow: Nana, na Ɔkonoro Yaa no na Ananse deen ne no?

Ɔtofo ne atiefow no bi: Ne yere.

Otieni no: Ne yere?

Atiefow: Eeei!

Ɔtofo: Ɔde kokora kosii gya so. Aduane yi beneee a maame no yii bɛema yi deɛ besii ho aa (ara) na ɔyii akɔdaa no firii n'apretwiwa mu de sii ho. Kwaku Ananse yii kokora no tam baako na odwidwaa mu de guu akɔdaa no "teeburu" (borɔfo kasa: *table*) no so ho. Akɔdaa no te ho aa (ara) ɔse, "Hee." Kwaku Ananse se, "Aden?" Ɔse, "Emmee me." Akɔdaa a ɔte se kokromotie no oo!

Atiefow: Eei!

Otieni bi: Abakomasem!

Ɔtofo: Ananse se, "Di e, na se ammee wo a, mɛma wo bi aka ho. Akɔdaa no sɔre gyinaa ho... (*Meka a monnye so "panko"*):

Ɔtofo: Ɔpanko

Atiefow: "Panko"

Ɔtofo: Ɔpanko

Atiefow: "Panko"

Ɔtofo: Herede!

Ɔtofo toa so: Kwaku Ananse "teeburu" ne nkyɛnsee nyinaa kɔ!

Otieni bi: Ennee akɔdaa "magyihyan" (borɔfo kasa: *magician*)!

Ɔtofo: "Stel" (borɔfo kasa: *still*) na ɔsan (ɔresan) pere aduane se kɔm de no. Wamene "teeburu" ne nkyɛnsee no nyinaa kɔ ne yam. Woi na, agya, Kwaku Ananse, ɔbeyɛ no den? Okukuruu akɔdaa yi sii Ɔkonoro Yaa deɛ ho. Akɔdaa no se "Hee." Ɔse, "Aden?" Ɔse, "Emmee (ɛremmee) me". Ɔse, "Ye dinn na ammee wo a, mɛma wo bi aka ho". Akɔdaa yi sɔre gyina ho (*Nyɛsoɔ ne "Panko"*):

Ɔtofo: Ɔpanko

Atiefow: "Panko"

Ɔtofo: Ɔpanko

Atiefow: "Panko"

Ɔtofo: Herede!

Ɔtofo: Na aduane no nyinaa wamene akogu ne yam; Ananse nkyɛnsee ne "nsereba" (borɔfo kasa: *silver/aluminium pans*) ne apɔtoyowa nyinaa.

Otieni bi: Ennee na amenegɔna!

Ɔtofo: Kwaku Ananse, afei, ɔhwe a na ani soso.

Wakɔfa asem kesee aba fie!

Otieni bi: Sɛ ɔno na ɔse ɔpɛ!

Otofoɔ: Saa mmɛrɛ no nso na Agya Nyankopɔn na...

Otieni baako: Agya, sɔ wo tuom (*Okukuru mmoguo; Nyesɔɔ ne "Sonn sɛ aborɔbɛ!"*):

Mmoguo:

Otofoɔ: *Sonn sɛ aborɔbɛ! ɔdehyee*

Atiefɔɔ: *Sonn sɛ aborɔbɛ!*

(3-5x)

Otofoɔ: ɛnna, Nana Nyankopɔn na ɔne kurom hɔ hene. Kwaku Ananse kɔbɔɔ no amannee sɛ asem a ato no ni.

Atiefɔɔ: Ei!

Otofoɔ toa so: Enti Nana Nyankopɔn nnye no mmoa na seesei, akɔdaa no, ontumi (ɔrentumi) nkɔto no ntwene. Nana Nyankopɔn bɔɔ dawuro ma amanfoɔ nyinaa behyiaɛɛ. ɔde asem no too wɔɔmo animu. Mpanyinfoɔ no bi sɔre a, wɔɔmo se, "Nana, ayɛ saa no Kwaku Ananse deɛ, ne ho yɛ hu oo! Anhwɛ a, wabɛdaadaa yɛn abɛfa y'aduane (yɛn aduane) nyinaa akodi." Ei, Kwaku Ananse se, "Saa na ɛtɛɛ deɛ a, Nana, mɛsrɛ mo, Nana, sɛ mede akɔdaa no ba na meboa na sɛ daadaa na meɛbɛdaadaa (mɛrebɛdaadaa) mo a, monnkyekyere me; monnkyekyere me nnto hɔ adaduanan ansa na moasane me." Nana Nyankopɔn ma emmaa a ɛwɔ kurom hɔ nyinaa kɔnoanoa aduane baɛɛ. Aduane kakra a ɛwɔ hɔ no, wɔɔmo kɔnoanoa baɛɛ.

Otieni bi: Na ɛnneɛ akɔdaa no onyini da anaa?

Otofoɔ: Ennuane ahodoɔ nyinaa. Yɛde aduane yi besisii hɔ. Nana Nyankopɔn se, "Na akɔdaa no wɔ he?" Yɛyii akɔdaa yi besii hɔ; na akɔdaa anwanwasoɔ yi, Kwaku Ananse yii no sii hɔ, ɔse, "Hee." Nana se, "Aden?" ɔse, "Nana, emmee me." Nana se, "Di, na sɛ ammee wo a, mema wo bi aka ho." ɛnneɛ akɔdaa yi sɔre gyinaa aduane yi ho:

Otofoɔ: *ɔpanko*

Atiefɔɔ: "Panko"

Otofoɔ: *ɔpanko*

Atiefɔɔ: "Panko"

Otofoɔ: *Herede*

Otofoɔ: Nana Nyankopɔn se, "Ei, asem yi yɛ nwanwa. Sɛ yɛka sɛ yɛbesoɔ ne so wɔ kurom ha a, anhwɛ a, kurom ha adan nyinaa mpo, ɔbɛmene. Saa na ɛtɛɛ deɛ a, momma yɛmmpe baabi mmfa no mfa."

Otieni bi: ɛnneɛ Nana Akwamuhene koraa ɔbɛmene no aka ho. (*Atiefɔɔ no sere: esiane sɛ Nana Akwamuhene ankasa na ugu so reto Anansesem wei no.*)

Otofoɔ toa so: Panyin baako sɔreɛ a ɔse, "Dabi, akɔdaa yi momma yɛmmfa no nkosi wiram.

(*Otieni bi pagya mmoguo. Nyesɔɔ ne: Mommɔ no mmoguo*):

Mmoguo:

Otofoɔ: *Agya Akora mmoguo*

Atiefɔɔ: "Mommɔ no mmoguo"

Otofoɔ: *Agya Akora mmoguo*

Atiefɔɔ: "Mommɔ no mmoguo"

Otofoɔ: *Akora mmoguo*

Atiefɔɔ: "Mommɔ no mmoguo"

(3-5x)

Ɖtofoɔ ([Nana Akwamuhene] *de dwom sɔ n'Anansesem no so sedee edi sɔɔ yi; Nyesɔɔ ne "Tammiriwa hyen hyen hyen tamiriwa*):

Ɖtofoɔ: Tammiriwa hyen hyen hyen tammiriwa

Ɖda kwaeɛ mu oo

Atiefɔɔ: "Tammiriwa hyen hyen hyen tammiriwa"

Ɖtofoɔ: Ɖda kwaeɛ mu oo

Atiefɔɔ: "Tammiriwa hyen hyen hyen tammiriwa"

Ɖtofoɔ: Ɖda kwaeɛ mu oo

Atiefɔɔ: "Tammiriwa hyen hyen hyen tammiriwa"

(3-5x)

Ɖtofoɔ: Wei na yeɔe akɔɔɔa yi, yeɔeɛ akonnwa fufuo na yeɔe nwera kaa ho na yeɔe no kosii kwaeɛ mu baabi. Afei deɛ, abɔfoɔ beye dummiensa, yegyina akɔɔɔa yi animu.

Otieni bi: Obiaa (Obiara) kuta tuo anaa?

Ɖtofoɔ toa so: Obiaa (Obiara) nkuta tuo. Yeekokum (Yerekokum) akɔɔɔa no na yeasie no, anye saa a, ɔde asem beba kurom ho.

Atiefɔɔ: Ei!

Ɖtofoɔ toa so: Afei deɛ, abɔfoɔ yi, wɔɔmo asa "lain" (borɔfo kasa: line) (wɔɔmo ato santen), sedee yeasa "lain" (yeato santene) yi, (ɔde ne nsa ye kyere te sedee nnipa no te nkonwa so nsesasoɔ wɔ Anansesemtoɔ no ase no) na akɔɔɔa yi te wɔɔmo anim sei. (Ɖtofoɔ no de ne nsa kyere n'anim). Woi na ebema tuo so a, ɔde hwe ne so a, akɔɔɔa no se, "See kɔɔ" na wawu! Woi na ebema tuo so a, ɔde hwe ne so a, akɔɔɔa no se, "See kɔɔ," na wawu!

Atiefɔɔ: Ookum (ɔrekum) abɔfoɔ no nso aka ho.

Ɖtofoɔ toa so: Abɔfoɔ beye dummiensa no na wakum beye nson.

Otieni bi: Ani aye nyane!

Ɖtofoɔ toa so: Enti wɔɔmo a ekaeɛ no se, "Aa, sedee adeɛ no aye no, eɛe se ye "pɔinte" (borɔfo kasa: point) tuo no nyinaa "at wans" (borɔfo kasa: at once). Anye saa a ɔbekum yen nyinaa; akɔɔɔa no. Eho ara na wɔɔmo nyinaa "pɔintee" (borɔfo kasa: pointed) tuo no hweɛ akɔɔɔa no sɔɔ. Wɔɔmo yee se wɔɔmo eebemia (rebemia) sɔɔ pɛ na akɔɔɔa no se, "See kɔɔ, see kɔɔ, see kɔɔ." Na wɔɔmo nyinaa awuwu. Dummiensa no, wakum wɔɔmo nyinaa.

Otieni bi: Abɔfoɔ no nyinaa awu?

Otieni foforɔ: Wɔɔmo nyinaa awu?

Ɖtofoɔ toa so: Nnipa dummiensa no, wakum wɔɔmo nyinaa.

Otieni bi: Abɔfoɔ no nyinaa awuwu!

Otieni bi nso: Aka Odikuro no ara mu!

Ɖtofoɔ toa so: Woi na ɔbɔfoɔ bi, ɔno deɛ ɔntee deɛ aba. Ɖnam wiram a, anadwo bi, ɔbehwe a, akɔɔɔa ketewa bi na esi ho a nwera gu ne kɔn mu na nnipa awu sam n'anim yi. Na oobie (ɔrebue) n'ano aka se "Ei, na akɔɔɔa ketewa ben na esi ha a nnipa a ente see gu n'anim yi". Ohuriie, "pakan"; wawura Papa Bɔfoɔ no ano mu. Enti na emaa ketrema baa wiase a ketrema nni aye na aduane biala (biara) a wo de bema no no, wamee koraa a

ɔbɛgyɛ no - aseɛ no no.

Na m'Anansem a metoɛ yi, sɛ ɛɛɛ (eye dɛ) o, sɛ ɛnye dɛ o, ebi nkɔ na ebi mmra, mede soa Agya Ananse.

Notes on Tale 1 (English Version): “It does not pay to be so greedy”

1. “This is what the *Ananse*/Spider tale/story says o!” (“*Anansem se se/see/sei o!*”): One of two beginning formulas or styles employed by the narrator (It indicates that he/she has a tale/story to tell, is about to perform and needs “permission”, cooperation, etc.). Other variants of the style include “Thus says the *Ananse*/Spider tale/story ...”/ “According to the (folk) tale/*Ananse*/Spider tale/story....” The other formula or style is “This is what we have been saying and saying o!” (“*Yense se nse se o!*”, or the corrupted form, “*Se se se se o!*” literally meaning “Haven’t we been saying and saying that ...” - a construction more emphatic than negative in meaning.) Essentially, the two, “*Anansem se se o!*” and “*Yense se nse se o!*” - refer us back to the folktale tradition.
2. “We load it on your head” a literal expression to mean “We ask you to carry the responsibility and tell it (a tale) to us/perform it for us”/“We give you the floor/responsibility to tell/narrate it (a tale) to us”/“We charge you to perform/do a tale” / “The onus is on you to tell/ perform a story” / “Let it roll” (and that we will co-operate with you, etc.”).
3. “Don’t we say that”: this is how the narrator actually launches into the tale/story. It will be roughly equated to “The tale/story goes like this/ is as follows:” It may be omitted altogether, but not many narrators omit it.
4. This style of starting the tale is common; the construction is not a question but a way of emphasizing the setting. The construction may be restated as: Once (upon a time), a great famine broke out in *Kwaku Ananse*’s hometown and he decided to go into the forest in search of food to feed himself and his family.
5. Specifically, it is the Maxwell’s Duiker.
6. “I call upon so and so (name supplied)/Father *Ananse* or whoever is ready to narrate the next story” (“I transfer the responsibility or give the floor to so and so/ Father *Ananse* or whoever is ready”) the literal expression is “I (in turn) load it on the head of so and so/Father *Ananse*, etc.”): This is a closing formula showing that the narrator is signing off and asking another participant to perform and thus continue with the story-telling session.

Notes on Tale 37 (English Version): “The origin of the human tongue”

1. *Nkokoraa* (plural); *kokora* (singular), translated here as “wild yam” has the scientific name *Smilax Kraussiana*.
2. *Ampesie*: A meal consisting of boiled yam, cocoyam or plantain (or even a mixture of all these for variety), and eaten with any sauce or soup (or both).

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