

Traditional Children's Songs of the Wagogo of Central Tanzania: Collection, Analysis, and Interpretation(1)

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Executive Summary

The Wagogo people of central Tanzania are a Bantu ethnic group living in rural, pastoral and agricultural communities situated about 300 miles inland from the Indian Ocean. Most of the children's songs among the Wagogo people are naturally acquired and evolve from an enculturation process by which songs are "learned but not taught" (Rice, 1994).

As a field researcher with an ethnomusicological perspective, I was graciously accepted by the village community to engage in a research project in Chamwino village in order to examine the songs of the Wagogo children of Chamwino, a Wagogo village about 300 miles inland from the capitol city of Dar es Salaam. Using observation, participant observation, and video: and audio-documentation, data were gathered from 150 children, ages 4 to 12.

Results from the research project indicate that most of the children's songs of the Wagogo people are sung in unison, songs are unaccompanied, and call and response is a formal characteristic of the songs. The focus on singing is, of course, a priority for AIRS, but, for the Wagogo children, movement and dance are not separated from the singing. Consistently featured dance movements include not only the limbs of the body, but also the head and torso. Topics such as family needs, moral issues and birds are evident in the texts of children's songs. Also, most of the songs in this particular age were spoken instead of sung, the use of three to four pitches was common and most of the songs were familiar to me .

There is concern about the disappearance of Wagogo children's songs in Chamwino, and of their wholesale abandonment by communities. The Wagogo people, along with many other groups of people in Tanzania, are being swept into more contemporary musical trends to the extent that some are abandoning their interests in long-standing traditional music and dance forms.

Based upon my findings in this research project, I recommend the following:

- 1. AIRS should make these recorded songs available to singers, choir directors, and teachers on the AIRS website, but also to the Wagogo of Dodoma, Tanzania.
- 2. More research and documentation are needed among the Wagogo people before more of the children's songs are swept away by popular culture. Note that this research was accomplished only in Chamwino village, however, I did not get many songs in this village, and then I had to travel to Kawawa village (approximately 30 miles North from Chamwino). There are more than 300 villages in the Dodoma region of central Tanzania.

Introduction

The region of the Wagogo people is centered around Dodoma, Tanzania, about 300 miles due west of the Indian Ocean. This region covers an area of 25,612 square miles, with an altitude of 480ms to 12ms above sea level (Cidosa, 1995). Much of the land is situated on an arid plateau dotted with small bushes and the occasional baobab tree. On average, the region receives rain approximately 7.8 to 23.6 inches per year for only three to four months of the year (Mascarenhas, 2007: 376).

The Wagogo are a Bantu ethnic group, one of 120 cultural:linguistic groups living within the boundary of the Republic of Tanzania, formerly known as Tanganyika; and they comprise 3% (1,735,000 people) of the population of Tanzania. They live largely in rural villages, and are primarily engaged in agriculture and pastoral activities. Many are farmers on small plots of family land, growing maize, millet and sorghum for food, and peanuts and sunflower for trade. Some herd cows, goats and sheep, traveling to and from their family homes every day to wide open fields where there are low grasses for them to feed upon. Cattle are valuable in Wagogo culture. They are useful in trade, finance, and for 'bride wealth' (i.e., dowry).



The Wagogo of Chamwino are largely Christian, mostly Anglican (98%), with just 2% identifying themselves as Catholics and Muslims. For business, banking, and various commercial

needs, the Wagogo of Chamwino travel about 30 miles west to the city of Dodoma, which, since 1978, has functioned as the capitol city of Tanzania. The Wagogo keep their Cigogo language strong within the family, even as they are now also speaking Kiswahili, the official national language of Tanzania which is utilized in telecommunications, trade and commerce. The Wagogo occasionally venture out of their villages for education, including schooling and training, and jobs. Life in the village continues as it has historically existed, with only limited modernization vis:à:vis (some) houses with electricity, (some) houses with radio, and the presence of the mobile phone in the hands of mostly a younger generation of Wagogo with college or secondary school education.

Most of the children's songs among the Wagogo people are 'naturally acquired' in an enculturation process by which songs are 'learned but not taught' (Rice, 1994). This is congruent with AIRS Theme 2.1: learning to sing naturally. The primary purpose of this research project, therefore, is to examine the songs of the Wagogo children of central Tanzania to answer the following questions: What is the musical content of these songs, particularly with regard to melodic, rhythmic, and textural components? What are the texts and topics of the songs? Can children sing the traditional Gogo harmonies, or do they sing in unison? At what point do Wagogo children begin to harmonize, vocally? Are there developmental stages at which children sing particular songs?

Summary of Prior Research

Because music is accepted as part of children's sociocultural processing, there is a large extent of research in ethnomusicology and music education that is directed toward aspects of musical enculturation; that is, how a music culture is transmitted (McCarthy, 1999), and on the teaching and learning process in its sociocultural context (Merriam, 1964; Nettl, 2005/1983; Colwell & Richardson, 2002; Lundquist, 2002; Lundquist, 1998; Szego, 2002; Volk, 1998; Figueroa, 1995; Yudkin, 1990; Campbell, 1991; Schippers, 2010). Enculturation theory seems to have emerged as a central theoretical framework for approaching the analysis of the children's songs.

Anthropologist Margaret Mead was fascinated by the concept of enculturation, as she studied the informal process by which Samoan youth of the southern Pacific Islands acquired a sense of their cultural priorities (1930). As an anthropologist, she examined the process of learning a culture from infancy onward, including the values, attitudes, and beliefs of a culture and all of its corresponding behavioral patterns. Melville Herskovits (1948) coined the term and he defines enculturation as the aspects of the learning experience... by means of which, initially, and in later life, [an individual] achieves competence in [the] culture" (p.39). Merriam (1964), a leading scholar in ethnomusicology, expanded the anthropologists' definition by saying that the word "enculturation refers to the process by which the individual learns his culture, and it must be emphasized that this is a never-ending process continuing throughout the life span of the individual" (p.146).

Nettl (1998) identified ethnomusicologists as the scholars who not only "have made the world's musics available to academics and educators and musicians" (p. 23), but also have "grappled most...with the problems of studying music both in its own cultural context and also from a comparative perspective, and with ways of seeing what it is that music does in culture" (p. 23). Such scholars have delved into studies of enculturation, how music is taught and learned, both in general terms (Merriam, 1964, p. 145:63; Nettl, 2005/1983, p. 388:403) and in specific cultures (e.g., McCarthy, 1999). It seems that enculturation theory, with a focus on the process from an ethnomusicological perspective (Nettl, 1998, p. 23:28), could serve as an intellectually defensible foundation for a project involving collection, analysis and interpretation of Wagogo children's songs. Most all anthropological and ethnomusicological studies are descriptive, not empirical. They are more rarely seeking to identify theories than to describe aspects of a culture in that culture's terms (Nettl, 1998, p. 24). However, they offer identification and clarification of concepts, descriptions of teaching and learning processes involved (e.g., imitation) and provide support for the importance of the process of enculturation.

Scholars in education are currently focusing on ideas involving enculturation. There are ideas on enculturation in the research of Weinreich (2009), Tishman, Jay and Perkins (2001), Adachi (1994), Bruner (1996), and others that seem to apply to this study. Weinreich's (2009) research indicates that "the primary processes involved in identity development are ones of enculturation of cultural elements, not acculturation" (p. 124). This makes sense, since anything learned (informal or formal) is part of an individual's enculturation. Weinreich's statement applies directly to schooling situations where

students identify with cultural elements of "influential others" (p. 127) in the process of enculturation. As he states it, "Enculturation references the agentic individual's process of identification with whatever cultural elements of influential others are available to the person" (p.127). What are the influential others? Culture-bearers, including parents, community music-makers, and other children can function as 'influential others'. A teacher is potentially 'influential', of course.

On that point, Tishman, Jay & Perkin's (2001) research carries on Weinreich's argument when they indicate that "learners tend to act in ways cued and supported by the surrounding environment" (p. 149) and identify an enculturation model of teaching (p. 150). This is a model in which "cultural exemplars, cultural interactions, and direct instruction in cultural knowledge and activities" are employed to "a) provide exemplars of the disposition, b) encourage and orchestrate student-student and teacher-student interactions involving the disposition, and c) directly teach the disposition" (p. 150) to enact consistently what students' learn.

Bruner (1996) uses the term constructivism to describe reality construction as a product of meaning making which is shaped by traditions. Bruner suggests that education must assist young people to use the tools of meaning making and reality constructions to better adapt to the world. On the other hand, constructivist theorists emphasize the idea that students should create knowledge by themselves based on their experiences to discover new ideas. I consider the combination of these two positions to refer to enculturation, in the sense that when students are in the schooling process, they have already experienced enculturation for better or worse at home. By using their experience, along with knowledge and tools provided by the teacher, they can, where teachers and schools are dedicated to the best possible education of all students, experience continuity in their enculturation, which supports optimum learning and creates an environment conducive to the development of new ideas.

In recent years, musical enculturation has become an area of study by music educators. Lum and Campbell (2007) examined the musical 'surrounds' of an elementary school, noting the presence of music in the hands of teachers of language arts and physical education (far beyond the music teacher's influence), so that children were regularly experiencing singing, chanting, and 'rhythmicking' as components of their learning environment. Watts (2009) studied the recollections of the musical childhoods of adult women in Seattle (and in several other Aemrican cities), and found that while none were involved professionally in music as adults, most remembered extensive engagement in listening, singing, dancing, and singing games at school.

On the other hand, Morrison, et al. (2008) and Demorest, et al. (2008), underscore earlier work by Campbell (1998), who observed that when children first enter the music classroom in kindergarten, they already have had numerous and varied experiences with music. Their musical skills have been shaped through interactions with parents and society at large. This is obviously another reason to support Wagogo traditional children's songs.

In concluding this section, it should be noted that if children are not exposed to the music of their culture in their music enculturation including schooling, they don't internalize (i.e., form cognitive representations of) the range of culture-specific musical prototypes appropriate to their culture's musical styles and genres (Carlsen, 1982; Unyk & Carlsen, 1987; Abe & Hoshino, 1990; Stein & Levine, 1990; Morrison, Demorest & Stambaugh, 2008; Demorest, Morrison, Beken & Junbluth, 2008). As a result, "their music listening experiences involve cultural noise" (Meyer, 1967, p. 16:17; Unyk, 1985).

In view of the process by which I was musically enculturated and educated as a Wagogo child, I wish to argue persuasively for the facilitation of musical experiences for children (as well as for teachers who work with children, in their teacher education and in:service training). If singing, dancing, and drumming can happen in the daily lives of children in schools, preschools, after-school programs, and other places where children gather, they will take away both discipline and joy that will last them their lifetimes long.

Procedures

This research project examined the songs of the Wagogo children of Chamwino. A tentative schedule for this research project was developed as follows:

| | Time frame | Work to be done |
|---|----------------------|------------------------------|
| 1 | Mid:September to | Literature review on musical |
| | November, 2010 | enculturation and education |
| | | of the Wagogo children |
| 2 | December, 2010 | Data collection |
| 3 | January, 2011 | Data analysis and |
| | | Interpretations |
| 4 | February-March, 2011 | Report writing and |
| | | submission |

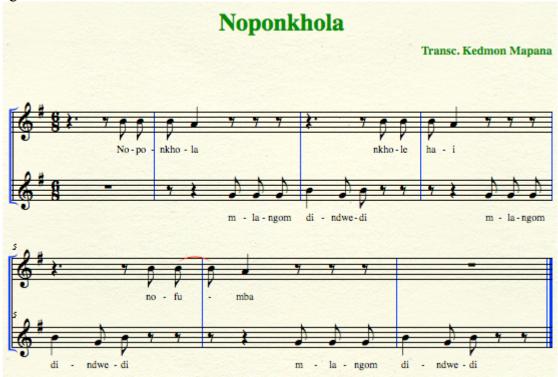
Using observation, participant observation, and video- and audio-documentation data was gathered from 150 children, ages from four to twelve years.

Data Analysis

Two techniques were used in the process of data analysis of the collected songs of children residing in Dodoma region of central Tanzania: Finale software was utilized to notate the musical sounds (melodies, rhythm, text words and syllables), and the text was translated from Cigogo to Kiswahili to English. Interpretations of the text were developed to convey the content meanings of the songs.

Results

The Wagogo children of Chamwino possess their own songs which they normally sing at home prior to schooling or separate from their school-age daytime activities of work and play. Cigogo songs, featuring the mother-tongue language of the Wagogo, are distinguished from the songs sung in Kiswahili songs at school. These Cigogo songs are rarely heard in Chamwino today as mentioned earlier in this report. These songs are called *midawalo* (games), as they invite and direct game-playing in their text meanings and with their rhythmic vitality. Following is a sampling of these songs, including transcriptions in standard Western staff notation, transcriptions of the Cigogo-language texts, presentation of the songs in Kiswahili language, directions for playing the associated game, and discussion of the musical structures and textual meanings. In addition to this sampling of 5 of the most child-appropriate songs in the collection, audio and video documentation of an additional 20 songs are provided for keeping in the AIRS database.



Mwimbizi: *Noponkhola?* Leader: Can I pass through?

Woce: *Mlango mdindwe di*, All: The door is closed.

Mwimbizi: *nkhole hai?*, Leader: where can I pass?

Woce: *mlango mdindwe di* All: The door is closed.

Great Transcription! Can you spell out 'transcribed by' rather than 'Transc.'?

Mdawalo (In Cigogo)

Wadodo walimwiduwala webate mawoko. Mwibizi yalihagati yakweimba "noponkhola" wabocezi wakutya "mlango mdidwi di". Mwimbizi yakujela bomola mlango na honoyasume yakutiga. Wayagwe wakumuwinga na yono yolongola mbata, ikwazamu yakwe kwimbila hagati.

Uchezaji (In Kiswahili)

Watoto wako kwenye duwara na wameshikana mikono. Kiongozi anakaa katikati na kuanza kuimbia wimbo" ni pite wapi" waitikiaji wanamjibu "mlango umefungwa". Mwimbishaji atajaribu kubomoa kwa kungu katikati ya mikono, na akifanikiwa anakimbia. Wengine wanaanza kumfukuza, na atakaye mkamata itakuwa zamu yake kuimbia.

Directions for 'Playing' the Song (Singing Game)

The children are in a circle holding hands. The leader is singing "Can I pass through?" (or "Should I break through?") and the children respond, "the door is closed." Then, the leader tries to break through the hands, and when he/she does, the group chases the leader, and whoever catches the leader, becomes the leader.

Musical Content and Structure

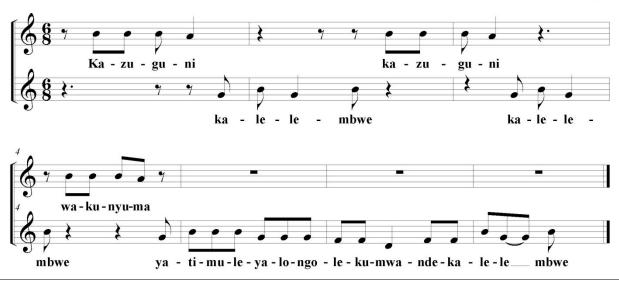
This song features a tritonic (mi, do, re) pattern in duple rhythm. A call and response technique is evident, as a leader sings a short motif while a group of singers offer a melodic response. The melody is constructed of two phrases [ab]. The first [a] introductory phrase is sung by the leader as a call, and the second [b] phrase is sung by the other children as a response. The phrases are normally sung repeatedly. The melody is sung in unison.

Meaning (and Context)

It is well known among the Wagogo that children call to each other in their neighborhoods at night, particularly when the moon shines brightly. Singing games like this one were great fun with friends, and we sang with enthusiasm as we played. The idea here is that leaders have to figure out ways to manipulate others to go out, or to do what the leader wants. Creativity is developed.

Kazuguni





Mwimbizi: Kazuguni Leader: Kazuguni

Woce: kalelembwe(x2) All: is not an ignorant (x 2)

Mwimbizi: wakunyuma Leader : the bind one

Woce: yatimule yalongole kumwande kalelembwe! All: will excel to the front

Mdawalo (In Cigogo)

Wekaye mmisitari miyejete yonoigoloce. Mwimbizi yakwanza kwimbila "kazuguni" wabocezi "kalelembe". Wakwimba kunji wakuyuvya miwili yao. Mwimbizi yalacema "wa kunyuma" wabocezi "yatimule yalongole kumwande kalelembwe". Wawalya wa kunyuma wakumankha na kubita kikala kumwande

Uchezaji (In Kiswahili)

Wanakaa mistari miwili iliyonyooka. Mwimbishaji anaita "kazuguni" wapokeaji wanajibu "kalelembwe". Wanaimba huku wakiyumbisha miili yao. Mwimbishaji akiita tena "wa nyuma" wanaitikia "akimbie na aende mbele". Wale walio nyuma wakimbia na kukaa mbele.

Directions for 'Playing' the Song (Singing Game)

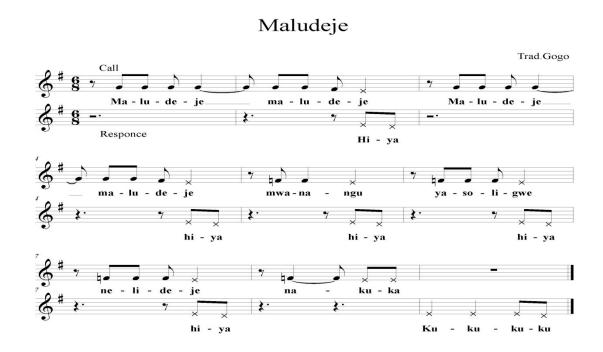
The children sit in two straight lines; each child sitting between the legs of the one behind them. They use their hands and bodies moving from side to side to move the line forward during the verse, which is call/response in form. The leader sings the call. The chorus responds and two children at the back run to the front of their lines and sit between the legs of the one behind them.

Musical Content and Structure

This song is in duple rhythm. A call:and:response technique is evident, as a leader sings a short motif while a group of singers offer a short, melodic response. The melody is constructed of two phrases [ab]. The first [a] introductory phrase is sung by the leader as a call, and the second [b] phrase is sung by the other children as a response. The phrases are normally sung repeatedly. The melody is sung in unison.

Meaning (and Context)

Kazuguni was perceived by other kids as backward or lazy. One day he came to the front! So, the idea is that you may be behind, or backward, economically or in other ways? But you can be at the front at times.



Mwimbizi: maludejex2 leader: A Kite x 2

Woce : hiya All : Oh no!

Mwimbizi: mwanangu Leader: My child

Woce: hiya All : Oh no!

Mwimbizi : yasoligwe Leader: has been taken

Woce : hiya All : Oh no!

Mwimbizi: nechideje Leader: by the kite

Woce: hiya All: Oh no!

Mwibizi: nakukax3 Leader: I tried to protect it!

Woce : kuku. All : (action of protection: ku:ku:

ku)

Mdawalo (In Cigogo)

Wakipanga msitali mmonga kunji wafugame na webate hasi. Mlongozi honoyakwimbila maludeje wanji wakubocela "hiya" kunji wakubonyla hasi. Na honowakwimba kuku kuku wakibinula migongo kucanhya na hasi.

Uchezaji (In Kiswahili)

Wanajipanga mstari mmoja na kupiga magoti na mikono ikiwa imeshika chini. Kiongozi husimama mbele ya mstari na kuimbisha maneno(maludeje:gwe) wote hujibu "HIYA" kwa kubonyea kidogo vichwa vyao na wakiimba maneno kuku:kuku hubinuabinua migongo yao juu na chini.

Directions for 'Playing' the Song (Singing Game)

Kneeling on the ground with hands in front of them, the children push themselves up and return to the position three times as they sing the response. Then, they arch their backs rhythmically as they sing the chorus.

Musical Content and Structure

This song features an undulating mi, and a lowered seventh, ta pattern in duple rhythm. It rises and falls with the words of the text in spoken way. The melody is constructed of two phrases [ab]. The first [a] introductory phrase is sung by the leader as a call, and the second [b] phrase is sung by the other children as a response. The phrases are normally sung repeatedly. The melody is sung in unison.

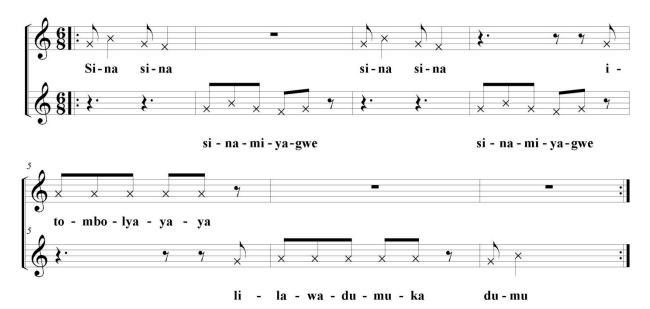
Meaning (and Context)

They are talking about a bird; in this case, a hen. A hen is singing about the other bird, a kite that that flies down and snatches up the chicks. She tried to protect the chick (the children arch their backs to show how she tried). The children make up such songs about what they see happening in the village.



Sina Sina

Trad.Gogo



Mwimbizi: sina sina Leader: I don't have I don't have

Woce: Sina muyagwe x 2 All: I don't have another x 2

Mwimbizi: Itombo lya yaya Leader : my mother's breast

Woce: Lilawa dumuka dumu All : will break, break

Mdawalo (In Cigogo)

Wose wafugame mmuduwala, wepanjile wane wane au wahano. Wakiwicila maganza mchanhya kotya wakikoma, kunji wakwimba nhavi " sina sina sina muyagwe, itombo lya yaya lilawadumuka dumu" howa wakwimba dumuu, wakilechela miwoko, na wakwanza kanhyi.

Uchezaji (In Kiswahili)

Wote hupiga magoti wakiwa kwenye duara. Hujipanga wanne wanne au watano. Huwekeana viganja juu ya kila mmoja kama wanafinyana huku wakiimba maneno "SINA MIYAGWE" na wanaposema "dumuu" huachana viganja vyao na kuanza tena.

Directions for 'Playing' the Song (Singing Game)

Crouching in a circle the children, in groups of 5 or 6, put one of their hands on top of each other, pinching the top of the hand below their's as they put their hands into the circle, one at a time, in the rhythm of the song.

Musical Content and Structure

The song's melody is constructed of two phrases [ab]. The first [a] introductory phrase is sung by the leader as a call, and the second [b] phrase is sung by the other children as a response. The phrases are normally sung repeatedly. The melody is sung in unison.

Meaning (and Context)

As they pinch the top of the hand below theirs, the leader is singing "Sina" ("I don't...") and the other children answer: "Miyagwe" (...have another one (i.e., a younger brother or sister) The children know that when they don't have a younger sibling, their mother's breast will stop producing milk so their breast: feeding will stop. Kids are saying that they are grown up and need younger brothers or sisters. They know what is going on.



Mwimbizi: ayulwa nani Leader : who is that?

Woce: ayulwa juma All : That is Juma

Mwimbizi: Juma nani Leader: Juma who?

Woce: Juma mtemi All : Juma Mtemi

Mwimbizi: mumucemaje yaze yalanje Leader : Call him to see

All: seeds of the baobab, calabash,

and fish

Mdawalo (In Cigogo)

Wemile mmusitali mmonga, wewopile kanga mviwino. Walakwanza kwimba asicili ndetele somba, wakuvina kunji wakuwuya ne nyuma. Wakuvina kunji wakusinjisa viwino.

Uchezaji (In Kiswahili)

Wanasimama mstari mmoja wakiwa wamejifunga vibwebwe. Kwenye korasi "ai sichili" wote huanza kuchezesha viuno wakivibinuabinua kwa nyuma huku wakirudi nyuma

Directions for 'Playing' the Song (Singing Game)

The children stand in a line, with feet spread apart. The leader starts, saying "who is that?" and the children say, "That is Juma." The leader sings the next line, the children answer, and the leader sings, "Call him to see." Then, they sing the chorus as they jump backward, pulling their elbows back and heads back on alternating sides and arching their bodies in the rhythm of the chorus.

Musical Content and Structure

The melody is constructed of two phrases [ab]. The first [a] introductory phrase is sung by the leader as a call, and the second [b] phrase is sung by the other children as a response. The phrases are normally sung repeatedly. The melody is sung in unison in a spoken way.

Meaning (and Context)

Children are expressing their positive feelings about eating "fish" made out of seeds of the baobab and calabash fruits. "Fish" seems to be a special relish in the Wagogo communities. It is not something you eat every day, but on a special occasion. The children normally welcome their friends to share. There are many baobab trees in Ugogo land.

Conclusion: Summary and Recommendations

I believe that the children's songs (games) are of highly valued among the Wagogo as most of are naturally acquired and evolve from an enculturation process by which songs are "learned but not taught" (Rice, 1994). Musically the results show that most of the children's songs of the Wagogo people are sung in unison, songs are unaccompanied, and call and response is a formal characteristic of the songs. The focus on singing is, of course, a priority for AIRS, but, for the Wagogo children, movement and dance are not separated from the singing. Consistently featured dance movements include not only the limbs of the body, but also the head and torso. Textually, topics such as family needs, moral issues and birds are evident in the texts of children's songs. Also, most of the songs in this particular age were spoken instead of sung, the use of three to four pitches was common and most of the songs were familiar to me. It is important to note that these results are based upon a small sample of respondents, and only one village (Chamwino) which was extended to the second village (Kawawa) so they should be carefully interpreted and further studies should be conducted to validate these results.

Based upon my findings in this research, I recommend that AIRS should make these recorded songs available to singers, choir directors, and teachers on the AIRS website, but also to the Wagogo of Dodoma, Tanzania. More research and documentation are needed among the Wagogo people before more of the children's songs are swept away by popular culture.

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