**PERFORMANCE OF ATESO ORAL NARRATIVES**

# Abstract

This study investigated how meaning is fostered in performance of Ateso oral narratives. It tried to re-establish the place of oral narratives in the contemporary Iteso society where the preoccupation of communities was grappling with survival after the devastating cattle rustling and socio-political turmoil. Performance of Ateso oral narratives was perceived as a treasure that had been left to idle away into the traditional archives of Iteso culture. The study tried to identify how the philosophical and cultural ideologies influenced performance of Ateso Oral Narratives. The bonfire norms of narration had been submerged in the modern age by technological advancement.

Using ethnographic methods, performances were solicited and focused group discussions carried out with respondents. In placing value and assessing the unquantifiable feelings and opinions the study chose the methods of qualitative research and ethno-methodological philosophical perspectives and methodologies of Conversational Analysis. Data was from ethnographic performances was analyzed using Suzanne Keen’s theory of Narrative Empathy.

A wide spectrum of oral narrative techniques were revealed in the performances and showed varied perceptions and meanings derived. The theatrical battles brought to the lime line the relevance of accommodating the polarilized interests between performer and audience. The study urges that the stock of oral literature of communities with little written literature to take advantage of the era of technological innovations and have narratives documented and used in formal settings like schools for enhancing effective education and collaborative development.