

**A HISTORY OF YAKANI SPIRIT AMONG THE
LUGBARA OF TEREKO IN THE WEST NILE REGION
OF UGANDA, 1883 TO 2025**

BY

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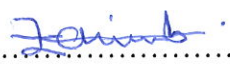
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**A RESEACH DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE DIRECTORATE OF
RESEARCH AND GRADUATE STUDIES IN PARTIAL FULFULMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE AWARD OF DEGREE OF MASTER
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MARCH, 2026

DECLARATION

I, Candiru Zainab, hereby declares that this is my original work, and has never been submitted in this or any other institution for an academic award.

Signed 

Date 

APPROVAL

This work was produced under our guidance and supervision as the University Supervisors for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts in History of Gulu University.

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my dear father-in-law, Mr. Dramadri Lugi, and my children, Munguci Kemisa, Mungu-Econ Kasim, Munguleni Basaam, and Mungufeni Juwariya. You all supported me spiritually, financially, and materially, especially my father-in-law, and their endurance of loneliness when I was busy, engaged in studies to come up with this work. I thank you very much. Alhamdulillah.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

DRC – Democratic Republic of Congo

FGD – Focus Group Discussion

IK – Indigenous Knowledge

IKS – Indigenous Knowledge Systems

KII – Key Informant Interview

LIST OF LUGBARA NATIVE WORDS

Yaya, Kani, Otakua/Saku, Kwete, Ngari, Gbanga, Anafi, kaiko, funo, Yondu au, Olirika, Angudru.
Banyale.

.

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the historical evolution and socio-political significance of the Yakani Spirit among the Lugbara of Terego in Uganda's West Nile region from 1883 to 2025. It traces its transformation from a strong anti-colonial resistance movement into a resilient contemporary cultural and spiritual practice. The specific objectives were; (i) To establish the origin and evolution of Yakani Spirit belief among the Terego people in the West Nile Region from 1883-2025, (ii) To explore the rituals and practices associated with Yakani Spirit among the Terego people in the West Nile Region from 1883-2025, (iii) To examine the impact of external influences, including Christianity, Islam, and modernization, on the traditional beliefs and practices related to Yakani Spirit among the Terego people from 1883-2025, (iv) To assess the effect of Yakani Spirit belief and practices on the Terego people from 1883-2025. Utilizing a qualitative historical-ethnographic methodology involving oral narratives from Participant, and focus group discussions, the research examines how the spirit provided communal unity against external aggression and navigated severe colonial suppression to maintain its relevance. The findings indicate that Yakani Spirit among the Terego people originated from South Sudan through cross-border interactions linking figures of Azibo, Mirio Omba, and Rembe. Yakani Spirit was important to the spiritual, social, and cultural life of the Terego people, with rituals and practices that served as moral order, communal cohesion, and continuity of ancestral knowledge. The findings also revealed that Christianity, Islam, and modernization reshaped Yakani Spirit beliefs among the Terego people, discouraging public rituals and introducing new worldviews. The Yakani Spirit belief and practice had significant social, economic, political, and judicial effects among the people of Terego in the West Nile District. Consequently, the study concludes that the spirit remains a cornerstone of regional heritage and recommends that the Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife, and Antiquities formally document its historical sites while educational institutions integrate these indigenous knowledge systems into local curricula to preserve the mysterious legacy of the Lugbara people.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.0 Introduction

This is a study of the Yakani Spirit among the Terego people in the West Nile region. The study traced the origin and development of Yakani Spirit beliefs, explored the rituals and practices, examined the impact of external influences such as Christianity, Islam, and modernization on Yakani Spirit practices, and interrogated its persistence among the Lugbara people of Terego in Uganda from 1883 to 2025. Chapter One presents the background of the study, statement of the problem, general study objective, the specific objectives, the research questions, the justification for the study, the significance, the limitations and delimitations, and theoretical framework of the study.

1.1 Background to the study

The study of indigenous spiritual traditions was essential to understanding the cultural heritage and social identity of African communities. Among the Lugbara people of Uganda's West Nile region, the Yakani Spirit, also referred to today as Olirika, stands out as a significant element of their historical and cultural experience. Despite its spiritual, social, and moral influence, the Yakani Spirit remains largely undocumented in academic literature, especially within the Terego subgroup of the Lugbara people. This research seeks to fill that gap by investigating the origin, development, roles, and transformation of the Yakani Spirit tradition from 1883 to 2025. The study explores how this spirit has been remembered, practiced, and passed down among generations, and how it has been affected by external forces such as colonialism, missionary activity, and modern state policies. To provide a clear and detailed understanding of the subject, the background to this study was organized into four main sections: Historical Background, Theoretical Background, Conceptual Background, and Contextual Background. By organizing the background in this manner, the study presents a comprehensive foundation that situates the Yakani Spirit within its history, thereby supporting deeper analysis of its enduring spiritual and social significance among the Lugbara of Terego.

1.1.1 Historical Background

The Lugbara people are part of the Moru-Madi ethnic group, which belongs to the Eastern Sudanic peoples of the Chari-Nile language family (Greenberg, cited in Agatha, 2016, pp. 1–12. Shiroya, 1981, pp. 124–136). Their ancestral origin is traced to the Bari region near Rejaf–Juba in present day South

Sudan. Between the 16th and 18th centuries, different groups of Lugbara migrated southwards and settled in Uganda's West Nile region, particularly around Mountains Liru, Wati, and Luku, near the Democratic Republic of Congo border (Agatha, 2016, pp. 1–12. 2016, pp. 1–12; Middleton, 1965, pp. 45–47). Among these groups, the Terego people formed a distinct subgroup residing around Mount Wati/Iti, and their ancestry is traced to two main sections and hero ancestors-Zaki and Dribidu: The name Terego was first used during colonial period when an Alur man, by then secretary to the District Commissioner of West Nile -Sir A. E .Weatherhead, described the people living around Mount Wati/Iti as Te-got (in Luo, literary meaning beneath the mountain) during the construction of the Arua Terego Yumbe road. Later, some elders traced the name to Tere, the father of Banale.

The people of Terego are composed of 89 clans, including: A'aa, Adripi, Agorovu, Aii-vu, Ajulepi, Alia, Aliaa, Aligo, Alue, Anaa, Anana, Angazi, Aree, Aripia, Aripia, Asivu, Awogo, Ayivu, Ayuri, Ayaa, Azipi, Bura, Dondi, Drimu, Egamara, Elefe, Elavu, Erea, Ewadri, Gila, Ibia, Idayi, Ilepia, Imvepi, Inia, Joyia, Katri, Kirido, Kozia, Langi, Lugbari, Luruja, Luwi, Manipica, Maraju, Minako, Mute, Naduke, Nakpa, Naranga, Nea, Nio, Noko, Obi, Obi Orivu, Obi Vuraa, Obopi, Ocopi, Ojia, Okavu, Okuvu, Olavu, Olea, Olevu ,Olivu, Olua, Oluba, Oliapi, Ombaci, Ombavu, Ombia, Ombokoro, Onayi, Onzoro, Orivu, Orube, Otori, Otrevu, Owayi, Paracha, Paranga, Royi, Vuraa, Yaa, Yamani, Yidu, Yinga, Yivu, Yole. (oral tradition, Abiriga Ben Henry, 2025).

Uriama Sub-County composed of 7: A'aa, Aripia, Elavu, Maraju, Naranga, Olavu, Orivu.

Bileafe Sub-County composed of 11: Adripi, Anana, Ayaa, Idayi, Nio, Obi, Okavu, Olevu, Ombokoro, Onayi, Yole. (oral traditional Abiriga Ben Henry,2025).

Katrini Sub-County composed of 8: Aree, Ewadri, Katri, Obopi, Ocopi, Okavu, Olea, Olivu. (oral traditional Abiriga Ben Henry,2025).

Aii-vu Sub -County composed of 25: A'aa, Agorovu, Ajulepi, Alia, Aliaa, Aligo, Aripia, Asivu, Awogo, Ayuri, Egamara, Erea, Gila, Inia, Luruja, Minako, Nakpa, Ojia, Olavu, Olevu, Ombaci, Onjoro, Otrevu, Paranga, Yivu. (oral traditional Abiriga Ben Henry,2025).

Odupi Sub- County composed of 25: Aii-vu, Ayivu, Azipi, Dondi, Egamara, Elefe, Joyia, Kirido, Kozia, Lugbari, Luwi, Ombaci, Ombavu, Ombia, Ombokoro, Okavu, Olua, Orivu, Orube, Oraa, Paracha, Vuraa, Yaa, Yamani, Yinga. (oral traditional Abiriga Ben Henry,2025).

Omugo sub- county composed of 22: Alia, Alue, Anaa, Angazi, Ayuri, Bora, Drimu, Elavu, Ilepia, Langi, Manipica, Mute, Naduke, Nea, Obi Orivu, Obi Vuraa, Olevu, Oluba, Otori, Owayi, Royi, Yidu. (oral traditional Abiriga Ben Henry,2025).

1.1.1a Origin of the Terego people

There is divergent oral tradition to the origin of the Terego people and clans. The Banale tradition:

According to Adaku Fredrick, most of the clans of Terego descend from Banale a Luo who had crossed from Acholi land. Terego oral traditions narrated by Abiriga asserts that, Banale initially known as Gangu had migrated from Acholi land. He crossed the River Nile into West Nile at present day Rhino-Camp after being excommunicated by his clan. A legendary story recounts that Banale had eaten a liver which had been dropped by a kite. Banale then picked the liver and roasted it. The liver was so tasty, and Banale went into a hunting spree looking for the animal bearing that kind of liver. After failing, he resorted to getting one from a child. After killing a child in the homestead, he tasted the liver, and discovered that it tasted similar to the one dropped by the kite. He then began to kill children in the homestead to harvest their liver. The disappearance of the children eventually made the village to enter a search in what was killing the children.

According to oral tradition, on a fateful day, Banale was caught removing a child's liver. The clan captured him, and nicknamed him Banale (Lugbara meaning, human eater). Having been excommunicated by the community, in the company of his nephew Rawule he crossed the River Nile into Madi land. He and Rawule then settled at Mount Wati/Iti. Banale met a leper woman called Buteru Edeku Alia popularly known as Ofunyaruru (leper woman), a daughter of Likiji from Maracha Aliba clan. She had been excommunicated because of having leprosy. Banale fell in love with her and treated her of the leprosy. Following her healing, they married and begot a son they named, Angundru, meaning lonely place. Banale later died and was buried on Mount Wati/Iti, which remains a central reference point in Terego identity oral tradition (Ongurulu Francis, manuscript 1998). Angundru son of Banale begot four children: Mburu, Ojule, Kabe, and Ojia, from whom some present day Terego clans trace descent.

The Rawule tradition:

According to the Rawule tradition, after the death of Banale (also referred to in this account as Dribidu), Rawule, the nephew, inherited Ofunyaruru the widow to Banyale. The tradition states that Rawule and Ofunyaruru had four children: Wandika, Aria, Elefe, and Oconia. Their descendants are associated with particular clans and settlements in the Terego area. Oconia is said to have produced the Ocopi clan of Katrini, located in Katrini Sub- County. Aria is said to have produced the Arivu clan, found in Varra County, where Arive Mission is located near Bondo. Wandika is said to have produced the Wandu clan; the name Wandu Trading Centre is associated in this tradition with the settlement of Wandu's descendants. Elefe is said to have produced the Elefe clan of Katrini Sub- County, in the area around Ombatine Secondary School. These accounts connect ancestral genealogies with present-day clan

identities and place names, showing how oral traditions preserve Terego histories of settlement and belonging ([insert informant's name, interview date, and place]).

The Zaki tradition:

Some Terego clan trace their lineage to Zaki the son of Weki(father) and Dadaa(mother) who was one of the grand sons of Barana the one of great ancestors of Lugbara. Zaki had many wives whose name were not remembered, and gave birth to many children They include:

Morobu who gave rise to Yumele clan in Yumbe District, Tumbe gave rise to Kurio clan of lobule sub-county of Koboko, Kembe gave rise to Mijale, Waju, and Dukulia of lobule sub-county in Koboko, Kodogele gave to Nania in Koboko District, Jambo gave to Dinako, Nyangilia, Rudbuja kk and Ayivu clan in Arua city, Benika Midia and Ponura in Koboko District, Abe Machu clan in Koboko District, Mori /Tere gave to Komiro commonly known as Kuno, Yakibu and Moje in Koboko, Tere gave birth to the following: Ibira, Obaru, Randaru, Kibira gave rise to Kozia clan of Odupi sub county, Oluze gave rise to Orivu clans of Aii-vu, Uriama, Subcounty. (oral traditional Abiriga Ben Henry,2025).

The Yakani Spirit soon became central to the spiritual, cultural, and moral life of the Terego people. It was associated with justice, fertility, healing, security, and communal protection. The Spirit was entrusted to specific clans who served as mediums and mediums, conducting rituals, maintaining shrines, and enforcing moral order. These mediums played essential roles in conflict resolution, disease diagnosis, and spiritual ceremonies. (Driberg, 1923, pp. 89–91; Middleton, 1965, pp. 120–124). Middleton, (1965) the colonial anthropologist, characterized Yakani Spirit (also referred to as the Yakani Spirit or Allah Water cult) as a “cult” that nevertheless “brought peace” to Lugbara (Terego) communities affected by epidemics and social breakdown, particularly through the ritual use of Yakani Spirit water to restore harmony and wellbeing. Alidri (2025) further emphasizes that the Yakani Spirit functioned as a form of transitional justice and a tool for healing the land during the colonial period, acting as a culturally rooted means of resistance and social restoration. Leopold (2025), in his historical and cultural exploration of the region, emphasized how such spirit-based movements provided a symbolic structure through which local communities like the Terego could mobilize collective identity, assert moral authority, and slightly oppose colonial encroachment, thereby reinforcing the mediums’ roles in communal cohesion and spiritual resilience

However, the arrival of British colonial rule and Christian missionary, and Islam activities in the late 19th and early 20th centuries brought disruption. Colonial administrators, missionaries, and Arabs viewed African spirituality, including Yakani Spirit Spirit, as pagan, superstitious, and backward

(Ward, 2001, pp. 55–58; Kiwanuka, 1971, pp. 140–145). Sacred sites were desecrated, and spiritual leaders were marginalized or displaced by new political and religious systems

Despite the suppression, the Yakani Spirit tradition did not disappear. Instead, it went underground, surviving through oral transmission, hidden rituals, and religious syncretism (Middleton, 1965, pp. 130–132; Ranger, 1986, pp. 275–278). Some Lugbara of Terego began to mix Christianity, and Islam with traditional beliefs, allowing Yakani Spirit to remain as part of their everyday life in a new form (Ward, 2001, pp. 60–63) The Spirit, reflecting changes in both naming and understanding (Driberg, 1923, pp. 95–96; Onyango, 2013, p. 44). The core spiritual functions such as justice, healing, protection, fertility, and moral order have remained, even as the methods of respect have changed (Shiroya, 1981, pp. 138–141). In rural areas, elders and mediums still maintained shrines and sacred places in houses, offer food sacrifices, and teach younger generations about the significance of the spirit Afeku (2025) Oral Interview; (Okot, 1998, pp. 22–25).

The period from 1883 to 2025 marks a long and active historical journey for the Yakani Spirit tradition. It has moved through precolonial adoration, colonial disruption, post-Independence revival, and modern reinterpretation stages. Today, Yakani Spirit represents not only a spiritual force but also a symbol of cultural resilience, memory, and identity for the Lugbara of Terego.

Understanding this historical background provides the foundation for analyzing the Yakani Spirit Spirit's changing roles and enduring presence in Terego's past and present. The study is not meant to romanticize Yakani Spirit Spirituality but aims to preserve and interpret this rich heritage as an essential part of Uganda's indigenous history.

1.1.2 Theoretical Background

This study is informed by five complementary theoretical perspectives, Afrocentricity, Historical Constructivism, Postcolonial Theory, Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS), and Symbolic Interactionism. Afrocentricity centres Terego people's historical agency and voices; Historical Constructivism helps explain continuity and change in Yakani Spirit beliefs and practices; Postcolonial Theory examines colonial power and the effects of external religious and social influences; IKS Recognises community-held knowledge and oral traditions as sources for historical investigation; and Symbolic Interactionism helps interpret the meanings people attach to rituals, objects, and interactions. The theoretical background introduces these perspectives providing valuable insights into the historical development, cultural significance and contemporary transformations of the Yakani Spirits among the Lugbara of Terego in the Uganda's West Nile region.

Afrocentricity

Afrocentricity, associated with Molefi Kete Asante (2003), places African people, experiences, knowledge, and agency at the center of interpreting African history. It challenges accounts that explain African societies mainly through external or Eurocentric viewpoints. In this study, Afrocentricity ensures that Terego oral accounts and local interpretations of Yakani Spirit are central to the historical narrative. It supports the study's investigation of the origin and evolution of Yakani Spirit while requiring oral accounts to be examined critically and compared with other available evidence.

Historical Constructivism

Historical Constructivism draws attention to how beliefs, identities, and traditions develop and change through historical circumstances and social relationships. Berger and Luckmann (1966) explain how social realities are produced and maintained through human interaction, while Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983) examine how traditions may be shaped, formalized, or reinterpreted over time. In this study, this perspective helps trace the development of Yakani Spirit beliefs and practices, including continuity and change in rituals, meanings, and transmission across generations. It does not imply that the tradition is false; it means that its historical forms and meanings are investigated in their contexts.

Postcolonial Theory

Postcolonial Theory examines how colonial power affected culture, knowledge, and identity, including how indigenous beliefs were represented or marginalized. Said (1978) analyses the representation of cultural 'Others', while Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o (1986) discusses colonialism's cultural effects and the importance of African languages and perspectives. In this study, the theory guides examination of how colonial administration and missionary activity affected Yakini's public status and practice, and how Terego people responded to such encounters. Christianity, Islam, and modernization are considered in relation to the evidence collected; their effects are not assumed to have been identical in every community or period.

Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS)

Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) refers to knowledge developed, practiced, and transmitted within communities through experience, oral accounts, observation, and social relationships. Hountondji (1997) contributes to critical discussions of endogenous knowledge; Mbiti (1969) examines African religious worldviews; Hoppers (2002) discusses indigenous knowledge in education and development; and Vansina (1985) explains how oral traditions can be evaluated as historical sources. In this study, IKS helps recognise Terego elders, spirit mediums, mediums, and other community members as holders of knowledge about Yakini's origin narratives, rituals, healing practices, and social

responsibilities. Their accounts are treated as historical evidence and assessed in context and, where possible, against other sources. IKS is a broad field and should not be attributed to one sole founder.

Symbolic Interactionism

Symbolic Interactionism is associated with George Herbert Mead (1934) and was developed as a named perspective by Herbert Blumer (1969). It focuses on how people create, share, interpret, and sometimes change meanings through social interaction. In this study, it helps explain the meanings attached to Yakani Spirit-related objects and practices, including the Otakua (pot), Ngara (spear), offerings, and ritual actions. It is particularly useful for analyzing how these symbols are understood in relation to spiritual authority, healing, protection, and social responsibility, and how interpretations may vary between people or generations and change through encounters with Christianity, Islam, education, and modernization.

Together, the five perspectives provide complementary explanations rather than competing or interchangeable accounts. They guide the study to centre Terego voices, trace historical continuity and change, examine power and external influences, evaluate indigenous knowledge and oral evidence, and interpret the meanings attached to Yakani Spirit rituals and symbols. Their specific applications are set out in Section 1.7 and brought together in its synthesis.

1.1.3 Conceptual Background

The conceptual background provides clarity on the major terms, ideas, and constructs that shape this study. It defines and contextualizes the key concepts that underpin the research to ensure consistency and a shared understanding of the subject matter.

At the core of this study are the following key concepts: Yakani Spirit Spirit, indigenous spirituality, heritage, continuity and change, the rituals and practices and cultural identity, External Influence

Each of these terms is critical to understanding the historical and contemporary significance of the Yakani Spirit among the Lugbara people of Terego.

Yakani Spirit

This study defines the Yakani Spirit as a specific spiritual entity or force historically revered by the Terego people, whose name derived from Lugbara *yaya* (“to shake, shiver, or tremble” and *kani* (“the one that causes”) (Abiriga, 2019, p. 1, Unpublished manuscript), Afeku (2025) oral interview, points to its distinct and often physically manifested presence. The Yakani Spirit is conceptualized as a powerful force capable of influencing individual and community well-being, regulating social order, resolving life’s challenges, and sustaining communal identity. It is treated not simply as a religious symbol but

as a historical and cultural institution deeply embedded within Lugbara cosmology and historical experience.

Colonial-era anthropologist Middleton identified Yakani Spirit as a “cult,” noting its deep roots in indigenous cosmology and its significant resurgence during epidemics and social unrest when it was invoked as a supernatural agent of peace, protection, and social restoration (Middleton, 1963, [1960], pp. 80, 90–92, and Leopold, 2005, pp. 210–213).

Building on this, the study by Alidri (2025) meticulously traces the Yakani Spirit across pre-colonial, colonial, and post-colonial periods, revealing how it served as a tool for anti-colonial resistance, a transitional justice mechanism, and a means of land-healing and moral regulation. According to Alidri, Yakani Spirit provided a cosmological framework through which the Lugbara construed the relationship between spiritual and material realms, preserving traditional authority and restoring social harmony even in the face of modernization (Alidri, 2025, pp. 72–88).

Indigenous Spirituality

Indigenous spirituality includes the religious beliefs, rituals, and cosmologies that originate within and are unique to a specific ethnic group or community (Mbiti, 1990, p. 15). The Lugbara people's spirituality is deeply tied to nature, ancestors, and spirits like Yakani Spirit, which function as mediators of health, fertility, and social harmony (Middleton, 1960, pp. 78–80). Scholars note that Lugbara cosmology places strong emphasis on the interconnectedness of the living, the dead, and the spirit world, making entities such as Yakani Spirit central to community identity and moral order (Leopold, 2005, pp. 132–134).

This research examines how the Yakani Spirit tradition functions as part of Lugbara indigenous spirituality and how it has been shaped by both internal developments and external influences, particularly colonialism and Christianity (Pirouet, 1978, p. 210; Alidri, 2025, p. 72–88). These external forces repressed and redefined indigenous religious practices, but local communities adapted them in creative ways that ensured their survival in transformed forms.

Historical Heritage

Heritage refers to the legacy of physical artifacts and intangible attributes passed down from past generations (Graham, Ashworth & Tunbridge, 2000, p. 1). In this study, historical heritage includes oral traditions, spiritual practices, cultural symbols, and ritual performances associated with Yakani Spirit. Oral traditions, as (Vansina, 1985, p. 27–28). Argues, are reliable sources of history in African societies, preserving collective memory across generations. Spiritual practices and ritual performances

connected to Yakani Spirit illustrate what (Middleton, 1960, p. 78–80). Described as the centrality of cultic institutions in Lugbara social life.

The research investigates how this heritage has evolved, been preserved, contested, or transformed between 1883 and 2025. Scholars note that colonialism and missionary interventions repressed or reshaped such traditions (Pirouet, 1978, p. 210; Hanson, 2010, p.55), while local communities employed strategies of adaptation and syncretism to safeguard their heritage (Leopold, 2005, pp. 132–135). More recently (Alidri, 2025, pp .72–88) emphasizes that Yakani Spirit heritage continues to be a framework for identity, resistance, and reconciliation in contemporary Lugbara society.

Cultural Identity

Cultural identity denotes the sense of belonging to a group that shares the same culture, language, traditions, and beliefs Hall (1990); (Smith, 1991, p. 71). The Yakani Spirit tradition has contributed significantly to the cultural identity of the Lugbara in Terego. Through the lens of cultural identity, this study explores how the spirit continues to shape collective memory and self-understanding among the Lugbara across generations (Mbiti, 1969, p. 256; Okot p'Bitek, 1971, p. 1–164; Appiah, 1994).

Continuity and Change

Continuity and change are central historical concepts that allow analysis of how traditions persist or transform over time (Carr, 1961, pp. 108–110; Tosh, 2015, pp. 45–47; Hobsbawm & Ranger, 1983, pp. 1–14; Vansina, 1985, pp. 12–18). The study traces the continuity of Yakani Spirit practices from precolonial times while also examining the changes brought about by missionary work, colonial rule, state policies, and modernization in Uganda (Ranger, 1993, pp. 62–65; Maxwell, 1999, pp. 104–108). The rituals and practices associated with Yakani Spirit such as spirit possession, sacrifice, chanting, and the use of sacred objects like Ngara spears, pots, and chickens serve as expressions of spiritual authority, healing, justice, and community cohesion. These rituals are not static; they have evolved over time in response to socio-political and religious changes (Mbiti, 1969, pp. 127–133; Vansina, 1985, pp. 27–31).

External Influence

The external influences, especially from Christianity, Islam, colonialism, and modernization, are conceptualized as forces that have challenged, reshaped, or syncretized Yakani Spirit traditions (Ranger, 1983, pp. 211–238; Sanneh, 1990, pp. 55–60; Mazrui, 1986, pp. 101–106). Missionary discourses often demonized indigenous spirits, while modern education and development ideologies encouraged abandonment of traditional beliefs (Iliffe, 2007, pp. 285–290, Hanson, 2010, pp. 285–288; Allen, 1991, pp. 63–67). Modernization refers to the processes of social and cultural change influenced by Western colonial and post-colonial developments. It encompasses the introduction of new

technologies, formal education, Western medicine, new political systems, and the spread of global religions such as Christianity and Islam (Comaroff & Comaroff, 1997, pp. 12–15; Ranger, 1986, pp. 275–278; Ward, 2001, pp. 58–60). This concept is crucial for examining the external influences that have challenged, transformed, or coexisted with the traditional Yakani Spirit belief system in Uganda, particularly in relation to spiritual practices, rituals, and community governance (Hanson, 2010, pp. 285–288; Allen, 1991, pp. 63–67). People and the spiritual world (Mbiti, 1969, pp. 145–150; Lan, 1985, pp. 37–42).

Spirit Mediums

A spirit medium is an individual who serves as a vessel or intermediary for a spiritual entity, such as the Yakani Spirit. They are believed to communicate with the spiritual realm, interpret messages, and perform rituals on behalf of the community (Mbiti, 1991, pp. 108–110; Driberg, 1923, pp. 89–91; Middleton, 1965, pp. 120–122). In the Terego context, spirit mediums are central to the practice of the Yakani Spirit belief system and play a vital role in maintaining the relationship between the people and the spirit, acting as mediums of spiritual knowledge, moral order, and communal cohesion (Leopold, 2005, pp. 215–218; Alidri, 2025, pp. 25–28).

Syncretism

Syncretism describes the blending of elements from two or more different cultural or religious traditions to form a new, integrated system of belief or practice (Horton, 1993, pp. 45–47; Ranger, 1986, pp. 275–278; Comaroff & Comaroff, 1997, pp. 12–15). In the context of this study, syncretism is used to analyze how the Terego people have reconciled or merged their traditional Yakani Spirit beliefs with the teachings and practices of modern religions, particularly Christianity. This approach helps explain the persistence of Yakani Spirit rituals and symbolism even in communities heavily influenced by external religious and social forces (Ward, 2001, pp. 58–60; Pirouet, 1978, pp. 112–115).

Conclusively by defining these key concepts, the study establishes a clear framework to investigate the history, role, and transformations of the Yakani Spirit tradition. The conceptual understanding ensures that the research remains focused on examining Yakani Spirit not merely as a religious phenomenon, but as a symbol of historical continuity, cultural resilience, and evolving identity among the Lugbara of Terego from 1883 to 2025.

1.1.4 Contextual Background

Terego District is located in the West Nile sub-region of northwestern Uganda. It is bordered by Yumbe District to the north, Madi-Okollo District to the East, Maracha District to the West, and the Arua City

to the south. Formerly part of Arua District, it became an independent district in 2020 and is made up of two counties Terego East and Terego West.

The district is predominantly inhabited by the Terego people, a branch of the Lugbara ethnic group, who share the Lugbara language, clan structures, and traditional belief systems. While they are closely related to other Lugbara communities in Uganda, DRC, and South Sudan, the Terego people maintain distinct local traditions, notably the veneration of the Yakani Spirit.

The economy is primarily agrarian, with households engaged in subsistence farming of crops such as cassava (Gbanga), millet (Anafi), beans (kaiko), and groundnuts (funo). Spiritual beliefs and practices are closely tied to agricultural cycles (farming season), community security, and social harmony.

Historically, the Yakani Spirit played a central role in justice enforcement, healing, fertility, morality, security and protection, with its mediums acting as both spiritual leaders and community judges.

In contemporary Terego, religious life is pluralistic, with Christianity (Catholic and Protestant) and Islam widely practiced alongside surviving indigenous spiritual traditions. Modernization, formal education, and globalization have influenced cultural values, resulting in a decline of public Yakani Spirit rituals, especially under missionary influence. However, private rituals, symbolic objects, and oral narratives continue to preserve Yakani Spirit's significance in certain clans.

This coexistence of traditional beliefs with modern institutions forms the present-day context in which the Yakani Spirit exists. Understanding how Yakani Spirit operates within this evolving socio-cultural environment is essential to appreciating its persistence, adaptation, or decline from 1883 to 2025.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Yakani Spirit is historically known for its central role in Lugbara traditional spirituality and social function in the maintenance of law and order. It forms part of ritual life, clan prestige, and oral knowledge transmission (Mbiti, 1969, pp. 145–150; Middleton, 1960, pp. 37–40). In the Orivu and Luruja clans, in particular, Yakani Spirit is remembered as spiritual custodian. (Ongurulu, 1998, Abiriga 2019, Afeku 2025). Moreover, the Yakani Spirit tradition has been linked to regional networks of spiritual power between Uganda and South Sudan (Vansina, 1985, pp. 27–31; Atkinson, 1994, pp. 101–105). Remnants of Yakani Spirit practices and oral memories still persist among elders and mediums. certain sacred sites remain significant in Lugbara cosmology (Sundkler & Steed, 2000, pp. 522–525).

The history of Yakani Spirit which is traced back to 1883, with its evolving roles and meanings in the contemporary period up to 2025, remains largely undocumented. There is limited research in and

academic documentation on Yakani Spirit and how colonialism, missionary activity, Islam, state interventions, and modernization influenced or disrupted its practices (Ranger, 1983, pp. 211–238; Sanneh, 1990, pp. 55–60; Iliffe, 2007, pp. 285–290). Furthermore, the intergenerational transmission of knowledge about Yakani Spirit is under serious threat of extinction due to declining oral traditions, lack of written records, and cultural marginalization (Vansina, 1985, pp. 12–18; Nabudere, 2011, pp. 23–25). There is also inadequate analysis of the continuity, transformation, or fading of Yakani Spirit in the face of Christianity, Islam, and modernization (Walls, 1996, pp. 24–29; Meyer, 1999, pp. 73–80).

This study, therefore, intends to fill this critical gap by conducting a comprehensive historical investigation of the Yakani Spirit among the Lugbara of Terego from 1883 to 2025. It documents oral testimonies, ritual practices, and clan histories to trace the origin, spread, and transformations of Yakani Spirit. The research examined the influence of external forces, including colonial rule, missionary activities, Islam, and modernity. By doing so, the study contributes to the preservation of indigenous knowledge systems, enriches academic understanding of Lugbara spirituality, and promotes the recognition of local heritage in Uganda's broader historical narrative.

1.3 General objective

The general objective of the study is to document the history and practice of the Yakani Spirit among the Lugbara people of the Terego clan in the West Nile Region of Uganda.

1.3.1 Specific Objectives

- 1) To establish the origin and evolution of Yakani Spirit among the Terego people in the West Nile Region from 1883 to 2025.
- 2) To explore the rituals and practices associated with Yakani Spirit among the Terego people in the West Nile Region from 1883 to 2025.
- 3) To examine the impact of external influences, including Christianity, Islam, and modernization, on the traditional beliefs and practices related to Yakani Spirit among the Terego people from 1883 to 2025.
- 4) To assess the effect of Yakani Spirit belief and practices on the Terego people from 1883 to 2025.

1.3.2 Research Questions

The following constitutes the research questions;

- 1) What is the origin and evolution of Yakani Spirit among the people of Terego in the West Nile Region from 1883 to 2025?
- 2) What are the rituals and practices associated with Yakani Spirit among the people of Terego in the West Nile Region from 1883 to 2025?
- 3) How have external influences, including Christianity, Islam, and modernization, impact on the traditional beliefs and practices related to Yakani Spirit among the people of Terego from 1883 to 2025?
- 4) How has Yakani Spirit belief and practices affected the people of Terego from 1883 to 2025?

1.4 Scope of the study

1.4.1 Geographical scope

The study was carried out in Terego District in the West Nile region. Terego is bordered by Aringa in the north, Madi in the east, Ayivu in the south, and Maracha in the west. Terego being a large district, the clans of focus, Luruja and Orivu, the two sub-clans where Yakani Spirit reverence is practiced, was in the two sub-clans where Yakani Spirit reverence is practiced. Luruja and Orivu sub-clans are spread out in the five sub-counties of Aii-vu, Bileafe, Odupi, Uriama, and Omugo.

1.4.2 Content scope

This was a historical study that focused on the history of Yakani Spirit among the Lugbara of Terego in the West Nile region. Looking at the origins, beliefs, practices, significance of the Yakani Spirit to the Terego people

1.4.3 Time scope

The period of the study was from 1883 to 2025. By 1883, the people today known as the Lugbara had settled and established their identity as Lugbara through the process Shiroya called Lugbara-isation (Shiroya, 1981, Alidri, 2016). The period 2025 exhibits the continuous reverence and practices of the Yakani Spirit despite Islam, Christianity and modernization and the time of completion of the field study.

1.5 Justification of the study

The study helps to document the history of Yakani Spirit among the Terego people of the West Nile Region, Uganda. Despite its existence since the pre-colonial period, Yakani Spirit practices have not

been widely studied and documented. Yet, it remains part of the cultural identity and spiritual heritage of the people of Terego in West Nile District. This study documents the history of Yakani Spirit by filling the knowledge gap informing culturally sensitive engagements and contributing to the broader academic understanding. This research points to the significant cultural values of Yakani Spirit for the Terego people and the academic world.

1.6 Significance of the study

The research contributes to providing a comprehensive documentation and record of the Yakani Spirit beliefs and practices among the Lugbara in the West Nile region. This could help to preserve history for posterity. The documentation serves as a valuable resource for future generation and contemporary community members

- a. The Terego and Lugbara cultural institutions may use the case study to inform their knowledge of the Yakani Spirit as a tool for social order
- b. The study may contribute to the body of academic knowledge on African traditional religions and indigenous knowledge systems. It could provide valuable insights into the dynamics of belief systems, world view, cultural adaptations, and the impact of external influences on traditional practices
- c. By validating and documenting the Terego cultural heritage, the research could empower the Terego community, fostering a sense of cultural pride and ownership, this can contribute to strengthening their cultural identity and resilience

1.7 Theoretical Framework

This study adopts Afrocentricity theory, Historical Constructivism theory, Postcolonial Theory, Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) theory, and Symbolic Interactionism theory. Each has a distinct function, but they are used together to investigate the origin and evolution of Yakani Spirit, its rituals and practices, the impact of Christianity, Islam, and modernization, and the effects of Yakani Spirit beliefs and practices on Terego people from 1883 to 2025. Afrocentricity centres local historical agency; Historical Constructivism examines continuity and change; Postcolonial Theory analyses colonial power and related cultural pressures; IKS guides the interpretation and critical evaluation of community knowledge and oral evidence; and Symbolic Interactionism examines meanings attached to rituals, objects, and social interaction.

1.7.1 Afrocentricity

Afrocentricity, associated with Molefi Kete Asante (2003, pp. 1–30), centres African people, perspectives, and agency in the interpretation of African experiences. It challenges approaches that treat

African communities only as objects described by outsiders. Applied to this research, it places Terego oral histories and local interpretations at the centre of the account of Yakani Spirit, especially when examining the tradition's origin and evolution. It presents Terego people as historical actors who interpreted, maintained, adapted, and transmitted their spiritual tradition. Their accounts are nevertheless examined critically and compared with other available evidence.

1.7.2 Historical Constructivism

Historical Constructivism directs attention to the ways beliefs, identities, and traditions are formed and reshaped through historical processes. Berger and Luckmann (1966) discuss the social construction of reality, while Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983) examine the formation and reinvention of traditions. Applied to this study, it helps trace how Yakani Spirit practices and meanings developed over time and were influenced by clan relationships, contact with neighboring communities, colonial rule, Christianity, Islam, and modernization. It therefore supports analysis of both continuity and change in rituals, transmission, and community understandings, without assuming that practices remained unchanged throughout 1883–2025.

1.7.3 Postcolonial Theory

Postcolonial Theory examines how colonial power shaped knowledge, culture, and identity, including the ways indigenous beliefs were represented or marginalized. Said (1978) analyses the construction of the cultural 'Other', while Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o (1986) discusses colonialism's cultural effects and the importance of African languages and perspectives. In this study, the theory guides analysis of how colonial administration and missionary activity affected the public standing and practice of Yakani Spirit, and how Terego communities responded to these encounters. It also helps frame the study of Christianity, Islam, and modernization, while the specific conclusions remain grounded in the historical evidence gathered.

1.7.4 Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS)

Indigenous Knowledge Systems refers to knowledge developed and maintained within communities and transmitted through oral tradition, observation, practical experience, and social practice. Hountondji (1997) contributes to critical study of endogenous knowledge; Mbiti (1969) discusses African religious worldviews; and Vansina (1985) explains the value and interpretation of oral traditions as historical sources. In this study, IKS helps recognise the knowledge held by Terego elders, spirit mediums, mediums, and other informants about Yakani Spirit origin narratives, ritual procedures, healing, sacred objects, and social responsibilities. It also requires attention to who holds particular knowledge, how it is transmitted, and where accounts differ. The oral evidence is therefore interpreted

critically and, where possible, corroborated with other sources. IKS is a broad field, not a theory attributable to one sole founder.

1.7.5 Symbolic Interactionism

Symbolic Interactionism is associated with George Herbert Mead (1934) and was developed as a named perspective by Herbert Blumer (1969). It focuses on how people create and interpret meanings through interaction. In this study, it helps explain how Yakani Spirit-related objects and practices—such as the Otakua pot, Ngara spear, offerings, and ritual actions—communicate meanings about spiritual authority, healing, protection, and social responsibility. It also helps analyse how such meanings are taught, shared, negotiated, or altered between people and generations, including in encounters with Christianity, Islam, formal education, and modernization. Interpretations of symbols are grounded in the accounts and practices documented during fieldwork.

1.7.6 Synthesis of the Five Perspectives

The five perspectives are complementary, and each contributes a distinct part of the explanation. Afrocentricity centres Terego voices and historical agency, helping the study investigate Yakini's origin and evolution from local perspectives. Historical Constructivism explains how beliefs, rituals, and meanings developed and changed over time. Postcolonial Theory helps analyse colonial power, cultural marginalization, and the effects of external religious and social influences. Indigenous Knowledge Systems Recognises community knowledge and oral traditions as important historical evidence while requiring them to be critically assessed. Symbolic Interactionism interprets the meanings attached to ritual objects, offerings, and social practices. Used together, the perspectives guide the study's four objectives: origin and evolution; rituals and practices; the impact of Christianity, Islam, and modernization; and the effects of Yakani Spirit beliefs and practices on the Terego people from 1883 to 2025.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter reviews and critically examines literature relevant to the history of Yakani Spirit among the Lugbara of Terego in the West Nile region of Uganda from 1883 to 2025. The review is organised around the four specific objectives of the study: to establish the origin and evolution of Yakani Spirit to explore its associated rituals and practices; to examine the influence of Christianity, Islam, and modernization on Yakani Spirit beliefs and practices; and to assess the effects of Yakani Spirit belief and practices on the people of Terego.

The chapter examines the contributions of existing scholarship to understanding African indigenous spirituality, Lugbara history and religious practices, oral traditions, and the relationship between spiritual authority and social organisation. Rather than simply describing what individual scholars have written, it compares their arguments, identifies areas of agreement and difference, and considers the extent to which their studies explain the historical experience of Yakani Spirit among the Lugbara of Terego. Particular attention is given to the geographical and historical scope of each work, the evidence used, and the questions that remain insufficiently explained.

The review also identifies the relevance and limitations of the literature in relation to the theoretical perspectives established in Chapter One. These perspectives guide the interpretation of historical change, indigenous knowledge, cultural meanings, and the relationship between local communities and external influences. The theoretical framework itself is not repeated here; instead, the chapter explains how the reviewed scholarship informs the study's historical questions.

The literature is considered alongside relevant primary historical evidence, including oral accounts and archival materials where available. For example, Abiriga Ben was interviewed in 2025 and shared information he had collected in 1998. This account is treated as oral historical evidence and assessed in relation to its content, context, and relevance to the study, rather than as a published scholarly work. By bringing relevant oral and written evidence into critical dialogue, the chapter establishes the existing state of knowledge, the limitations of previous studies, and the specific historical questions addressed by this research.

2.1 The Origin and Evolution of Yakani Spirit Beliefs

The origin and Evolution of Yakani Spirit must be examined in relation to both the broader history of the Lugbara and the oral accounts through which knowledge of the spirit has been transmitted. Scholarship on African religious traditions provides a general context for understanding the relationship between spiritual beliefs, ancestry, land, and community life. However, broad discussions of African religion cannot, by themselves, establish the specific origin or historical development of Yakani Spirit among the Lugbara of Terego.

Mbiti (1969) discusses African religious worldviews and the relationship between spiritual beings, human communities, and the wider social and moral order. His work provides a comparative framework for interpreting the place of spiritual beliefs in African societies. Its limitation for the present study is that a general account of African religion does not independently establish the particular origin narrative, historical chronology, or local meanings of Yakani Spirit among the people of Terego. Mbiti's work is therefore useful for contextualization, but the specific historical claims in this study require evidence relating directly to Yakani Spirit and its local setting.

Oral evidence is particularly important when examining histories that have been transmitted through community memory rather than fully documented in written records. Vansina (1985) explains the value of oral traditions as historical sources and the need to interpret them critically. This approach is relevant to the present study because oral accounts can preserve local understandings of origins and historical change. Nevertheless, oral accounts must be examined with attention to when information was obtained, how it was transmitted, the narrator's relationship to the events or traditions described, and whether other evidence supports or challenges the account.

The oral account shared by Abiriga Ben provides one source for investigating the origin of Yakani Spirit. Ben was interviewed in 2025 and shared information he had collected in 1998. The year 1998 therefore refers to the collection of the information he relayed, while 2025 refers to the interview conducted for the present research. These dates should not be presented as the date of the events described in the account. The narrative should be interpreted alongside the origin background presented in Chapter One and any other relevant oral or documentary evidence. It should not be treated as conclusive proof of every detail solely because it was transmitted orally.

The broader historical literature on the Lugbara, including works by Shiroya (1981) and Middleton (1965), provides context for understanding Lugbara origins, migration, settlement, and social organisation. Such studies help situate the history of Terego within the wider history of the Lugbara. However, their general historical coverage does not necessarily answer the more specific questions

raised by this dissertation: how Yakani Spirit originated in the accounts of the Terego people, how knowledge of it was transmitted, and how its significance developed over the period 1883–2025. Their contribution is therefore contextual rather than a substitute for local evidence on Yakani Spirit.

The literature must also be assessed in light of scholarship that deals more directly with Yakani Spirit. The study by Alidri (2025), identified in the existing review, is particularly relevant because it addresses Yakani Spirit in relation to spirituality and social order among the Lugbara. Its presence means that the research gap should not be framed as though Yakani Spirit has received no scholarly attention. Instead, the present study must establish more precisely what its historical focus on Terego from 1883 to 2025 adds to the existing discussion. This requires a direct comparison of Alidri's geographical and chronological coverage, evidence, and principal arguments with the questions addressed in this dissertation.

The central issue, therefore, is not simply the absence of literature on Yakani Spirit, but the extent to which existing studies explain its origin and historical development within Terego over the period under investigation. By examining local oral accounts alongside relevant historical scholarship and primary records, this study investigates the transmission of Yakani Spirit-related knowledge and the ways its place in Terego society changed or persisted over time. The analysis remains attentive to differences between accounts and avoids assuming that all clans, generations, or Participant understood Yakani Spirit in the same way.

2.2 Rituals and Practices Associated with Yakani Spirit

The literature on ritual, particularly Turner's (1969) work on ritual symbolism, helps explain how ceremonies can express shared meanings and social relationships. However, Yakani Spirit-specific evidence is necessary to establish the particular meanings of these practices among the Lugbara of Terego. The study's fieldwork identifies spirit mediums and elders as key Participant in ritual performance, alongside knowledgeable individuals who preserve ritual procedures, songs, prayers, and sacred objects.

The fieldwork also records healing and cleansing rites, sacrificial offerings, thanksgiving ceremonies, and divination associated with justice. These accounts provide a basis for investigating how Yakani Spirit rituals were performed and understood. Yet the precise procedures and their historical continuity require careful attribution to informants and comparison across sources; contemporary testimony alone cannot establish that every practice existed unchanged from 1883.

A significant limitation in the broader literature is the lack of detailed published analysis of Yakani Spirit ritual practices specifically among the Luruja and Orivu sub-clans. General studies of African indigenous religions offer useful comparative concepts, but they cannot substitute for local historical evidence. This study addresses that limitation by examining the documented rituals, their Participant, and their meanings within the historical experience of the Lugbara of Terego between 1883 and 2025.

2.3 Impact of External Influences: Christianity, Islam, and Modernization

The arrival of European missionaries and colonial administrators in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries introduced new religious and political influences into Terego. Postcolonial scholars such as Said (1978, pp. 1–2) and Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o (1986, p. 5) provide perspectives for examining how colonial power shaped understandings of indigenous cultures and spirituality. In Uganda, the spread of Christianity, particularly Roman Catholicism and Anglicanism, created encounters between Christian teachings and indigenous beliefs. Islam, alongside wider social and religious developments in the region, provides another context for examining such encounters. However, the specific effects of these influences on Yakani Spirit among the Terego Lugbara require local historical evidence.

Modernization, particularly through education, urbanization, and globalization, also provides a basis for investigating changing attitudes towards indigenous spiritual practices. Mead’s (1934, p. 46) work offers a theoretical perspective on how meanings are shaped through social interaction. Nevertheless, it cannot independently establish that Lugbara youth have rejected Yakani Spirit or that modernization has reduced participation in its practices.

Pirouet’s (1995, p. 112) work on Christianity in Uganda and broader literature on Islam and modernization provide useful historical context. However, the literature offers limited specific evidence about how these influences affected Yakani Spirit beliefs and practices among the Luruja and Orivu communities of Terego between 1883 and 2025. This study investigates these encounters through available historical accounts and oral testimonies without presuming that Yakani Spirit declined, persisted unchanged, or adapted in response to external influences.

2.4 The effect of Yakani Spirit belief and practices on the people of Terego from 1883-2025

Yakani Spirit beliefs and practices influenced the social, economic, and political life of the Lugbara. Ramponi (1937, p. 860) reported that Yakani Spirit was believed to protect against the evil eye, while Alidri (2025, p. 75) associated Yakani Spirit water with family protection, immunity from death, and the restoration of ancestors and dead cattle. These accounts reflect the powers attributed to Yakani Spirit rather than independently verified outcomes.

Yakani Spirit was also associated with resistance to foreign domination. Driberg (1931, p. 419) discussed its role in a movement against foreign rule, while Alidri (2025, p. 78) reported that the Lugbara attributed their defeat of Emin Pasha's forces to drinking Allah water dispensed by Taaka of Bileafe. These historical claims require verification in their original context.

Socially, Middleton (1963, pp. 90–92) associated the cult's spread with peace. Alidri (2025, p. 82) similarly reported this association among the Agar Dinka, although this does not establish the same effect in Terego. Alidri (2025, p. 81) also argued that Yakani Spirit mediums and their followers gained independence and influence, challenging the authority of elders.

Yakani Spirit was further associated with maintaining law and order, protecting property and crops, and controlling antisocial behaviour (Alidri, 2025, p. 85; Storer, 2025, p. 117). However, the extent of these effects among the Luruja and Orivu communities requires locally specific evidence. The available citations also do not establish a precise chronology of these effects between 1883 and 2025.

2.5 Synthesis and Research Gaps

The reviewed literature provides useful insights into African traditional religions, colonial encounters, and the social significance of spiritual practices. However, limited attention has been given to the specific history of Yakani Spirit among the Terego Lugbara, particularly the Luruja and Orivu communities. Existing studies offer insufficient detail on its historical development, associated rituals, and the effects attributed to its beliefs and practices within the study area.

The literature also provides limited evidence on the roles of Yakani Spirit mediums and how their authority and practices relate to changing religious and social contexts. Furthermore, the relationship between published historical accounts and locally transmitted oral histories requires closer examination. This study addresses these gaps by combining historical analysis with oral testimony and relevant sociological and anthropological perspectives to investigate Yakani Spirit in Terego between 1883 and 2025.

2.6 Conclusion

This chapter reviewed literature on the origin and development of Yakani Spirit, its associated rituals and practices, the influence of external forces, and its reported effects on the people of Terego. The literature and oral accounts provide insights into Yakani Spirit's spiritual significance, including beliefs concerning protection, healing, peace, and authority. However, the available evidence varies in geographical scope and historical detail, requiring a distinction between accounts specific to Terego and findings concerning the wider Lugbara or other communities.

The review also established that Christianity, Islam, colonialism, and modernization provide important contexts for investigating Yakani Spirit, but their specific effects on its beliefs and practices in Terego cannot be assumed without supporting evidence. Similarly, reported social, economic, and political effects should be understood in relation to the sources and communities from which they originate.

The principal gap is the limited historical documentation of Yakani Spirit among the Terego Lugbara, particularly the Luruja and Orivu communities, within the period 1883–2025. This study addresses that gap by examining available historical records and oral testimonies to investigate Yakani Spirit's origins, practices, and attributed effects, as well as its encounters with external influences. By critically assessing these sources, the study seeks to develop a locally grounded history of Yakani Spirit while distinguishing documented findings from reported beliefs and questions that remain unresolved.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the methodology for the study titled: “A History of Yakani Spirit among the Lugbara of Terego Clan in the West Nile Region of Uganda, 1883–2025.” The study employed a qualitative historical inquiry framework, guided by postcolonial and African Indigenous Knowledge Systems, to explore the heritage of the Yakani Spirit among the Terego people. This approach was preferred because it is culturally specific and contextually rich (Natasha, 2005), enabling the study to capture Participant’ experiences, opinions, feelings, values, and practices. The chapter outlines the research approach, research design, study area, study population, sample size, data collection methods, sources of data, sampling techniques, area of study, and ethical considerations.

3.1 Research Paradigm

This study was guided by the interpretivist research paradigm, which emphasizes understanding how people interpret and give meaning to their experiences within specific social, cultural, and historical contexts (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). This paradigm was appropriate because the study examined how the Terego Lugbara understood, practiced, and remembered Yakani Spirit beliefs and practices across generations. It acknowledged that Participant’ accounts could differ according to their experiences, clan affiliations, religious positions, and access to traditional knowledge. The interpretivist perspective therefore guided the analysis of oral testimonies and observed practices within their cultural contexts. However, Participant’ interpretations were not automatically treated as established historical facts; they were critically examined alongside available documentary evidence and other accounts.

3.2 Research Approach

The study employed a qualitative research approach to investigate the historical development, rituals, and attributed effects of Yakani Spirit among the Terego Lugbara between 1883 and 2025. A qualitative approach was suitable because it enabled an in-depth examination of Participant’ experiences, memories, beliefs, and interpretations, rather than reducing the subject to numerical measurements alone (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Data were obtained through interviews, focus group discussions, oral traditions, documentary sources, and ethnographic observation. These sources enabled the study to explore the meanings attached to Yakani Spirit and compare accounts from different Participant and historical contexts. The qualitative approach was therefore consistent with the interpretivist paradigm, while allowing the researcher to examine the historical evidence critically.

3.3 Research Design

The study adopted a historical research design complemented by ethnographic fieldwork. The historical design was appropriate for investigating the development of Yakani Spirit between 1883 and 2025 through the examination and critical evaluation of oral traditions, testimonies, documentary records, and other relevant historical evidence (Howell & Prevenier, 2001). Ethnographic fieldwork complemented this design by enabling the researcher to engage with the Terego community, observe contemporary practices where accessible, and examine the cultural meanings Participant attached to Yakani Spirit (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). Interviews, focus group discussions, and observations conducted during the five-month fieldwork period provided evidence about contemporary experiences and Participant' recollections of earlier practices. The combined design enabled the study to relate present-day understandings to historical accounts while distinguishing contemporary observations from claims about the past that required corroboration.

3.4 Study Area

The study was conducted in Terego District, located in the West Nile region of northwestern Uganda. The district borders Arua city to the south, Madi-Okollo District to the east, Yumbe to the north, and the Maracha to the west. Data collection was concentrated in five sub-counties, Omugo, Odupi, Aii-vu, Uriama and Bileafe, recognized as the heartland of Terego clan settlement and the historical and contemporary center of Yakani Spirit practices. Key sites included Pilima (now Aripea Catholic Parish), where Yakani Spirit was established by Azibo and Miria Omba; Luruja and Orivu, where contemporary rituals were observed; and Uriama, Omugo, Agurua, and Leju, where Yakani Spirit mediums reside.

This area was selected for several reasons. It is the primary location where the Yakani Spirit was established and where its mediums have resided for generations. The area remained home to several spirit mediums, elder mediums, and knowledgeable community members essential for rich data collection. Established community connections facilitated access and trust-building during five months of fieldwork, while the proximity of the sub-counties enabled efficient data collection across multiple sites. Additionally, the coexistence of indigenous spiritual practices with Christianity, Islam, and modern governance made the area ideal for exploring both the historical origins and contemporary transformation of Yakani Spirit.

3.5 Study Population

The study population comprised individuals within the Terego clan residing in the five selected sub-counties of Omugo, Odupi, Aii-vu, Uriama and Bileafe who possessed knowledge, experience, or direct involvement with Yakani Spirit beliefs and practices. Participant were drawn from four categories: elderly persons and mediums of oral tradition aged 60 years and above who held genealogical and historical knowledge. This included the Yakani Spirit mediums and mediums responsible for performing rituals and maintaining sacred objects; religious and community leaders, including Catholic priests, Anglican priests, Imams, Local Council members, parish chiefs, and cultural institution leaders. It also included young people and middle-aged adults between 18 and 60 years who had witnessed or participated in Yakani Spirit practices. Inclusion criteria required Participant to reside in or originate from the study area, possess demonstrable knowledge or experience related to Yakani Spirit, and provide voluntary informed consent, while individuals under 18 years, those lacking relevant knowledge, or those unwilling to participate were excluded. This stratification ensured the study captured diverse perspectives across generations, spiritual roles, and institutional positions, enabling a holistic understanding of Yakani Spirit's history, practice, and contemporary transformation.

3.6 Sampling Techniques

The study initially set a target of 100 Participant as a practical estimate based on the time available for fieldwork and the need to collect detailed historical and cultural information about Yakani Spirit among the Terego Lugbara. The target was considered manageable within the study period while allowing the researcher to engage different categories of knowledge holders, including elders, cultural institution leaders, traditional spiritual practitioners, and other community members familiar with Yakani Spirit beliefs and practices. Purposive and snowball sampling techniques were used to identify Participant with relevant knowledge and experience.

The decision to use 100 Participant was therefore based on practical considerations rather than a statistical sample-size formula. This approach is consistent with qualitative research literature, which recognises that sample size decisions may reflect the research objectives, the relevance and depth of the information required, and practical constraints such as time and resources (Malterud, Siersma, & Guassora, 2016; Vasileiou et al., 2018). The study ultimately involved 98 Participant: 49 in-depth interview Participant, 25 key informants, and 24 focus group discussion Participant distributed across three groups of eight. The final number was two below the initial target. The adequacy of the data was considered in relation to the study objectives and the range of information collected.

3.7 Sample Size

The non-statistical sampling technique based on the saturation point was used to determine the sample size. This non-statistical method involves reaching the point when no new data or information is obtained during data collection, known as the saturation point. When no new information or data were received, the total number of Participant was used to determine the final sample size. The initial sample size target was 100 Participant. However, saturation level was attained at 98 Participant, when there were no new responses and no new data collected. Through snowball and networking approaches, Participant who had knowledge of the study problem and had either participated in or witnessed Yakani Spirit practices were identified and engaged in the study. The final sample of 98 unique Participant comprised 49 in-depth interview Participant, 25 key informants, and 24 focus group discussion Participant (across 3 FGDs with 8 Participant each).

3.8 Sources of data

3.8.1 Historical Sources

This study relied on a combination of historical sources to reconstruct the cultural, spiritual, and social history of the Yakani Spirit among the Terego people. Using multiple sources ensured reliability, validity, and a holistic understanding of the subject. By integrating oral, documentary, linguistic, and secondary sources, the study constructed a broad and historically grounded account of the Yakani Spirit.

3.8.2 Oral Tradition

Oral tradition refers to the transmission of cultural knowledge, beliefs, values, and history through spoken word across generations (Vansina, 1985, pp. 3–4). It encompasses collective memory rather than individual testimony and often preserves myths, legends, songs, rituals, and symbolic practices. Ancestral lineage records generated from oral traditions, including family histories and genealogical records such as the Azibo lineage, were explored to trace ancestral connections to Yakani Spirit. This aided in establishing historical timelines and understanding the integration of the spirit into clan structures.

In group discussions, folklore sessions, and storytelling on the Yakani Spirit were organized to collect communal narratives, myths, proverbs, and songs. For the Terego, oral tradition provided insight into the spiritual significance of Yakani Spirit, the rituals surrounding its installation, and the symbolic elements such as the spear (Ngara), the chicken (Yondu Au), and the wind spirit (Olirika). These traditions, handed down from ancestors, served as a foundation for understanding how the Yakani Spirit is embedded in the cultural identity and cosmology of the people.

3.8.3 Oral History

Oral history is the systematic collection of historical information through recorded interviews with individuals who witnessed or participated in past events (Thompson, 1978, pp. 8–10). Unlike oral tradition, which reflects inherited communal memory, oral history focuses on personal narratives and lived experiences. As emphasized by Vansina (2006), oral history is essential for reconstructing indigenous knowledge that is often absent from written records.

In this study, oral histories were gathered through structured and semi-structured interviews with elders and knowledgeable community members. These accounts included detailed recollections of key figures such as Azibo and Miria Omba, their journey to Yondu to acquire Yakani Spirit water (*dedeyi*), and how Yakani Spirit was established at Pilima (now Aripea Catholic Parish). Such testimonies helped contextualize the transmission of Yakani Spirit practices within specific historical moments and social changes.

3.8.4 Documentary Sources: Primary and Secondary Sources

Documentary sources defined as written records that provide evidence about past events, ideas, and social practices (Prior, 2003, pp. 2–5) were crucial for reconstructing historical contexts. These were divided into primary sources, which are contemporaneous accounts such as colonial administrative files, missionary reports, correspondences, and official records, and secondary sources, which interpret, analyze, or summarize primary data, including academic books and journal articles (Howell & Prevenier, 2001, pp. 5–10).

In this study, primary sources provided direct evidence of historical events affecting the Terego people and the Yakani Spirit, such as the introduction of Christianity, colonial administrative policies, and local responses to spiritual practices. Secondary sources, including works by Shiroya (1981, pp. 1–25), Middleton (1965, pp. 12–30), and Mamdani (1976, pp. 45–60), offered scholarly interpretations and contextualization, situating the Yakani Spirit within broader socio-political and cultural frameworks. Archival and documentary research involved reviewing early ethnographic studies and anthropological literature to supplement oral accounts (Tosh, 2015; Ray, 1976; Mbiti, 1990).

Using both primary and secondary documentary sources allowed the researcher to cross-check information, uncover patterns of continuity and change, and situate oral narratives and ethnographic observations within a well-documented historical framework. This approach strengthened the reliability and validity of findings by ensuring that both contemporary accounts and later analyses were considered in understanding the historical development of Yakani Spirit practices.

3.8.5 Linguistic Sources

Linguistic sources involve the analysis of language and terminology to understand cultural meaning and the transmission of knowledge (Bendor-Samuel, 1989, pp. 20–25). Analyzing the Lugbara language, including terms such as dedeyi (spirit water), Ngara (spear), and Yondu Au (Yondu chicken), provided insights into the symbolic and cultural significance of Yakani Spirit practices. Linguistic sources clarified oral narratives, helped trace semantic meanings, and connected traditions to specific clans or dialects.

3.8.6 Anthropological and Ethnographic Literature

Ethnographic and anthropological studies provided interpretive frameworks for understanding ritual behavior, spiritual authority, and community functions. Works by Middleton (1965, pp. 12–30) and Turner (1969, pp. 94–95) were particularly useful for analyzing the roles of Yakani Spirit mediums and communal ritual practices. These secondary sources complemented the primary data collected through fieldwork and provided a theoretical foundation for interpreting findings.

3.9 Data Collection Methods

This study employed multiple qualitative methods to gather historical and ethnographic data on the Yakani Spirit, ensuring triangulation and depth of understanding. Data collection was conducted over five months (May–November 2025). The methods included:

3.9.1 In-depth Interviews

A total of 49 in-depth interviews were conducted. These comprised interviews with 40 elders and 5 Terego cultural institution leaders selected from Aii-vu, Luruja, and Orivu who possessed deep knowledge of the Yakani Spirit. An additional 4 in-depth interviews were held with Yakani Spirit mediums from Leju, Uriama, Omugo, and Agurua. These conversations provided first-hand accounts of the historical origins, practices, associated rituals, and cultural roles of the Yakani Spirit in the Terego community. Interviews were audio-recorded with Participant' consent, transcribed verbatim, and conducted in the Lugbara language where appropriate, with translations verified by community members.

3.9.2 Key Informant Interviews

A total of 25 key informant interviews were held with individuals possessing specialized knowledge. These included 4 Imams, 5 Catholic priests, 2 Anglican priests, 1 parish chief in Odupi, 2 Local Council members, 4 teachers of history and social studies, and 7 members of the council of elders who were mediums of history and oral tradition. Their perspectives helped interpret the spiritual and socio-cultural significance of the Yakani Spirit, particularly in the context of external influences from

Christianity, Islam, and modernization. Key informant interviews were typically longer than in-depth interviews and focused on Participant' expert knowledge and historical memory.

3.9.3 Focus Group Discussions

A total of 3 focus group discussions were organized, each in Omugo, Agurua, and Odupi. Each discussion comprised 8 Participant who were purposively selected, including male and female youth, elderly men and women, and persons between the ages of 45 and 60. Each focus group discussion lasted approximately 2 hours. Participant were selected based on their knowledge, belief in, participation in, or eyewitness experience of Yakani Spirit performance. Focus group discussions allowed for the collection of communal narratives, generational comparisons, and the identification of areas of consensus and divergence regarding Yakani Spirit practices.

3.9.4 Ethnographic Observation

Ethnographic observation was undertaken during the five-month fieldwork period to allow the researcher to observe current Yakani Spirit rituals and practices. Non-participant observation was employed during rituals, ceremonies, and symbolic practices involving Yakani Spirit in Leju (agricultural sacrifice and first-harvest ceremonies), in Uriama (beginning-of-month sacrifices), and in Orivu and Luruja. This method allowed for the interpretation of lived experiences, material culture, and symbolic expressions (Atkinson et al., 2001, in Ryan, 2017). Field notes were recorded daily, documenting ritual processes, spatial arrangements, participant behaviors, and the researcher's reflections. Ethnographic methods captured continuity, transformation, and adaptation in Yakani Spirit practices, allowing comparisons between historical accounts and modern practices (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007, pp. 1–20; Spradley, 1980, pp. 33–40).

3.10 Data Analysis

Data from interviews, oral narratives, and ethnographic field notes were transcribed and analyzed thematically. The analysis process followed several steps. First, all data from interviews and focus group discussions were transcribed verbatim. Second, data were coded manually using a color-coded system, with codes grouped into potential themes. Third, these codes were organized into broader thematic categories. Common themes derived included origin, ritual practices, external influence, effect, symbolism, transformation, and intergenerational transmission. These themes guided the analysis and interpretation of the data collected. Symbolic meanings, gender roles in Yakani Spirit practices, and spiritual functions were identified.

In addition to thematic analysis, three analytical strategies were employed. Content analysis was used to review and make sense of the meanings in the primary and secondary documents used during the study. Narrative analysis was used to make sense of the prevailing experiences, values, and perceptions of the study Participant regarding Yakani Spirit. Chronological analysis was used to organize and analyze data based on time order, events, change, and continuity across the precolonial, colonial, and postcolonial periods.

Comparative historical analysis was employed to interpret continuity and change in Yakani Spirit traditions over time. This involved comparing oral testimonies from different generations against archival records and ethnographic observations to identify patterns of persistence, adaptation, and transformation in Yakani Spirit practices. Data from personal archival records were reviewed and cross-referenced with oral testimonies for triangulation and validation.

3. 10.1 Validity and Reliability of Data

To ensure the rigor and trustworthiness of the findings, several strategies were employed. Triangulation, the use of multiple sources, methods, and perspectives to cross-validate research findings, was central to this study. Triangulation was used to cross-validate information from oral, documentary, linguistic, anthropological, and ethnographic sources to check for consistency of information and data (Denzin, 1978, pp. 291–303; Flick, 2014, pp. 85–90). Where bias, inconsistency, or contradictions were exhibited, the researcher cross-checked with other sources and explained their existence in the findings.

Prolonged engagement in the field for five months (May–November 2025) allowed the researcher to build trust with Participant, gain a deep understanding of the cultural context, and observe rituals and practices across different seasons and events. Member checking was conducted by returning to a subset of Participant to verify interpretations and ensure that findings accurately reflected their experiences and knowledge. Reflexivity was practiced through the maintenance of a research journal in which the researcher documented personal biases, assumptions, and reflections throughout the research process, ensuring that interpretations were grounded in the data rather than preconceived notions. These strategies strengthened the validity and reliability of the findings.

3.11 Ethical Considerations

The research followed ethical guidelines to protect Participant and respect indigenous knowledge systems. Ethical clearance was obtained from the relevant institutional review board before the commencement of fieldwork.

Informed Consent: Participant were informed about the research purpose, procedures, and their rights. Consent was sought using both oral and signed consent forms. For Participant who were not literate, the consent form was read aloud in the Lugbara language, and verbal consent was documented.

Voluntary Participation: Participation was voluntary, and individuals were free to withdraw at any time without consequence.

Confidentiality: The identities of Participant were protected using codes and pseudonyms, especially when discussing sensitive spiritual matters. Where photographs of Participant and their sacred artifacts were taken, explicit consent was sought, and Participant were informed about how the images would be used.

Respect for Indigenous Beliefs: The researcher approached all rituals, symbols, and sacred spaces with cultural sensitivity. Permission was obtained from community elders and spirit mediums before recording, observing, or documenting any sacred practices.

Non-maleficence (Do No Harm): The researcher ensured the principle of non-maleficence was followed to minimize potential harm to Participant. This included being mindful of the sensitive nature of spiritual knowledge, avoiding disruptions to rituals, and ensuring that participation did not expose individuals to social or spiritual repercussions within their communities.

3.12 Problems faced during the study

Researching indigenous society comes with its unique problems which are the challenges that may arise beyond the researchers control and could affect how much or how well data is collected (Theofanidis & Fountouki, 2018; Simon &Goes, 2013). In this study on the history of the Yakani Spirit among the people of Terego from 1883 to 2025, the study faced the following problems which affected the quality of data:

Memory loss among elderly informants: Some of the elders presumed to be the mediums of history among the Terego people could not clearly recall details of rituals, events, or origins of Yakani Spirit due to age-related memory decline.

Scarcity of written sources: Due to the limited study of Yakani Spirit on the history of Terego people, there was limited academic literature specifically on Yakani Spirit, making reliance on oral sources inevitable.

Language and translation issues: Oral testimonies were narrated in Lugbara-ti, Terego dialect which often caused translation challenges or loss of nuance given there were no equivalent terms in English.

Bias and secrecy around spirituality: Some elders or spirit mediums withheld the historically important information due to fear of exposing sacred knowledge or due to religious bias.

Generational gaps in knowledge: Younger Lugbara exhibited little or no knowledge of Yakani Spirit due to Christianity, Islam, and modernization. This was attributed to the fact that most of the young people spent their time in school and out of the villages, therefore having limited interactions with the elders who were the source and mediums of indigenous knowledge.

Researcher subjectivity: The researchers own interpretation of oral traditions influenced by her own cultural and religious background often interfered with her objectivity. However, the critic of the work by the supervisors, subjectivity was minimized.

Remoteness of Some Areas: major sites associated with Yakani Spirit heritage, such as shrines, homes to mediums, were located in remote or hard-to-reach areas. Poor road conditions, especially crossing the rivers and streams, the rainy season, hindered mobility and fieldwork.

Religious Bias and Modern Influence: The growing dominance of Christianity and Islam among the people in the region influenced their opinions about Yakani Spirit. Younger people often distanced themselves from traditional spirituality, calling it “pagan,” which made intergenerational comparison difficult.

Suspicion: At the beginning, a few community members were suspicious of the researcher’s intentions, thinking the study aimed to criticize or expose traditional beliefs to outsiders or religious authorities. This slowed down access to key informants.

Poor Record Keeping: There were no existing community archives or documented records about traditional spirit mediums, rituals, or sacred sites. The available sources were secondary sources documented by Europeans and colonial anthropologists who reported Yakani Spirit from a western lens. The researcher had to reconstruct historical facts through oral triangulation and participant observation.

Sensitivity of the Subject matter: The Yakani Spirit is considered sacred and confidential among its mediums. Some mediums and elders were hesitant to release certain ritual facts or secrets, fearing spiritual consequences or community disapproval.

Dependency on Oral Sources: Since most of the data existed in oral form, the scholar had to depend on deeply on elderly informers and oral narratives. Some Participant had worn memories and gave contradictory accounts, which made confirmation and verifying of facts a hard task.

Limited Written Literature: There was a severe scarcity of written sources on the Yakani Spirit and related spiritual practices among the Lugbara of Terego. Most of the existing materials focused on general Lugbara culture, colonial influence, or missionary encounters, making it difficult to acquire direct secondary data about Yakani Spirit traditions.

3.12.1 Intervention to the Problems of the Study

Researching indigenous societies involves unique challenges beyond a researcher's control that can impact data collection quality (Theofanidis & Fountouki, 2018; Simon & Goes, 2013). In this study, several limitations were identified and addressed:

- i. **Information Gaps and Scarcity:** To counter age-related memory decline and a scarcity of written literature specifically on the Yakani Spirit, the study employed methodological triangulation. This included using focus group discussions to stimulate collective memory, conducting a critical re-reading of colonial and missionary records (for instance., Middleton, Leopold), and utilizing cross-disciplinary analysis of linguistic patterns and material culture to bridge gaps where formal texts were absent.
- ii. **Cultural and Religious Sensitivity:** Secrecy, suspicion, and religious bias driven by the dominance of Christianity and Islam often hindered access to sacred knowledge. The researcher mitigated this by building trust with gatekeepers, ensuring voluntary participation, and excluding restricted ritual secrets to maintain ethical boundaries.
- iii. **Logistical and Linguistic Barriers:** To manage translation challenges in the Lugbara-ti Terego dialect, bilingual assistants and back-translation were utilized. Physical remoteness of heritage sites was addressed by scheduling fieldwork during the dry season and employing local guides.
- iv. **Knowledge Transmission:** To address generational gaps, intergenerational interviews were used to compare perceptions between elders (45+ years) and the younger generation (18–35 years), highlighting how traditions are remembered or adapted in a modern context.

Synthesis of Methodology

Chapter Three presents the methodological framework employed to investigate the history of Yakani Spirit among the Lugbara of Terego in the West Nile Region of Uganda between 1883 and 2025. The study adopted a qualitative historical inquiry guided by the interpretivist paradigm, using a historical research design complemented by ethnographic fieldwork. This approach enabled the researcher to examine the origins, practices, cultural meanings and historical transformations of Yakani Spirit through the experiences and interpretations of community members. The study was conducted in five sub-counties of Terego District, namely Omugo, Odupi, Aii-vu, Uriama and Bileafe, selected for their historical and contemporary associations with Yakani Spirit.

The study employed purposive and snowball sampling to identify knowledgeable participants, including elders, traditional spiritual practitioners, religious leaders, cultural institution representatives and other community members. Although the initial target was 100 participants, the study involved 98 participants comprising 49 in-depth interview participants, 25 key informants and 24 participants in three focus group discussions. Data were collected over five months in 2025 through interviews, focus group discussions, ethnographic observation and the examination of oral traditions, documentary records, linguistic evidence and relevant secondary literature. These complementary sources enabled the researcher to investigate both inherited communal memories and individual recollections while situating contemporary practices within their historical contexts.

Data analysis involved thematic, content, narrative, chronological and comparative historical approaches. These methods facilitated the identification of recurring themes concerning the origins, ritual practices, symbolism, external influences, social functions and transformation of Yakani Spirit across precolonial, colonial and postcolonial periods. The credibility of the findings was strengthened through triangulation, prolonged engagement with the community, member checking and reflexive journaling. The study also observed ethical principles relating to informed consent, voluntary participation, confidentiality, cultural sensitivity and the protection of sacred indigenous knowledge. Finally, the chapter acknowledges methodological challenges, including the scarcity of written records, inconsistencies in oral accounts, age-related memory limitations, translation difficulties, religious sensitivities, restricted access to sacred knowledge and the researcher's potential subjectivity. These challenges were addressed, where possible, through cross-checking sources, engaging different generations and knowledge holders, building community trust and critically evaluating the available evidence. Overall, the methodology provides the basis for reconstructing the historical development of Yakani Spirit while recognising the importance of oral traditions and indigenous knowledge and the need to distinguish community interpretations from independently corroborated historical claims.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE ORIGIN AND EVOLUTION OF YAKANI SPIRIT BELIEFS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents and discusses findings on the origin and evolution of Yakani Spirit beliefs among the Lugbara of Terego in the West Nile Region of Uganda between 1883 and 2025. Drawing on oral histories, interviews, available documentary records, and relevant scholarly literature, the chapter examines accounts of Yakani Spirit's origins, the individuals associated with its introduction, the locations connected with its early development, and the historical and social circumstances that contributed to its acceptance among the Terego people. Particular attention is given to the accounts linking Azibo of the Orivu clan, Mirio Omba of the Luruja clan, and Rembe to the transmission of Yakani Spirit. These accounts are examined critically, distinguishing community memories and reported beliefs from historical claims that require independent corroboration.

The chapter is the first of four findings' chapters, each addressing one of the study's specific objectives. Chapter Four investigates the origin and evolution of Yakani Spirit, while Chapter Five examines the rituals and practices associated with it. Chapter Six explores the influence of Christianity, Islam, and modernization on Yakani Spirit beliefs and practices. Chapter Seven assesses the effects attributed to Yakani Spirit beliefs and practices on the social, cultural, economic, and political life of the Terego people. Together, these chapters address the study's general objective of documenting the history and practice of Yakani Spirit among the Terego Lugbara.

By situating the origin and evolution of Yakani Spirit within the historical experiences and oral traditions of Terego, this chapter contributes to understanding how the community remembers the introduction and development of the spirit. It also identifies gaps in the available historical documentation and places locally transmitted accounts in dialogue with relevant scholarship. The discussion therefore provides a historical foundation for the subsequent chapters, which examine Yakani Spirit's ritual practices, encounters with external influences, and attributed effects on the people of Terego.

4.1 The Origin of Yakani Spirit

Oral traditions collected during this study associate the introduction of Yakani Spirit among the Terego Lugbara with interactions between communities across the present-day Uganda–South Sudan border. The accounts identify Azibo of the Orivu Agorovu clan and Mirio Omba of the Luruja clan as important figures in its introduction, with Rembe remembered as a spiritual intermediary. According to Afeku (oral interview, 2025), the journey involved obtaining sacred items and spiritual knowledge from a custodian beyond Terego. These accounts also associate Yakani Spirit with *dedeyi* (sacred water), a snake, *Olirika* (wind spirit), a spear known as *Ngara*, and a chicken called *Yondu Au*. Such details indicate that local traditions understand Yakani Spirit not simply as a belief, but as a spiritual institution associated with particular objects, places, and people.

The accounts further connect Yakani Spirit's establishment with Pilima, a site now associated with Aripea Catholic Parish. However, the precise date of its introduction and the sequence of events remain uncertain. The oral testimonies are valuable evidence of how Terego elders remember Yakani Spirit's beginnings, but they do not independently establish the date or verify every detail of the narrated journey. In this study, therefore, the accounts are treated as historical traditions that require comparison with other oral versions and documentary evidence.

Published scholarship provides a wider context for examining these traditions. John Middleton's (1963, pp. 80–108) study, *The Yakani or Allah Water Cult among the Lugbara*, places the emergence of the cult among the Lugbara in the late nineteenth century. His account identifies a transmission sequence involving Lagoro, Rembe, Anziku, and Mba of Lugbara, among others. In this version, Anziku obtained Yakani Spirit water from Rembe around 1891–1892 and passed some to Mba (Middleton, (1963, p. 84;) see also Alidri, (2025, pp. 72–89). This published account is important because it provides names and an approximate chronology against which the traditions collected for this study can be compared.

A notable difference is that the local accounts examined here emphasize Azibo and Mirio Omba, whereas Middleton's account foregrounds Anziku and Mba in the transmission of Yakani Spirit into Lugbara. These accounts should not be combined into a single narrative without further evidence. They may reflect different stages of transmission, different community memories, or competing explanations of Yakani Spirit's introduction. Further examination of clan histories and early documentary records is needed to establish the relationship between these named individuals.

The evidence therefore suggests that Yakani Spirit's history among the Terego Lugbara formed part of a wider regional history of spiritual exchange, rather than an isolated local development. Nevertheless, the precise route, date, and individuals involved in its introduction remain matters for further

investigation. The contribution of this study is to document Terego-specific traditions and compare them critically with the broader historical account provided by Middleton (1963). This distinction helps preserve the significance of local oral history without presenting every remembered detail as independently verified fact.

4.1.a Oral Traditions and Narratives Linking the Origin of Yakani Spirit to South Sudan

Oral accounts collected during this study predominantly associated the origin of Yakani Spirit with South Sudan, although an alternative account linked it to the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), formerly Zaire. Participant who identified South Sudan traced Yakani Spirit's transmission to Yondu and Malakal, describing them as distinct places associated with the spirit's history. These accounts emphasize the role of cross-border relationships in the transmission of spiritual beliefs and practices among the Lugbara, Kakwa, and Dinka.

According to Nikodemus Onzima (*76 years old, Igamara, Omugo subcounty*), a Yakani Spirit medium, Rembe, a Kakwa man, introduced Azibo and Mirio Omba to a Dinka spiritual custodian who gave them Yakani Spirit, referred to in the account as *Dedeyi*. The spirit was reportedly accompanied by a pot (*Otakua* or *Saku*) containing sacred water, a spear (*Ngara*), a curled-feather chicken known as *Yondu Au*, and a wind spirit called *Olirika*. Tabua Jokino Abas, a Yakani Spirit medium, similarly recalled that Yakani Spirit came from South Sudan through Rembe and was transmitted to the ancestors of Terego. His testimony emphasizes the sacred objects and spiritual authority associated with Yakani Spirit's place of origin.

These narratives present Yakani Spirit's introduction as a process involving spiritual exchange between the Kakwa, Dinka, and Lugbara. They also demonstrate how particular places and ritual objects have become embedded in Terego's collective memory of Yakani Spirit. However, the accounts do not independently establish the precise route or date of transmission.

The oral evidence can be compared with Middleton's (1963, p. 84) account, which describes a transmission sequence involving Rembe, Anziku, and Mba of Lugbara. Although this version differs from the accounts emphasizing Azibo and Mirio Omba, both associate Yakani Spirit's transmission with Rembe and connections beyond Terego. Alidri (2025, pp. 72–89) provides a more recent discussion of Yakani Spirit's historical and social significance among the Lugbara. Read together, these sources provide a broader framework for examining the Terego narratives, while leaving the precise relationship between the different accounts open to further investigation.

4.1.b Oral Traditions and Narratives Linking the Origin of Yakani Spirit to the Democratic Republic of Congo

A contrasting account linked Yakani Spirit's origin to Anori in the present-day Democratic Republic of Congo. According to the participant who shared this version, Yakani Spirit may have reached Terego through interactions with Lugbara-speaking communities across the border, including the Zaki Lugbara. This account suggests a possible connection between the transmission of spiritual practices, kinship relations, and population movements across the region.

However, the participant acknowledged having heard this explanation from earlier generations rather than possessing direct knowledge of the events. The account should therefore be treated as an alternative oral tradition rather than established evidence that Yakani Spirit originated in the DRC. The greater emphasis on South Sudan in the other accounts suggests that this version was less prominent among the Participant interviewed; the extent of that difference should be confirmed against the interview records.

The contrast between the South Sudan and DRC narratives illustrates both the value and the limitations of oral history. Such traditions preserve community memories, but they may differ in geographical details, named individuals, and explanations of origin. Middleton's (1963, pp. 80–108) study and Alidri's (2025, pp. 72–89) discussion provide broader historical context for understanding Yakani Spirit among the Lugbara, but neither should be treated as direct confirmation of every Terego-specific claim presented here. The contribution of this study is to document local accounts identifying the people and places associated with Yakani Spirit's introduction and to compare these accounts critically with published scholarship. Further examination of oral traditions and historical records is needed to establish whether the Anori narrative represents a separate transmission route or an alternative explanation of Yakani Spirit's history.

4.1c. The Location of Yakani Spirit Shrines in Terego

The majority of the Yakani Spirit mediums involved in this study consistently point to Pilima, the present-day Aripea Catholic Parish in Terego District, as the first installation site of Yakani Spirit in Terego. It is believed that after Azibo and Mirio Omba brought the spirit from Yondu in the current South Sudan and established its shrine at Pilima, where its first rituals and sacrifices were performed.



Figure 1. Photograph of First Yakani Spirit Site, in which Pilima Catholic Chapel in Uriama Sub-County was constructed

Source: Field photograph Candiru Zainab (2025)

All Participant agreed that the shrine afterwards became the central spiritual home of the Yakani Spirit in Terego, serving as a place of worship, healing, celebrations, and judgment. It remains a symbol of the Yakani Spirit presence and continuity. Other sacred sites or spots, such as Orivu and Luruja clan shrines, are known as branch centers linked to the original Pilima shrine.

Meanwhile, Shiroya (1981) and Middleton (1965) document the broad migratory patterns of the Lugbara; this research points to the specific sacred geography of the key spiritual tradition. The journey to Yondu exemplifies Vansina's arguments about the dynamism of oral traditions and their capacity to preserve the memory of specific historical journeys and cultural acquisitions (Vansina, 1985). The overlay of the Catholic parish on the Yakani Spirit shrine at Pilima is a tangible symbol of the postcolonial religious encounter.

4.2 Factors that led to the rise of Yakani Spirit beliefs and practices

According to the accounts of Participant across Terego, several historical, economic and social circumstances contributed to the rise and establishment of the Yakani Spirit beliefs and practices among the Terego people as detailed in the analysis and discussion below:

4.2.1 The mysterious loss of animals

The unexplained loss of animals emerged as one of the factors associated with the acceptance of Yakani Spirit among the Terego people. Cattle were important to household wealth, marriage arrangements, and social standing; therefore, unexplained animal deaths could create anxiety and encourage people to seek spiritual explanations and protection. Within this context, Yakani Spirit was understood by its followers as a source of protection and a means of addressing misfortunes that existing explanations appeared unable to resolve.

This finding is consistent with Middleton's (1963, pp. 90–92) discussion of Yakani Spirit's association with protection and the restoration of social order. Alidri (2025) also notes that cattle deaths between 1890 and 1925 were attributed to the presence of Europeans in some accounts of the Yakani Spirit movement. Such evidence provides a wider historical context for understanding the relationship between livestock loss, insecurity, and spiritual belief. However, it does not establish that every case of animal loss in Terego had the same cause or interpretation.

The evidence suggests that concern about livestock loss may have strengthened the appeal of Yakani Spirit by offering an explanation for misfortune and hope of protection. This interpretation should nevertheless be distinguished from the spiritual claims themselves: the historical significance lies in how people understood and responded to animal loss, rather than in independently verified supernatural causation.

4.2.2 Wealth acquisition

Wealth acquisition was another factor associated with the growth of Yakani Spirit beliefs among the Terego people. In an interview, Tabua Marico, an elder from Odupi village, explained that people who possessed Yakani Spirit attracted visitors seeking solutions to personal problems, including sickness, theft, misfortune, and infertility. He observed that these consultations brought material benefits to the mediums. Similarly, Obiga Kana Joseph, another elderly participant, stated that people consulting Yakani Spirit brought various items in appreciation of the assistance they sought. Their testimonies suggest that Yakani Spirit could provide its mediums with both social recognition and material benefits.

These accounts indicate that the relationship between Yakani Spirit and wealth involved more than the direct accumulation of possessions. The ability to attract visitors and respond to community concerns could strengthen a custodian's standing and create opportunities to receive gifts or other forms of compensation. However, the interviews do not establish that wealth acquisition was the principal motivation for all mediums. Material benefits should therefore be understood as one possible incentive

for maintaining the practice, alongside the spiritual and social responsibilities Participant associated with Yakani Spirit.

This finding can be considered alongside Middleton's (1963, pp. 90–92) discussion of Yakani Spirit's role in social life and Alidri's (2025) examination of its relationship with spirituality and social order. These studies provide broader context, but the evidence from Tabua Marico and Obiga Kana Joseph is particularly relevant to how the practice was understood within Terego. Taken together, the accounts suggest that Yakani Spirit could connect spiritual authority with material exchange, although the extent of the economic benefits varied and requires further evidence.

4.2.3 Moral breakdown

The perceived breakdown of moral values was another factor associated with the acceptance of Yakani Spirit among the Terego people. Participant connected this concern with conduct considered contrary to customary expectations, including sexual misconduct and declining respect for elders. Within this understanding, Yakani Spirit was regarded as a spiritual authority through which wrongdoing could be addressed and social order maintained.

An important perspective on this issue comes from Ocima Patrick, a 39-year-old spirit medium from Uriama who serves as the lead deity for the Orivu Agorovu clan. His position as a medium and his responsibilities within the clan make his testimony particularly relevant to understanding how Yakani Spirit's spiritual authority is interpreted in relation to customary morality. His account should therefore be examined not simply as an individual opinion, but in light of his responsibilities and knowledge of the clan's spiritual practices. However, his position does not automatically establish that all members of the clan share the same understanding.

The finding can be considered alongside Middleton's (1963) study of Yakani Spirit and its relationship with Lugbara social organization. This wider scholarship helps situate the Terego accounts within broader questions of spiritual authority, customary expectations, and social order. Nevertheless, the specific connection between moral misconduct and Yakani Spirit's role in addressing it must be established primarily through the study's interview evidence.

The evidence suggests that Yakani Spirit's significance extended beyond spiritual protection to include the maintenance of conduct considered appropriate within the community. Its perceived authority could reinforce customary expectations and provide a framework for responding to behaviour regarded as unacceptable. At the same time, these findings describe Participant's understandings of morality and spiritual authority; they do not independently demonstrate a general historical decline in moral standards.

4.2.4 Insecurity from external intruders

External incursions, slave raiding, and warfare formed part of the historical circumstances within which Yakani Spirit gained significance among the Lugbara of Terego. During the late nineteenth century, the wider West Nile region experienced insecurity associated with the Mahdist uprising in Sudan (1881–1898), the movements of Emin Pasha’s forces, and raids involving armed groups and slave traders. Emin Pasha administered Equatoria from 1878 until his withdrawal from the region in 1889. These upheavals exposed communities, including the Lugbara and their neighbours, to violence, displacement, and disruption of established social and political relationships.

Historical studies suggest that these experiences contributed to the climate of uncertainty in which Yakani Spirit spread. Middleton (1963) discusses the cult’s emergence during a period of regional upheaval, while King (1970) examines its relationship with external incursions and the later Lugbara response to colonial rule. Yakani Spirit was associated with spiritual protection and confidence in the face of threats, including beliefs that its sacred water could protect followers from harm. Such beliefs may help explain its appeal during periods of insecurity, although they should be understood as reported spiritual convictions rather than proof of supernatural protection.

The regional context is also important for understanding developments in Terego during the early twentieth century. In 1918, colonial authorities became concerned about Yakani Spirit, and in April 1919 an attempt by government police to close a Yakani Spirit gathering at Odupi was followed by a violent confrontation. The episode demonstrates that Yakani Spirit had acquired significance beyond individual spiritual concerns and had become entangled with colonial authority and local political tensions. King (1970), however, cautions against interpreting the movement simply as a sustained anti-colonial rebellion; its development also involved internal religious and social changes.

The evidence therefore suggests that external incursions, warfare, and colonial intervention formed an important context for the growth of Yakani Spirit. Nevertheless, the specific effects of these events on individual Terego communities should be established through local oral testimony and documentary evidence rather than inferred from regional history alone. Yakani Spirit’s appeal may be understood partly in relation to the search for protection, security, and social stability during a period of profound change.

4.2.5 Seek speedy justice

The search for speedy justice was another factor associated with the appeal of Yakani Spirit among the Terego people. Where theft, interpersonal disputes, or other wrongdoing threatened relationships within the community, Yakani Spirit was understood by its followers as a means of identifying wrongdoing

and seeking redress. Its perceived spiritual authority could encourage people to seek intervention where customary processes were considered inadequate or where disputes remained unresolved.

Alidri (2025) identifies Yakani Spirit as having served as a form of transitional justice and as a mechanism for restoring social order among the Lugbara. This interpretation provides a useful framework for examining the Terego findings, although the specific procedures and outcomes must be established through local evidence. Yakani Spirit should not automatically be equated with a formal court system; its role depended on the beliefs, rituals, and authority attributed to it by Participant.

The evidence suggests that Yakani Spirit's appeal may have rested partly on the expectation that wrongdoing would be exposed and disputes resolved through spiritual intervention. This perceived capacity could reinforce social accountability and help restore relationships. However, claims about the speed or effectiveness of Yakani Spirit in delivering justice should be supported by specific interview accounts rather than assumed from its spiritual reputation.

4.2.6 Protection against Evils

Yakani Spirit was believed to protect people against poisoning, witchcraft, and mysterious deaths attributed to malicious or jealous individuals. Elders from Omugo recalled that, before Yakani Spirit's introduction, unexplained deaths created fear because the people responsible could not easily be identified. Yakani Spirit was consequently regarded by its followers as a spiritual means of uncovering concealed wrongdoing and protecting the community.

A teacher from Omugo recounted the murder of his brother, whose body was found in a pool of blood near a riverside where he had gone to bathe. The deceased had left behind two wives and seven children. According to the teacher, his uncle sought Yakani Spirit's intervention to identify the killer, who was reportedly found to be a fellow villager. This testimony illustrates the importance attached to Yakani Spirit as a means of seeking answers when a violent death appeared difficult to explain or resolve through ordinary means.

The account suggests that Yakani Spirit's perceived power extended beyond protection from misfortune to the identification of people suspected of wrongdoing. For the bereaved family, consulting the spirit represented an attempt to establish responsibility and address a serious disruption to family and community life. However, the testimony does not independently establish how the suspected killer was identified or whether the accusation was verified through other evidence. It should therefore be understood as an account of the role attributed to Yakani Spirit, rather than conclusive proof of guilt.

This finding can be compared with Middleton's (1963, pp. 90–92) discussion of the beliefs and powers associated with Yakani Spirit among the Lugbara. His study provides a broader context for understanding why followers regarded the spirit as capable of revealing hidden wrongdoing and protecting people from harm. The evidence from Omugo adds a locally situated example of how these beliefs were understood in relation to violent death and the search for justice. It suggests that Yakani Spirit's significance lay partly in the reassurance and perceived spiritual authority it offered people confronted by fear, uncertainty, and unresolved loss.

Friends influence

Influence from friends and relationships across ethnic boundaries contributed to the acceptance of Yakani Spirit among the Terego people. Religious leaders from Oninia Church explained that Rembe, a Kakwa man from South Sudan, spoke about Yakani Spirit's power and its perceived ability to address community problems. According to these accounts, his influence encouraged Azibo and Mirio Omba to accept the spirit. This narrative highlights the importance of personal relationships and the sharing of spiritual knowledge in the transmission of Yakani Spirit to Terego.

The evidence suggests that Rembe's role extended beyond introducing a spiritual practice; his reported testimonies helped establish confidence in Yakani Spirit among those who encountered it. His relationship with Azibo and Mirio Omba illustrates how inter-community contacts could facilitate the movement of religious beliefs across ethnic boundaries. However, the claim that his influence directly caused their acceptance should be understood as the interpretation preserved in the oral accounts, rather than an independently verified sequence of events.

This finding can be compared with Middleton's (1963, p. 84) account of Yakani Spirit's transmission, which identifies Rembe as an important intermediary in the movement of sacred water to Lugbara communities, including Terego. Middleton's *Prophets and Rainmakers* (1971) also provides a broader framework for examining the relationship between spiritual authority and social change among the Lugbara. Together, these works support the importance of examining personal networks in Yakani Spirit's spread, although they do not independently confirm every detail of the account concerning Azibo and Mirio Omba.

The findings therefore suggest that friendship, trust, and cross-border interaction helped shape the acceptance of Yakani Spirit among the Terego people. Rather than treating its spread solely as an internal religious development, the evidence points to the role of relationships between communities in transmitting and legitimizing spiritual practices.

4.2.8 Respect and Fear

The desire to command respect and avoid interference from others was another factor associated with the acceptance of Yakani Spirit among the Terego people. Participant from Agurua and Odupi explained that some individuals sought Yakani Spirit because its mediums were perceived as powerful and were treated with caution. As one participant remarked, “People wanted to be praised and feared so that nobody jokes with their property and daughters.” This testimony suggests that possessing Yakani Spirit could be associated with social prestige, protection of property, and authority over family affairs.

A further example emerged during the researcher’s visit to a Yakani Spirit medium, who questioned why the motorcycle had been moved across the river rather than left on the opposite bank. He explained that nobody would interfere with the property of someone visiting his home and added that his animals slept in an open place without being disturbed. This account illustrates the medium’s confidence in the protective authority associated with Yakani Spirit. It also suggests that the spirit’s perceived power could influence how mediums understood security and how others behaved around them.

These accounts indicate that Yakani Spirit could function as a source of social authority as well as spiritual protection. The respect accorded to mediums may have discouraged interference with their property and family members, while enhancing their standing within the community. However, the medium’s account demonstrates his own understanding of Yakani Spirit’s power; it does not independently establish that the spirit prevented theft or guaranteed security in every case.

This interpretation can be considered alongside Middleton’s (1963) analysis of Yakani Spirit’s influence on Lugbara social organization. His study helps explain how the movement could create forms of authority that differed from established customary structures. King (1970) further examines the relationship between Yakani Spirit’s organization and colonial-era social and political change. These studies provide a broader context for interpreting the Terego findings, although they do not directly verify every claim concerning respect, property, or family protection.

The evidence therefore suggests that the desire for respect and security contributed to Yakani Spirit’s appeal among some Terego people. Its perceived spiritual power could translate into social prestige and influence, although the extent of these effects should not be generalized to all mediums or community members.

4.2.9 Rigidity in the payment of dowry and marital disputes was rampant

Narrators from Uriama recalled that reluctance by some men to pay bride wealth contributed to family disagreements and tensions surrounding marriage customs. According to these accounts, Yakani Spirit

helped reinforce respect for marital obligations because those who disregarded customary expectations were believed to risk misfortune or spiritual punishment. The narratives suggest that Yakani Spirit's perceived authority could encourage compliance with marriage obligations and help uphold expectations governing relationships between families.

This finding illustrates the connection Participant made between spiritual authority and customary marriage practices. Bride wealth was not merely a material transaction; it formed part of the social relationship between families. Where obligations remained unmet, disagreements could affect wider kinship relations. The belief that Yakani Spirit could punish those who violated customary expectations may therefore have strengthened its perceived role in maintaining social order. However, the accounts establish what narrators believed about the spirit's influence, not that Yakani Spirit independently resolved every marital dispute or that bride wealth practices were uniformly observed.

The finding can be situated within John S. Mbiti's *African Religions and Philosophy* (1969), which discusses the close relationship between religion and social life in African societies. Mbiti's broad perspective helps explain why spiritual beliefs may be connected to marriage, kinship, and communal obligations. Nevertheless, his work provides a general interpretive framework rather than direct evidence about Yakani Spirit among the Terego Lugbara.

The evidence from Uriama therefore suggests that Yakani Spirit was understood not only as a source of spiritual protection but also as a means of reinforcing customary expectations surrounding marriage. Its perceived capacity to punish wrongdoing may have encouraged respect for bridewealth obligations and helped sustain relationships between families. This interpretation demonstrates how Participant understood Yakani Spirit's place in community life without assuming that its influence was uniform across Terego.

4.3 The Arrival of Yakani Spirit among the Terego people

When Participant were asked to indicate when the Yakani Spirit belief began, most of them explained that no exact time could be given, since the origin of Yakani Spirit was deeply rooted in the oral traditions of the Terego people. They emphasized that the spirit had existed long before the coming of Europeans, Christian missionaries, and Islam into the West Nile region.

The elderly Participant stated that by the time they were born, their parents and grandparents had already known about Yakani Spirit, and therefore the belief is much older than the present generation. A youth participant indicated: "*We don't know the exact time and date and the year when Yakani Spirit arrived, but before the Europeans Christianity, and Islam reached our land, Yakani Spirit was already*

inexistence, even our parents had already heard about it.” This narration highlights that the Yakani Spirit was part of precolonial spiritual system of the Terego people a belief that guided moral behavior, protected communities, and connected them to the supernatural long before Western religion and administration took place.

Another elder from Agurua also explained that the Yakani Spirit was introduced during the regime of a local leader known as Ocima, a period known by oral historians as one of the earliest organized leadership systems among the Terego people. According to him: “Yakani Spirit was brought during Ocima’s reign.” (Ocima “ngari”) This organization with a traditional ruler reinforces the idea that the emergence of Yakani Spirit corresponded with early community consolidation and clan association, likely between the late 19th and early 20th centuries a time before colonial boundaries were firmly established in West Nile.

From these accounts, the Participant agree that Yakani Spirit is a very old spirit, whose belief system begun before European colonialism, missionary Christianity, and Islam, placing its beginning in the precolonial period when spiritual power and ancestral veneration were central to social life.

4.4 The Evolution of Yakani Spirit beliefs and practices from 1883 to 2025

This section examines the development of Yakani Spirit beliefs and practices among the Lugbara of Terego from 1883 to 2025, focusing on historical change, adaptation, and continuity. The year 1883 provides a regional historical reference point because published accounts associate it with the Agar Dinka revolt and the early history of Allah Water, which later spread to neighbouring communities. It should not, however, be interpreted as the confirmed date of Yakani Spirit’s introduction into Terego. Middleton (1963, p. 84) traces its transmission into Lugbara communities to the late nineteenth century, while King (1970) examines the movement’s subsequent development and relationship with colonial rule.

The discussion therefore distinguishes the wider regional history of Allah Water from the specific history of Yakani Spirit among the Terego people. It considers how the spirit became established in local religious life, how its practices and authority developed during the colonial period, and how beliefs surrounding it continued or changed through 2025. Oral testimonies are examined alongside published historical accounts, with attention to differences between community memories and independently documented events.

4.1.1 The Evolution of Yakani Spirit into Traditional Religion among the Terego People

Oral interviews associate the adoption of Yakani Spirit among the Terego people with the journey of Azibo and Mirio Omba to Yondu, described in these accounts as a place in present-day South Sudan. An elder from Uriama recalled: “Our ancestors went to the land of the Kakwa and Dinka, where they obtained the sacred water, spiritual wind, the spear, and the chicken. From that period, Yakani Spirit started to protect the people of Terego.” This testimony presents Yakani Spirit’s introduction as an ancestral event through which sacred objects, spiritual knowledge, and beliefs about protection became part of Terego religious life. It records a community understanding of the spirit’s origins, although it does not independently establish the precise date of its arrival.

The period from 1918 to 1930 is particularly significant because Yakani Spirit had become a movement of wider social and political importance by the late 1910s. Colonial authorities were aware of the movement by 1918, and the confrontation at Odupi in April 1919 marked a major episode in its relationship with the colonial administration. Middleton (1963) and King (1970) provide historical context for examining the movement’s organization, beliefs, and changing relationship with Lugbara social structures. These accounts can be compared with oral testimony concerning the development of ritual leadership and the responsibilities of spirit mediums, while recognizing that broader historical accounts do not automatically establish the specific arrangements that existed in every Terego clan.

An interview with Andiga Khemis Jabir, aged 69 and a clan council leader in Aii Vu, conducted on 13 August 2025, provides insight into community understandings of Yakani Spirit’s ritual organization. He recalled: “Every clan had somebody who knew how to speak to the Yakani Spirit. When sickness arrived, he would perform cleansing rituals for the whole community.” His testimony suggests that knowledge of Yakani Spirit and responsibility for ritual activities were associated with particular individuals within clan communities. It also indicates that Yakani Spirit rituals were understood as serving a communal function, especially in responding to sickness. However, his account alone does not establish that every clan had a designated ritual specialist between 1918 and 1930. The historical timing and extent of this arrangement require corroboration from additional oral accounts or documentary sources.

A second interview conducted on 13 August 2025 was with Ocotoko Richard, aged 69, an institutional leader in Aii Vu. His account should be considered alongside Jabir’s testimony when examining local understandings of Yakani Spirit’s historical and social significance. Their positions within community institutions provide relevant perspectives on local traditions, although their statements must be assessed

individually according to what each reported. In particular, it is necessary to distinguish personal recollections from accounts transmitted by earlier generations.

The findings also associate Yakani Spirit with fertility, health, rain, and communal peace. These associations indicate the range of needs those followers understood Yakani Spirit to address. Mbiti (1969, pp. 72–75) provides a broader interpretive framework for examining relationships between spiritual beliefs and human life in African religious systems. Vansina (1985) is relevant to the critical interpretation of oral traditions as historical evidence shaped by cultural meanings and transmission. These works help contextualize the Terego accounts, but they do not independently verify the specific powers attributed to Yakani Spirit or the chronology of local ritual development.

Taken together, the available evidence suggests that Yakani Spirit developed into an important institution of religious and social life among the Terego people. Oral testimony emphasizes ancestral transmission, sacred objects, ritual specialists, and the perceived role of Yakani Spirit in addressing communal concerns. Published scholarship provides a broader regional and colonial historical context against which these accounts can be examined. The distinction between the two forms of evidence remains essential: oral traditions reveal how Terego Participant understand Yakani Spirit's place in their history, while historical scholarship helps establish the wider circumstances in which the movement developed. Further archival and oral evidence is needed to determine more precisely when particular ritual arrangements emerged and how consistently they were practiced across Terego clans.

4.4.2 The Evolution of Yakani Spirit into a Tool of Resistance against Colonial and Missionary Influence among the Terego People

The findings indicate that colonial rule and missionary activity contributed to changes in the public practice of Yakani Spirit among the Terego people, particularly during the period from 1914 to 1962. An elderly participant from Omugo recalled:

“When the white missionary priests arrived, they said the Yakani Spirit was witchcraft. People started to hide their sacred pots and stopped calling the Yakani Spirit publicly. Some of the Yakani Spirit mediums began confronting the colonial administrators. In 1919, a conflict erupted between the people of Terego and the British administration in the West Nile District. This became known as the Odupi rebellion of 1919.”

This testimony suggests that missionary condemnation was associated with concealment of sacred objects and reduced public observance. The participant also connected Yakani Spirit with resistance to colonial authority. Historically, the 1919 Odupi confrontation is discussed in scholarship on the Yakani

Spirit movement, particularly by King (1970) and Middleton (1963). However, the interview alone cannot establish that missionary opposition directly caused the confrontation.

An elderly woman from the Luruja clan further recalled: *“The missionaries told us to end sacrificing to the Yakani Spirit. Other people continued secretly, singing Christian songs mixed with Yakani Spirit words.”* Her account suggests that some followers responded to religious pressure through concealment or the blending of practices. Masondo (2011), citing Leonard (1906), provides a broader interpretation of colonial influence on African religious systems, but this argument should be treated as contextual rather than direct evidence of developments among the Terego. Similarly, claims that mission schools and hospitals displaced traditional healing and that Yakani Spirit survived through hidden rites require further local evidence.

Overall, the testimonies suggest that colonial and missionary influence challenged the public practice of Yakani Spirit, while some followers maintained or adapted their beliefs. Yakani Spirit’s association with resistance is therefore best understood through both its reported spiritual significance and its place in the historical tensions between indigenous institutions and colonial authority.

4.4.3 The Evolution of Yakani Spirit into a Tool for Cultural Identity among the People of Terego in the Post-colonial Period (1962–2025)

Oral narratives from Uriama indicate that the meaning of Yakani Spirit has changed across generations while retaining cultural significance. Two young Participant observed: *“Yakani Spirit is part of our culture, but we see it now as history more than a power to worship.”* In contrast, some elders maintained that Yakani Spirit *“still works very effectively when invoked with truth.”* This difference suggests that younger people may emphasize Yakani Spirit’s historical and cultural value, while some elders continue to affirm its spiritual efficacy. Mbiti (1969) provides a broader framework for understanding the continuity and adaptation of African religious traditions amid social change. In Terego, however, the extent of this generational shift must be established through the local testimony rather than assumed from general theory.

A female participant in her early forties explained: *“Nowadays, we remember Yakani Spirit during cultural occurrences. We dance, sing, tell stories, cook, brew (Kwete), and teach children about our ancestors.”* Her account suggests that cultural gatherings and the transmission of ancestral memories provide ways of maintaining Yakani Spirit’s significance. Although some practices may have become more private or culturally oriented, the available testimony does not establish that shrine-based rituals have generally been replaced by family observances or festivals. Rather, it indicates that Yakani Spirit’s cultural role can persist alongside differing contemporary beliefs about its spiritual power.

Mbiti (1969) and Vansina (1985) offer general frameworks for interpreting African religious traditions and oral history, but they do not provide direct evidence of Yakani Spirit's transformation among the Terego. Middleton's work on Yakani Spirit and Lugbara society, particularly his 1963 study, provides a more specific historical point of comparison. Nevertheless, further research is needed to document how Yakani Spirit beliefs and practices have changed across Terego communities and generations.

This study addresses that gap by combining oral testimonies, historical literature, and accounts of contemporary cultural practice to examine Yakani Spirit from 1883 to 2025. The findings suggest that Yakani Spirit has retained cultural significance even as Participant differ in how they understand and practice the tradition. Its post-colonial history therefore reflects not simply the disappearance or survival of a religious practice, but an ongoing negotiation between spiritual belief, ancestral memory, and cultural identity.

4.4.4 The Acceptance and Reverence of Yakani Spirit among the People of Terego

The findings indicate that Yakani Spirit was accepted and revered by some Terego communities because of its perceived influence on moral conduct, social order, security, and material well-being. Participant described Yakani Spirit not only as a spiritual force but also as an institution through which community values and expectations were upheld. The following factors emerged from their accounts.

Wealth and material benefits. Participant reported that Yakani Spirit mediums received livestock, poultry, food, and other gifts from people seeking healing, protection, or solutions to personal difficulties. These exchanges suggest that the shrine could provide material benefits to its mediums while reinforcing their social standing. However, such accounts do not establish that all mediums became wealthy or that Yakani Spirit itself objectively caused prosperity.

Discipline and social order. Participant associated Yakani Spirit with the enforcement of customary expectations, including respect for elders, honesty, and the protection of property. They believed that violations could attract spiritual punishment. This suggests that belief in Yakani Spirit helped reinforce community norms and encouraged compliance with accepted standards of behaviour.

Fear, accountability, and justice. Some Participant explained that fear of exposure or spiritual punishment discouraged theft and other perceived wrongdoing. According to these beliefs, Yakani Spirit mediums could reveal concealed offences, while those who refused to acknowledge wrongdoing might experience misfortune or illness. These accounts demonstrate how Participant understood Yakani Spirit as a source of accountability and justice; they do not independently verify supernatural punishment or establish the guilt of particular individuals.

Promotion of morality. Participant also associated Yakani Spirit with condemning adultery, fornication, lying, and theft. The expectation that followers should act truthfully and respect others indicates that Yakani Spirit belief was linked to a moral framework governing everyday relationships. Nevertheless, the claim that its followers were more morally upright than non-followers would require comparative evidence.

Respect and status of mediums. Yakani Spirit mediums and their families were reportedly respected because of their perceived ability to communicate with the spirit and advise people facing illness, conflict, or other difficulties. This role could strengthen their influence within the community. Their authority therefore had both spiritual and social dimensions.

These findings can be interpreted alongside Turner's (1969) work on ritual and symbolism, which provides a broader framework for understanding how ritual practices express and reinforce shared social values. In Terego, Participant's accounts suggest that Yakani Spirit's significance extended beyond worship to questions of morality, authority, material exchange, and communal relationships. Turner's work provides an interpretive framework rather than direct evidence about Yakani Spirit itself.

Overall, the accounts suggest that Yakani Spirit was revered because followers associated it with protection, discipline, justice, moral guidance, and material well-being. Its acceptance can therefore be understood in relation to the spiritual meanings people attached to it and the social functions they believed it served. The extent of these functions, however, should not be generalized to every Terego community without further supporting evidence.

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter examined the origin and evolution of Yakani Spirit among the Terego people from 1883 to 2025. Oral traditions associate its introduction with Azibo, Mirio Omba, and Rembe through cross-border interactions with communities in present-day South Sudan. However, differences between local accounts and Middleton's (1963) transmission history mean that its precise origin and route into Terego remain uncertain.

The findings indicate that Yakani Spirit developed significance beyond spiritual belief, becoming associated with protection, moral regulation, dispute resolution, and material well-being. Colonial and missionary encounters challenged its public practice, while oral testimonies suggest that some followers concealed or adapted their practices. In the post-colonial period, Yakani Spirit continued to hold cultural significance, although Participant differed in their understanding of its spiritual power.

Overall, the evidence suggests that Yakani Spirit's history involved both continuity and change. These findings provide a foundation for examining its rituals and practices in Chapter Five, external influences in Chapter Six, and its effects on the people of Terego in Chapter Seven.

CHAPTER FIVE

RITUALS AND PRACTICES ASSOCIATED WITH THE YAKANI SPIRIT AMONG THE TEREKO PEOPLE IN THE WEST NILE REGION, 1883-2025

5.0 Introduction

This chapter examines the rituals and practices associated with Yakani Spirit among the Tereko people from 1883 to 2025. It analyses the people who perform the rituals, the criteria for selecting mediums, the occasions and locations of ritual performance, and the spiritual and social meanings attached to these practices. Drawing on oral interviews, key informant interviews, focus group discussions, and relevant historical scholarship, the chapter compares community accounts with published evidence while distinguishing remembered traditions from independently documented historical events. It also examines how ritual practices relate to healing, moral authority, communal identity, and the transmission of cultural knowledge. The discussion is organized around ritual leadership, ceremonies, timing, sacred places, consultation, and the significance of Yakani Spirit rituals in Tereko society.

5.1 Yakani Spirit and communalism among the Tereko people

Yakani Spirit rituals were remembered as communal practices through which the Tereko people expressed shared spiritual beliefs and sought collective well-being. An elder from Pilima recalled: “The shrine was here where Aripea Parish now stands. People gathered with the sacred water (*dedeyi*), the spear (*Ngara*), and the chicken (*Au*). They prayed to the wind spirit (*Olirika*) for rain and peace.” This account connects ritual practice with a specific place, sacred objects, and communal concerns such as rainfall and peace.

The gathering of community members around a shared ritual suggests that Yakani Spirit practices served purposes beyond individual worship. The preparation of sacred objects, collective prayer, and participation in ceremonies helped communicate cultural knowledge and affirm relationships between the community and the spirit. Mbiti (1969) provides a general framework for interpreting the relationship between religion and communal life in African societies. In the Tereko case, however, the significance of communalism is demonstrated most directly by the elder’s account and requires comparison with other testimonies to establish how participation varied by clan, gender, age, and ritual occasion.

5.2 Yakani Spirit mediums and the criteria for their selection

The selection of a Yakani Spirit medium among the Terego people was associated with spiritual calling, family background, ritual knowledge, and the ability to fulfil the responsibilities attached to the position. However, the accounts collected for this study indicate that there was no universally agreed criterion for becoming a medium. While some accounts emphasized inheritance, others stressed the manifestation of spiritual power and the recognition of the candidate by experienced mediums and elders.

One account associated succession with family lineage, particularly the first son of the first wife of an existing medium. Other accounts, however, indicated that spiritual responsibility could pass to another family member or person believed to possess the necessary calling. This difference suggests that hereditary succession was one reported pathway rather than a rule that can be assumed to have applied uniformly across all Terego clans and historical periods.

The accounts also associated selection with moral conduct, knowledge of ritual procedures, and the ability to maintain the sacred objects and fulfil the obligations of the spirit. Dreams, unusual experiences, illness, and changes in behaviour were reportedly interpreted as possible signs of a spiritual calling. Elders or experienced practitioners could help determine whether such experiences indicated a genuine calling and whether the individual was prepared to assume the responsibilities of a medium. These accounts point to a process involving both personal experience and community recognition, although the precise procedures appear to have varied.



Figure 2. Photo of Yakani Spirit Spiritual leader Ocima Patrick at Uriama Sub-County, Terego District (field photo by Candiru Zainab 2025)

The emphasis on resources in some accounts also requires careful interpretation. Maintaining ritual objects and meeting the demands of ceremonies could require material support. Nevertheless, the evidence does not establish that wealth was a universal qualification or that every medium was selected because of economic status. Material capacity should therefore be distinguished from the spiritual legitimacy and ritual knowledge associated with the position.

In my assessment, the variation in these accounts is historically significant. It cautions against presenting the selection of Yakani Spirit mediums as a single, fixed system throughout the period 1883–2025. The available testimonies provide evidence of remembered selection practices, but further comparison across clans and generations is necessary to establish when particular criteria were followed and how they changed. The following section examines the duties and responsibilities that mediums were expected to perform.

5.3 Duties, Powers and Responsibilities of Yakani Spirit Mediums

Yakani Spirit mediums were described in the interviews as occupying both spiritual and social positions within Terego society. Their reported responsibilities included conducting rituals, providing spiritual guidance, treating illness, interpreting misfortune, advising community members, and safeguarding sacred objects and knowledge associated with Yakani Spirit. These responsibilities suggest that the medium's role extended beyond individual religious observance to matters of communal welfare and social relationships. However, the extent of a medium's authority varied according to the accounts and should not be assumed to have been uniform across all Terego clans or throughout 1883–2025.

One important responsibility was presiding over rituals associated with purification, appeasement, rainmaking, healing, and protection. According to the accounts collected for this study, community members consulted mediums when particular difficulties required ritual intervention. Some descriptions also associated ritual performance with communication between the medium and Yakani Spirit through a trance or possession state. Such descriptions represent Participant' understandings of spiritual communication; they do not establish that every medium entered a trance or that all rituals followed the same procedure. The specific practices, Participant, and circumstances of each ceremony require examination in relation to the relevant oral testimony.

Healing was another responsibility attributed to Yakani Spirit mediums. Interview accounts associated their interventions with herbal remedies, divination, and spiritual cleansing, particularly where illness was understood to result from a broken taboo, a curse, or spiritual displeasure. These accounts indicate that healing could involve explanations of illness that connected an individual's condition with family relationships, customary obligations, and spiritual beliefs. In interpreting this evidence, I distinguish

the healing practices reported by Participant from claims about their medical effectiveness. The interviews document how people understood and responded to illness, rather than independently demonstrating that Yakani Spirit rituals cured particular conditions.

Mediums were also reportedly consulted during disputes, drought, epidemics, and other communal difficulties. Through divination and ritual consultation, they were believed to help identify the causes of misfortune and advise people on appropriate responses. This role potentially placed mediums within wider systems of customary authority, alongside clan leaders and elders. Nevertheless, the available accounts do not establish that mediums directed every major community decision or possessed authority over all local leaders. Their influence should instead be understood in relation to the particular circumstances and relationships described by informants.

The safeguarding of sacred objects, ritual songs, oral traditions, and knowledge of customary practices constituted another reported responsibility. The accounts suggest that this knowledge was transmitted selectively, particularly to people considered suitable to maintain the spirit's practices. Such transmission could contribute to the continuity of Yakani Spirit traditions across generations. At the same time, the extent to which knowledge was restricted, and whether access depended on initiation, family connections, or individual spiritual calling, requires comparison with the different accounts discussed in Section 5.2.

Yakani Spirit mediums were further associated with the maintenance of moral expectations. Participant described them as people who could mediate disputes, pronounce blessings or curses, and respond ritually to conduct regarded as a violation of customary obligations. These reported responsibilities suggest that spiritual authority could reinforce social expectations concerning acceptable behaviour. However, the evidence should not be taken to mean that mediums possessed a uniform judicial authority or that every alleged offender was subjected to spiritual sanctions.

Taken together, the accounts portray Yakani Spirit mediums as ritual practitioners whose responsibilities could encompass healing, divination, cultural transmission, dispute mediation, and moral guidance. In my assessment, their significance lay in the relationship between spiritual authority and the practical concerns of community life. Yet these findings remain grounded in the testimonies available for this study; establishing how the roles differed between clans and changed over time requires further chronological and comparative evidence. The next section examines the people who participated in performing Yakani Spirit rituals and the responsibilities assigned to them.

5.4 Yakani Spirit Rituals among the Terego People

The accounts collected for this study indicate that Yakani Spirit rituals among the Terego people involved different Participant whose responsibilities depended on their knowledge, experience, and relationship with the spirit. These included spiritual mediums, elders, individuals knowledgeable about ritual procedures, and younger people who assisted experienced practitioners. The accounts suggest a division of responsibilities in ritual performance, although the precise arrangement varied according to the ceremony and the community concerned.

The spiritual medium occupied a central position in the performance of Yakani Spirit rituals. Informants from Uriama, Omugo, Leju, Odupi, Agurua, and Aii-vu associated mediums with leading ceremonies, invoking Yakani Spirit, directing sacrifices, and guiding Participants through prescribed ritual procedures. Within these accounts, the medium was understood as an intermediary between the community and the spirit. The description of the medium as the spirit's spokesperson therefore reflects the spiritual authority attributed to the office by practitioners. It does not necessarily mean that every medium performed identical duties or that all community members interpreted the medium's pronouncements in the same way.



Figure 3. Photo showing the lead medium at the shrine and making demonstration of how and when the rituals are practiced and, on the right, he is making a chicken offertory to the Yakani Spirit at the end of the month

Source: Field photograph by Candiru Zainab (2025)

Elders were also described as important Participant in Yakani Spirit ritual activities. Their reported responsibilities included preserving customary knowledge, advising younger Participant, explaining ritual requirements, and helping ensure that ceremonies respected established taboos. Some oral accounts connected this knowledge with traditions transmitted from earlier mediums, including Azibo

and Mirio Omba. This association is significant because it links contemporary understandings of ritual authority with community memories of Yakani Spirit's introduction and development. However, the precise historical relationship between these figures and the subsequent organization of ritual performance requires further corroboration.



Figure 4. Photo of Yakani Spirit Spiritual leader Abasi Jokino Tabua at Aii-vu Sub- County, Terego District

Source: Field photograph by Candiru Zainab (2025)

The accounts further indicate that some elders and knowledgeable community members continued to guide Yakani Spirit-related practices at the time of the fieldwork. This suggests a degree of continuity in the transmission of ritual knowledge. Nevertheless, continued knowledge of Yakani Spirit traditions should not automatically be equated with active ritual performance. The extent to which particular elders continued to conduct or supervise ceremonies must be established through their individual testimonies and observations recorded during fieldwork.

Other knowledgeable individuals reportedly assisted with the procedures, songs, prayers, and materials required during ceremonies. Their participation suggests that ritual performance was not necessarily the responsibility of the medium alone. Practical and ceremonial knowledge could be distributed among people with different levels of experience. The available accounts, however, do not establish that every ritual required the same assistants or followed an identical sequence of activities.

The accounts also refer to younger people assisting experienced mediums in particular ritual activities. Such participation may have provided opportunities to learn customary procedures and acquire

knowledge under the guidance of established practitioners. One reported practice involved selecting a trusted child or younger person to assist with certain responsibilities. However, assistance, training, initiation, and succession should be distinguished. The evidence available for this section does not establish that every young assistant was formally initiated or expected to inherit the position of medium.

In my assessment, these accounts suggest that Yakani Spirit ritual performance involved cooperation between spiritual specialists and other knowledgeable members of the community. The medium's ritual authority was complemented by elders' customary knowledge and the assistance of individuals familiar with particular procedures. This arrangement could support the continuity of ritual knowledge across generations, although the available evidence does not establish a uniform organizational structure or succession system across all Terego clans throughout 1883–2025.

The findings therefore point to differentiated participation rather than a single, universally applied hierarchy. The specific responsibilities of ritual Participant need to be understood in relation to the testimonies, locations, and periods documented in this study. Further comparison of accounts is also necessary to establish whether participation differed according to clan, gender, generation, and the nature of the ceremony. The next section examines the rituals and ceremonies themselves, focusing on their purposes, procedures, timing, and associated objects.



Figure 5. Photograph of Yakani Spirit Ritualists in Omugo Sub County, Terego District

Source: Field photograph by Candiru Zainab (2025)

5.5 Yakani Spirit Rituals and Ceremonies Performed

The interviews, focus group discussions, and accounts provided by Yakani Spirit mediums identified several rituals associated with the spiritual and social life of the Terego people. These included the use

of *dedeyi* (sacred water), healing and cleansing ceremonies, divination and dispute resolution, fertility rites, and rituals associated with rainfall and communal thanksgiving. The accounts suggest that these practices addressed concerns such as illness, protection, fertility, social conflict, and collective well-being. Their procedures and meanings, however, should be understood in relation to the testimonies documenting them rather than assumed to have remained unchanged throughout 1883–2025.

The Dedeyi Ritual

The *dedeyi* ritual was associated with spiritual protection, healing, and the blessing of livestock and people preparing for conflict. According to the oral accounts, sacred water was kept in a pot known as *Otakua* or *Saku*, which served as an important ritual object. The water was understood by practitioners to possess spiritual significance and was used in ceremonies intended to protect individuals and the wider community. These accounts connect the material object—the pot and its contents—with the spiritual authority attributed to Yakani Spirit.

Oral traditions associate the use of *dedeyi* with the period of Azibo and Mirio Omba, remembered in Terego as important figures in Yakani Spirit’s history. Some accounts also recall the loss or removal of sacred water during encounters with colonial authorities and missionaries. These recollections are relevant to understanding how community members remember changes in ritual practice. However, the precise date, circumstances, and historical agents involved in the removal of *dedeyi* require corroboration from specific interviews and documentary sources. The accounts therefore establish a remembered association with earlier mediums more securely than they establish a precise chronology.

Healing and Cleansing Rituals

Healing and cleansing constituted another category of Yakani Spirit ritual practice. Participant described ceremonies in which a chicken was moved around the head of a sick person as part of a process intended to remove illness or spiritual impurity. One account specified that the chicken was rotated three times for a female patient and four times for a male patient. This detail suggests that ritual procedures could be governed by prescribed actions and distinctions based on the person receiving treatment.

The significance of these actions lies partly in the meanings attributed to them by practitioners. The movement of the chicken was understood as part of a ritual response to illness, while the subsequent treatment or sacrifice formed part of the broader ceremony. These accounts demonstrate how healing could involve spiritual interpretations of suffering alongside physical symptoms. They do not, by themselves, establish the medical effectiveness of the ritual, and the reported difference in the number

of rotations should be attributed to the particular informants who described it rather than generalized to every Terego community.

Divination and Dispute Resolution

Yakani Spirit was also associated with divination and the resolution of disputes. According to the accounts collected for this study, people consulted mediums when they suspected theft, experienced unexplained misfortune, or encountered disagreements that they believed required spiritual intervention. Through divination and ritual consultation, mediums were believed to help identify the causes of such problems and guide those involved towards a resolution.

These practices suggest that Yakani Spirit rituals could contribute to the maintenance of customary expectations and social relationships. The medium's authority was important because the advice offered during consultation was understood within a spiritual framework. Nevertheless, the description of Yakani Spirit as a judicial mechanism should not be taken to mean that it operated like a formal court or that a medium's identification of a suspected offender constituted independent proof of guilt. The evidence instead documents a customary approach to interpreting wrongdoing and seeking redress.

Fertility Rites

Fertility rites also appear in the oral accounts of Yakani Spirit practices. One reported narrative described a woman experiencing difficulty conceiving who climbed an anthill with assistance from a person described as a warrior or strong individual. The ceremony was understood as an attempt to address fertility difficulties through ritual action. The anthill and the assisted movement formed part of the account's description of the procedure, although the symbolism attributed to these elements requires further explanation from the informant or other knowledgeable practitioners.

This account illustrates how fertility concerns could be interpreted through both physical and spiritual understandings of human experience. However, a single narrative does not establish how widely the practice was performed, whether it was specific to a particular clan, or whether the procedure changed over time. Its historical and cultural significance should therefore be assessed alongside other accounts of fertility rituals in Terego.

Seasonal and Communal Rituals

The accounts also associated Yakani Spirit rituals with rainfall, thanksgiving, and communal well-being. Such ceremonies brought spiritual concerns into the shared life of the community, particularly where rainfall and agricultural success were important to household livelihoods. Participant described these activities as occasions for seeking assistance from Yakani Spirit and expressing collective concerns.

Communal ceremonies may also have provided opportunities for transmitting ritual knowledge, songs, and customary understandings between generations. Their significance therefore extended beyond the immediate purpose of a particular ritual: they could reinforce relationships among Participant and preserve memories of shared traditions. Nevertheless, the frequency, timing, and precise organization of these ceremonies need to be established from the field evidence rather than assumed to have been identical across Terego.

Taken together, the accounts reveal a range of Yakani Spirit rituals associated with protection, healing, dispute resolution, fertility, rainfall, and thanksgiving. In my assessment, their importance lies in the way they connected spiritual beliefs with practical concerns in community life. They also demonstrate that ritual practice involved prescribed actions, objects, and forms of participation whose meanings were understood within the Terego cultural context. However, the available evidence does not establish that every practice was performed in every clan or remained unchanged throughout the study period. The following section examines when and under what circumstances these rituals were performed.

5.6 Time and Performance of Yakani Spirit Rituals

Yakani Spirit rituals among the Terego people were performed in response to particular circumstances, including illness, misfortune, disputes, lunar cycles, death, hospitality, warfare, and harvest. The accounts indicate that ritual timing depended on the problem being addressed and the obligations associated with Yakani Spirit.

Illness and healing: When illness was attributed to spiritual causes, a medium reportedly rotated a chicken around the patient's head three times for a female and four times for a male before slaughtering it at the shrine. Dedeyi (sacred water) was also applied to wounds, which practitioners believed would heal without leaving scars. These accounts document traditional healing beliefs but do not independently establish medical effectiveness.

Misfortune, death, and justice: Rituals were performed when people experienced crop failure, unexplained deaths, theft, or unresolved disputes. Practitioners consulted mediums to seek explanations, identify suspected wrongdoers, and restore social harmony. Such identifications represent spiritual interpretations and should not be treated as independent proof of guilt.

Lunar cycles: One account described monthly sacrifices involving a chicken at the beginning of the new moon and a goat at the end of the lunar cycle. Failure to fulfil these obligations was believed to

provoke Yakani Spirit, sometimes resulting in the loss of livestock. This schedule should be attributed to the informant unless corroborated by other accounts.

Hospitality and restoration of Yakani Spirit: A participant from Aii-vu in Leju recalled that when the researcher returned from Kampala, his father sacrificed a chicken in a sacred corner of the house. The participant explained: “The head and the gizzard were given to Yakani Spirit first before giving for me to eat.” This account illustrates how ritual obligations could be incorporated into household hospitality. Other testimonies described rituals to restore Yakani Spirit when observance had ceased because of Christian conversion, difficulties fulfilling perceived spiritual obligations, or the death of a custodian.

Warfare and protection: An informant from Uriama Ayaa recalled that elders consulted his grandfather, Azibo, about preparing for war. According to the participant, Azibo instructed them to bring their war equipment for blessing. This testimony reflects community memories of Yakani Spirit's protective role, although the precise historical events and outcomes require independent corroboration.

Communal and agricultural activities: Other accounts associated Yakani Spirit rituals with communal gatherings, thanksgiving, and harvest. One reported practice involved offering the first harvested food to Yakani Spirit before consumption. Such observances suggest a connection between spiritual obligations, agricultural life, and the transmission of cultural knowledge.

Overall, the findings indicate that Yakani Spirit rituals were associated with both recurring obligations and specific life events. Mbiti (1969) offers a general framework for understanding the relationship between religion and everyday life in African societies, while the Terego testimonies provide the direct evidence for the practices described here. However, the available evidence does not establish that all these rituals were practised uniformly across Terego or remained unchanged throughout 1883–2025.

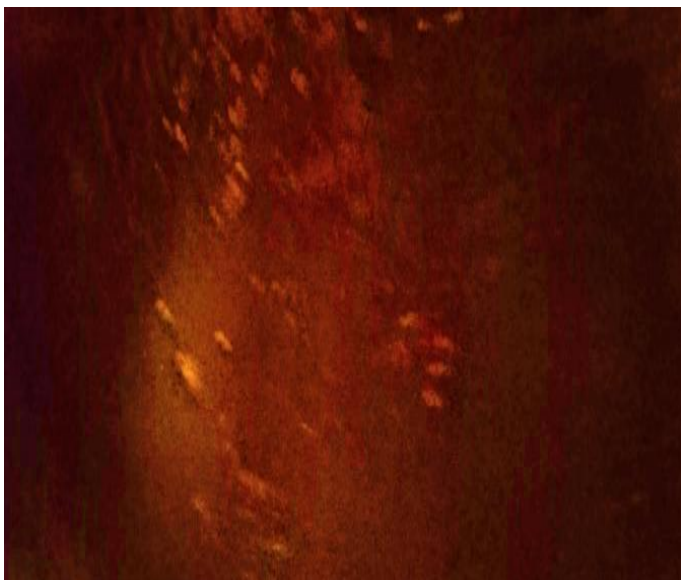


Figure 6. A first harvest Ritual of the agricultural food of cooked beans sacrificed to the Yakani Spirit in the shrine Leju in Aii-vu

Source: Field photograph by Candiru Zainab (2025)

This organized and context-motivated ritual life demonstrates the widespread nature of the sacred in the Terego Belief system. It corresponds with Mbiti's emphasis on the integration of religious practice with all aspects of life, from the cosmic (lunar cycles) to the mundane (hospitality) (Mbiti, 1969).

Yakani Spirit rituals are therefore timed according to agricultural cycles, life events, and crises affecting the community. This careful timing determines the Terego people's belief that spiritual guidance must align with natural, social, and personal circumstances. The seasonal, event-driven, and situational nature of Yakani Spirit rituals reflects their practical and symbolic importance in sustaining spiritual, social, and cultural life in Terego.

5.7 The Abode of Yakani Spirit mediums

Yakani Spirit mediums among the Terego people conducted spiritual activities in designated sacred places, including shrines and sacred corners within homes. These locations provided settings for ritual performance and represented the community's connection with Yakani Spirit.

The shrine was described as a principal place of ritual activity. According to Participant, it contained sacred objects such as a spear (*ngari*), pots (*Otakua/saku*), stones, and a calabash used for offerings. Mediums reportedly used these spaces for healing rituals, spiritual consultation, and communication with Yakani Spirit. These accounts suggest that the shrine was both a ritual space and a repository of sacred objects and knowledge.

The findings also indicate that Yakani Spirit-related practices were not confined to shrines. Some rituals took place in designated corners of homes, demonstrating that spiritual obligations could form part of household life. In my assessment, these different settings show how Yakani Spirit practices connected sacred space with everyday community activities. However, the available accounts do not establish that all mediums used identical shrine arrangements or performed rituals in the same locations.

Overall, shrines and sacred corners were important to the practice and transmission of Yakani Spirit traditions among the Terego people. Their specific significance is best understood through the Participant's accounts and descriptions of actual ritual practices.

5.8 Place of Yakani Spirit rituals and practices

Yakani Spirit rituals among the Terego people were performed in designated places, particularly mediums' homes, shrines, and sacred corners. According to the accounts collected for this study, these spaces housed ritual objects and provided settings for activities such as sacrifices and spiritual consultation.

Some accounts indicated that particular corners of homes were reserved for sacred purposes, with women and children restricted from entering them in certain circumstances. These restrictions suggest that access to ritual spaces was regulated by customary rules. However, the available evidence does not establish that the restrictions applied uniformly across all Terego clans or throughout 1883–2025.

Although contemporary practices were associated with household shrines, Pilima remained significant in community memories as an early site associated with Yakani Spirit. This connection links present-day ritual practices with the historical landscape of Terego, although the site's precise historical role requires corroboration.

In my assessment, the location and regulation of ritual spaces helped maintain the distinction between ordinary household activities and practices considered sacred. The evidence also suggests continuity in the association between Yakani Spirit and particular places, although the extent of that continuity over time requires further documentation.



Figure 7. The inside of a Yakani Spirit Shrine with Items

Source: Field photograph by Candiru Zainab (2025)

Sacred Corners: Within homes, specific "sacred corners" are reserved. Women and children were prohibited from accessing it for the purpose of maintaining ritual purity.

While current rituals are home-based, the memory of Pilima as the original installation site remains powerful, anchoring the sacred geography in a historical landscape.

The careful demarcation of ritual space reinforces the sacred/profane division common in religious studies. The static, non-movable nature of the shrine utensils signifies the permanence and rootedness of the Yakani Spirit tradition within the Terego homeland.

5.9 Consulting Yakani Spirit Mediums

Circumstances under Which Yakani Spirit Mediums are consulted or engaged, according to Participant, Yakani Spirit mediums are mainly consulted during times of illness, misfortune, conflict, or uncertainty when the community doubts a trouble in the relationship between the living and the spiritual realm. The invocation of a Yakani Spirit medium generally signifies a crisis demanding spiritual involvement and moral reflection. These circumstances signify the importance of Yakani Spirit in preserving social order, health, and worldwide balance among the Terego people.

Participant stressed that Yakani Spirit mediums are most often involved when Illness persists in spite of medical treatment or when the illness appears to have a mystical cause, such as a curse, ancestral annoyance, or a broken taboo. In this kind of case, the spirit medium performs rituals of divination to investigate the origin of the sickness and prescribe the suitable sacrifices or cleansing ceremonies. This outcome harmonizes with Mbiti, who noted that African spirit mediums are regularly called upon to establish the spiritual causes of sickness and restore balance through ritual healing (Mbiti, 1991, p. 67). Anderson further comments that traditional healing is attached to community spirituality and that mediums act as instruments through which divine power restores wellbeing (Anderson, 2000, p. 112).

Participant also remarked that Yakani Spirit mediums are consulted during abrupt misfortunes such as accidents, crop failure, lightning strikes, or mysterious deaths. Such events are understood not as accidents but as signs of spiritual disorder. A head teacher from Uriama stated that,

I always got accident until one time my uncle decided to go to a Yakani Spirit medium called Ocima, who testified that my father was having a Yakani Spirit which we had abandoned. That is why I was involved in several accidents.

The above account illustrates how the Yakani Spirit was viewed as an inherited spiritual obligation, where "abandoning" the practice was believed to trigger misfortunes like repeated accidents as a sign of spiritual neglect. By consulting the medium Ocima, the family reframed these events as a "warning" from a neglected ancestral power, a concept corroborated by John Middleton in *Lugbara Religion* (1960). Middleton's research confirms that in this cultural context, spirits like Yakani Spirit require constant reciprocity; if the lineage fails to maintain the bond, the spirit withdraws its protection or inflicts "indignation" (*ole*) upon descendants, necessitating ritual restoration to ensure the family's safety.

Equally, the medium is expected to clarify the will of Yakani Spirit and specify which moral or ritual requirements have been ignored. This process helps the community to re-establish moral balance and

stop further misfortune. This reflects Ranger's argument that African spirituality links calamities to moral and social disorder, making the medium's intervention both a religious and a social necessity (Ranger, 1986, p. 94).

In situations of interpersonal or clan dispute Yakani Spirit mediums act as impartial mediators who reveal the spiritual reality of the matter. Participant stated that elders regularly consult the spirit medium before major resolutions, especially in disputes involving allegations of witchcraft, poisoning, inheritance conflicts, or broken oaths. The Yakani Spirit, speaking through the medium, offers a divine decision that commands submission. This corresponds with Ray's (1976) observation that mediums serve as divine arbiters whose judgments exceed human judgment because they are believed to represent ancestral justice (Ray, 1976, p. 45).

Participant explained that Yakani Spirit mediums also preside over rituals, particularly after harvest, initiation, or communal offences. Such rituals restore the land, cleanse the spirit, and reestablish communal harmony. This reveals that the mediums' involvement is recurring, tied not only to crises but also to periodic confirmation of social unity and divine favor.

Historically, Yakani Spirit mediums were also consulted during epidemics, droughts, or warfare. Oral narrations show that during the colonial period, some spirit mediums warned communities against forced labor and foreign invasion, interpreting these as instabilities to ancestral peace. This positions Yakani Spirit within a wider context of cultural preservation, and resistance as discussed by Ranger (1986) in his theory of spiritual nationalism in colonial Africa Ranger (1986).

The Existing literature, including Ray and Mbiti, discusses general African spirit consultation forms but fails to identify the exact situations and ritual analysis under which Yakani Spirit mediums in Terego are invoked. Ray (1976) and Mbiti (1991), this study fills that gap by documenting both the spiritual criteria for consultation and the contextual significance these involvements hold within Terego cosmology.

Hence, Yakani Spirit mediums are involved during misfortune, illness, conflict, environmental crises, and communal rituals. Their involvement is not only a response to physical suffering but also a means of reestablishing moral and universal order. By identifying the spiritual causes of human suffering and suggesting culturally meaningful solutions, Yakani Spirit mediums continue to sustain the moral and spiritual structure of Terego society, even amid modern influences that challenge traditional belief systems.

5.10 Importance of Yakani Spirit mediums in the community

Participant constantly stressed that Yakani Spirit mediums occupy an essential and respected position within the Terego community because of their alleged spiritual authority, wisdom, and connection with the invisible world. Their importance derives from the belief that they act as intermediaries between the human and spiritual realms, ensuring balance, protection, and harmony for persons and the wider community. To several elders, the Yakani Spirit medium represents the spirit's presence and thus commands respect not only as a religious figure but also as a guardian of traditional knowledge and morality.

Spirit Mediums are considered powerful because they are believed to hold the ability to communicate directly with Yakani Spirit, interpret the will, and convey messages that guide communal and personal decisions. Their spiritual insight allows them to recognize roots of misfortune, illness, or social conflict, and to prescribe appropriate rituals or sacrifices for appeasement. This mediating power positions them as mediums of peace and justice, mainly in circumstances where modern systems have failed to offer satisfactory explanations.

To add on, Yakani Spirit mediums are believed to defend the community from external and supernatural threats, such as curses, witchcraft, or evil spirits. Their presence ensures that taboos are valued, and that moral order is preserved. As one of the elder Participant explained, "*Community without a spirit medium is like a home with no head; disorder arrives easily.*" This highlights their symbolic role in preserving the social system and continuity of indigenous morals among the Terego people.

Moreover, spirit mediums' knowledge of rituals, medicinal herbs, and ancestral customs strengthens their power and indispensability. They are often consulted during times of drought, epidemics, or communal disputes, reflecting their essential role in spiritual authority and collective decision-making. Their authority exceeds a simple belief that is both social and knowledge-based authority rooted in centuries of oral tradition and communal experience.

Scholars like Middleton and Mbiti equally remark that in African belief system, mediums evolve authority from their capacity to connect between humanity and the divine, representing the community's moral and spiritual order (Middleton, 1965) and Mbiti (1990). In this context, the Yakani Spirit medium power is not forceful but symbolic and operational, ensuring continuity of the sacred traditions that define Terego identity.

5.11 Importance of Yakani Spirit rituals to the Terego people's spiritual and cultural identity

The Participant highlighted several reasons why these rituals are central to the Terego people's spiritual and cultural life, emphasizing that these practices are deeply rooted in the spiritual and cultural life of the Terego people

Yakani Spirit rituals were described as important to the spiritual and cultural identity of the Terego people. The accounts associated these practices with spiritual guidance, protection, moral expectations, communal relationships, and the transmission of cultural knowledge.

Participant described rituals as ways of seeking protection, healing, and guidance from Yakani Spirit and the ancestral realm. Ritual consultation was also associated with resolving disputes and reinforcing customary obligations. These accounts show how spiritual beliefs could influence interpretations of misfortune, social conduct, and community well-being, although the perceived benefits should be distinguished from independently verified outcomes.

Yakani Spirit rituals also contributed to cultural continuity through the preservation of sacred objects, ritual procedures, songs, and oral traditions. Elders and experienced practitioners played a role in transmitting this knowledge to younger generations. In my assessment, this transmission helped maintain cultural memory, even as the extent of ritual participation and belief varied among individuals and across generations.

The rituals further provided occasions for expressing shared identity and respect for customary authority. Their collective performance could strengthen social relationships and affirm connections to Terego history and traditions. Blumer's (1969) symbolic interactionism offers a framework for examining how shared meanings are formed and maintained through social interaction. Turner (1969) may also provide a comparative perspective on ritual and communal relationships, but neither scholar's work independently establishes the specific effects of Yakani Spirit rituals among the Terego.

Overall, the findings suggest that Yakani Spirit rituals have served both spiritual and cultural purposes. Their significance lies in the meanings Participant attach to them and their reported role in sustaining cultural knowledge, social relationships, and Terego identity. However, these effects should not be assumed to have been uniform or unchanged throughout 1883–2025.

5.12 Organization of Rituals and their Spiritual or Symbolic Meanings

Yakani Spirit rituals among the Terego people involved a series of activities whose order and meaning varied according to the purpose of the ceremony. The accounts collected for this study identify the involvement of elders, preparation of sacred objects, invocation, sacrifice, healing, divination, and communal sharing.

Preparation and invocation: Elders were reportedly involved in organizing rituals and guiding their performance. The medium prepared the ritual space and arranged objects such as the Otakua/saku (ritual pot) and Ngara (spear). Some accounts also associated dedeyi (sacred water) with the practices of Azibo and Mirio Omba. These preparations reflected respect for customary procedures and the sacred character attributed to the objects. Depending on the ceremony, the medium invoked Yakani Spirit through spoken prayers, while Participant sometimes joined in singing and dancing.



Figure 8. *The items for feeding Yakani Spirit*

Source: *Field photograph by Candiru Zainab (2025)*

Animal sacrifice and offerings: Participant described the sacrifice of chickens, goats, sheep, and bulls during particular ceremonies. In one account, selected parts of the animal, including the head and gizzard, were offered to Yakani Spirit before the remaining food was shared. These practices were understood as expressions of respect and the fulfilment of spiritual obligations. The animals used and the procedures followed appear to have depended on the purpose of the ritual.

Healing and protection: Some accounts associated dedeyi with healing and protection. An informant recalled that Azibo applied the sacred water to wounds and blessed men preparing for warfare. The

informant stated: “Baba Azibo blessed them with dedeyi which made them become victorious within six hours the war had ended.” This testimony illustrates the protective power attributed to Yakani Spirit in community memory. However, the claimed healing effects and military outcome require independent historical corroboration.

Another reported healing practice involved rotating a chicken around the head of a sick person before sacrificing it. According to the account, the chicken was rotated four times for a male patient and three times for a female patient. Practitioners understood the procedure as removing sickness or misfortune attributed to Yakani Spirit. This description records a reported belief and ritual procedure rather than establishing the spiritual cause of illness.

Fertility and divination: One account described a fertility ritual in which a woman experiencing infertility climbed an anthill with assistance from a person recognized for bravery or achievement. The symbolic meaning attributed to this practice concerned overcoming difficulties and seeking spiritual assistance. Further evidence is needed to establish how widely the practice was performed and whether its procedures varied.

Divination was also reportedly used in cases involving theft, disputes, and unexplained misfortune. The medium interpreted spiritual signs to advise those seeking assistance. Such practices connected spiritual authority with customary expectations of accountability, although divination alone cannot establish whether a person was responsible for wrongdoing.

Sharing and communal responsibility: Some ceremonies concluded with thanksgiving, shared food, and drink. Ocima explained the importance of generosity in relation to Yakani Spirit, stating: “Yakani Spirit does not like selfishness it needs one to help those in need”. This testimony links the spirit with expectations of sharing and assistance to others. Communal feasting and the distribution of resources could therefore reinforce social relationships alongside the ritual's spiritual purpose.

Overall, the accounts suggest that Yakani Spirit rituals combined prescribed procedures with meanings relating to respect, healing, protection, fertility, justice, and generosity. Their organization was not necessarily identical across all ceremonies or Terego clans. The findings are therefore best understood

through the specific testimonies available, while claims about historical events and ritual effectiveness require corroboration.

5.13 Conclusion

This chapter examined the rituals and practices associated with Yakani Spirit among the Terego people. The findings indicate that these practices were associated with healing, divination, sacrifice, fertility, protection, and communal obligations. Mediums were remembered as performing spiritual and social roles, while elders and other knowledgeable individuals helped preserve ritual knowledge. Shrines and sacred corners provided settings for these activities.

The accounts also suggest that Yakani Spirit rituals contributed to moral expectations, social relationships, and the transmission of cultural knowledge across generations. However, practices and beliefs varied, and the available evidence does not establish that they remained unchanged throughout 1883–2025. Religious change and modernization also influenced how Yakani Spirit was understood and practiced, although their effects require further examination. Overall, the chapter demonstrates the continuing significance of Yakani Spirit in Terego historical memory and cultural identity while identifying the need for further corroboration of particular historical claims.

CHAPTER SIX

EXTERNAL INFLUENCES ON YAKANI SPIRIT BELIEFS AND PRACTICES

6.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the results on the Specific Objective Three: to examine the impact of external influences, including Christianity, Islam, and modernization, on the traditional beliefs and practices related to Yakani Spirit Spirits among the Terego people. The data was collected through interviews with elders, mediums, community members, youth, and local historians, triangulated with documentary sources viewed or treated by the community.

6.1 The interface between Yakani Spirit belief and practice, with Christian Missionaries and colonialism

FGD Participant and elders described the period of colonial administration (early 20th century to Uganda's independence in 1962) as a critical phase of external interference in Yakani Spirit practices.

The elders recalled that Christian missionaries and colonial officers actively discouraged Yakani Spirit rituals, framing them as “pagan” and “backward.” A priest custodian from Pilima stated:

“When the British came with the priests, they told our people not to worship Yakani Spirit Spirit. They even threatened fines and punishment for those who continued. Many stopped going to shrines openly”.

The account highlights the colonial-religious suppression of Yakani Spirit, where British legal threats and missionary condemnation forced the movement to transition from a public practice to a “hidden” resistance. While many stopped visiting shrines “openly” to avoid fines, this strategic retreat allowed the belief system to survive as a private, domestic defiance. This is corroborated by John Middleton in *Prophets and Resistance* (1971), who notes that colonial efforts to ban the “sacred water” and destroy shrines failed to eradicate the movement. Instead, suppression led to the “domestication” of Yakani Spirit, as practitioners moved their rituals into the private sphere, ensuring cultural survival despite external pressure from the state and the church.

Participant also noted that colonial authorities sometimes destroyed shrines or confiscated sacred objects, further suppressing traditional practices. Colonial schools and administrative centers introduced new governance structures, literacy, and moral codes that privileged Western religions. One elder noted, *“The schools taught us to pray in church and respect colonial laws. Those who followed these rules were seen as good people, and those who continued with Yakani Spirit rituals were often*

looked down upon.” In spite of suppression, most Participant emphasized that Yakani Spirit survived through private rituals and oral preservation. Mediums maintained the shrines in secret, and some rituals were adapted to avoid colonial scrutiny. A Custodian from Agurua noted, *“We hide our sacred objects and perform rituals at night. We could not stop completely because Yakani Spirit protects our families and property.”* Participant highlighted that some families combined colonial-introduced religious practices with Yakani Spirit rituals, leading to syncretic forms of spirituality. These adaptations permitted communities to observe superficially with colonial and missionary prospects while preserving ancestral practices.

The interface of Yakani Spirit beliefs with colonialism shows the imposition of external authority on native spirituality, consistent with postcolonial theory. Edward Said stresses that colonial power often sought to undermine local belief systems by presenting them as inferior and evil (Said 1978, pp. 1–21). This is evident in the missionary and administrative actions reported by Terego Participant. Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o also maintains that colonialism struggled to reshape African cultural perception, but indigenous systems continued through resistance and adaptation (Ngũgĩ wa Thiong, 1986, p. 5). The persistence of Yakani Spirit rituals, although in modified forms, demonstrates resilience and continuity under external pressure.

Mbembe highlights the inspired approaches employed by African communities to maintain spiritual identity despite colonial dominance (Mbembe, 2001, p. 3), which aligns with Participant’ narratives of secret rituals and collective practices. Mbiti further underlines that African religions are deeply communal and culturally rooted, making total elimination by colonial forces unlikely (Mbiti, 1969, p. 3).

The Terego example shows that colonialism interrupted but did not eliminate Yakani Spirit practices; it rather prompted planned adaptation, isolated worship, and cultural negotiation, generating a historical example for the continued coexistence of Yakani Spirit with Christianity, Islam, and modern influences today.

6.2 Resistance and collaboration with External influences on Yakani Spirit beliefs and practices

From the field data collected through oral interviews and key informant discussions, it emerged that the response of the Terego people to external influences, particularly Christianity, Islam, and modernization, has been varied, reflecting both resistance and selective acceptance.

The elders, especially spirit guardians and traditional leaders from Omugo, Aii-vu, Bileafe, Uriama, and Odupi, reported that the early converts to Christianity and Islam rejected Yakani Spirit practices due to the teachings of missionaries and Muslim preachers (imams) who condemned indigenous spirits as evil or satanic. An elderly participant from Uriama noted: “When the missionaries came here, they told our fathers that Yakani Spirit was the work of the evil spirit (devil). The people feared the church punishment and abandoned the rituals.”

However, another set of defendants, mainly elder mediums and families linked to the Yakani Spirit shrines, maintained devotion to their ancestral faith, believing that Yakani Spirit was a supernatural protector of the community. A spirit medium from Pilima in Uriama explained, “Some of us could not abandon Yakani Spirit, because it is from our ancestors. Even when the priests said it was evil, we still kept the sacred pots hidden in our homes.

Young informant and local church members showed a mixed attitude towards Yakani Spirit. While the youth now identify with Christianity and Islam, they often recognize Yakani Spirit as part of their cultural identity rather than an active faith. A participant from Leju remarked, “*Yakani Spirit is our tradition, but we only hear about it from our grandparents. We believe in God, but we also respect Yakani Spirit because it is part of who we are.*” Therefore, the community displays a double response; some sections resisted external religions to reserve indigenous identity, while others accepted new beliefs due to fear of rejection, colonial authority, and modern education.

The results demonstrate the complex spiritual negotiation that took place in Terego following the introduction of Christianity and Islam. This reflects the argument that colonial influence reconstructed indigenous Cosmologies by introducing foreign knowledge systems and ways of knowing that positioned local beliefs as inferior (Said, 1978, pp. 1–2). Also, (Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o, 1986, p. 5). asserts that colonialism sought to replace African cultural consciousness with Western moral authority, often through religion (Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o, 1986, p. 5).

Within Terego, Christianity, especially through Catholic and Anglican missions, encouraged the abandonment of Yakani Spirit rituals and the demolition of shrines. S.J. Pirouet notices that in Uganda, early missionary work aimed to “civilize” Africans by discouraging what was termed as paganism (Pirouet, 1995, p. 112). This aligns with local evidence describing church-led suppression of spirit rituals.

Nevertheless, as Mbembe had noted, indigenous belief systems did not vanish completely; they evolved through resistance and adaptation. The persistence of Yakani Spirit among mediums and families demonstrates the resilience of African spirituality (Mbembe, 2001, p. 3, and Ngũgĩ, 1986, p. 5), consistent with (Mbiti, 1969, p. 2), who observed that religion in Africa is deeply rooted in the community's cultural structure and cannot be easily separated from daily life. The selective acceptance of new faith by the Terego community, therefore, signifies syncretism rather than complete conversion. Individuals reinterpreted Christianity and Islam through the perspective of their indigenous spirituality, leading to the coexistence of Yakani Spirit respect and modern religious connection.

6.3 The changing perspectives on Yakani Spirit belief and practices arising from external religious influence

From the findings collected, Participant generally approved those external religions, particularly Christianity and Islam, have significantly changed how Yakani Spirit is regarded and practiced in Terego. Elders, religious leaders, and Spirit mediums revealed that before the coming of Christianity and Islam, Yakani Spirit rituals were conducted openly without fear, with community gatherings, dancing, and offerings. However, afterward the coming of missionaries and the spread of Islam, several of these rituals were either performed secretly or completely abandoned. An elderly woman from Agurua village recalled that:

In the old days, people would gather together at the shrine, singing and pouring beverages (Kwete) to the Yakani Spirit. But when the priest and imams came, they said it was idolatry. People avoided coming, and some shrines were destroyed.

The account illustrates the displacement of indigenous ritual space as the arrival of priests and imams redefined communal Yakani Spirit practices, like the pouring of *Kwete*, as “idolatry.” This theological shift, coupled with the physical destruction of shrines, forced the movement from a public social gathering to a suppressed private belief, a transition corroborated by A.T. Dalfovo in *Lugbara Proverbs* (1988). Dalfovo and John Middleton (1971) observe that these libation rituals were essential to community cohesion; thus, the destruction of shrines was a strategic attempt to dismantle local authority, ultimately forcing the spirit's followers to navigate a dual identity between newly introduced monotheism and traditional ancestral loyalty.

Among the religious leaders' Participant interviewed during the study, they revealed that Christian and Muslim converts reinterpreted the Yakani Spirit not as a divine spirit, but as a cultural symbol or ancestral memory. A Catholic catechist from Aii-Vu village stated, “*We no longer take Yakani Spirit as a god; we see it as our history. Our parents used to worship it, but now we pray through Jesus*

Christ. “At the same time, modernization through education, urbanization, and exposure to modern media has caused younger generations to disconnect from ritual life. Youth Participant expressed disbelief toward Yakani Spirit, often calling it “old people’s belief” and “superstition.” A teacher from Leju stated, “Yakani Spirit was for our ancestors. Nowadays we go to church, we study science, and believe in medical medicine, not spirits.”

However, even with these changes, some elders noted that Yakani Spirit practices have adapted rather than disappeared. A few families carry on keeping sacred objects secretly, raising Yakani Spirit during illness, drought, or misfortune, indicating a form of spiritual continuity beneath surface change. These results reveal a process of religious transformation and cultural reinterpretation rather than the total disappearance of the Yakani Spirit belief system. The noticeable change from open ritual practice to isolated or symbolic remembrance mirrors Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o’s argument that colonial and missionary influence displaced indigenous spiritual expressions, forcing them into the margins of cultural life (Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o, 1986, p. 5).

Edward Said and Mbembe emphasize that such external systems created a “spiritual hierarchy” in which Western religions gained legitimacy while African beliefs were stigmatized (Said, 1978, pp. 1–2, and Mbembe, 2001, p. 3). This dynamic is evident in how local Participant defined Yakani Spirit as “superstition” and “evil,” internalizing the colonial and missionary discourse. However, as Mbiti and Turner remind us, African spirituality is adaptive. Even when rituals disappear, the underlying cosmology belief in ancestral protection, moral order, and communal harmony persists in redefined forms (Mbiti, 1969, p. 3, and Turner, 1969, p. 94). In Terego, this is shown by families who balance Christian prayers with symbolic remembrance of Yakani Spirit during times of crisis.

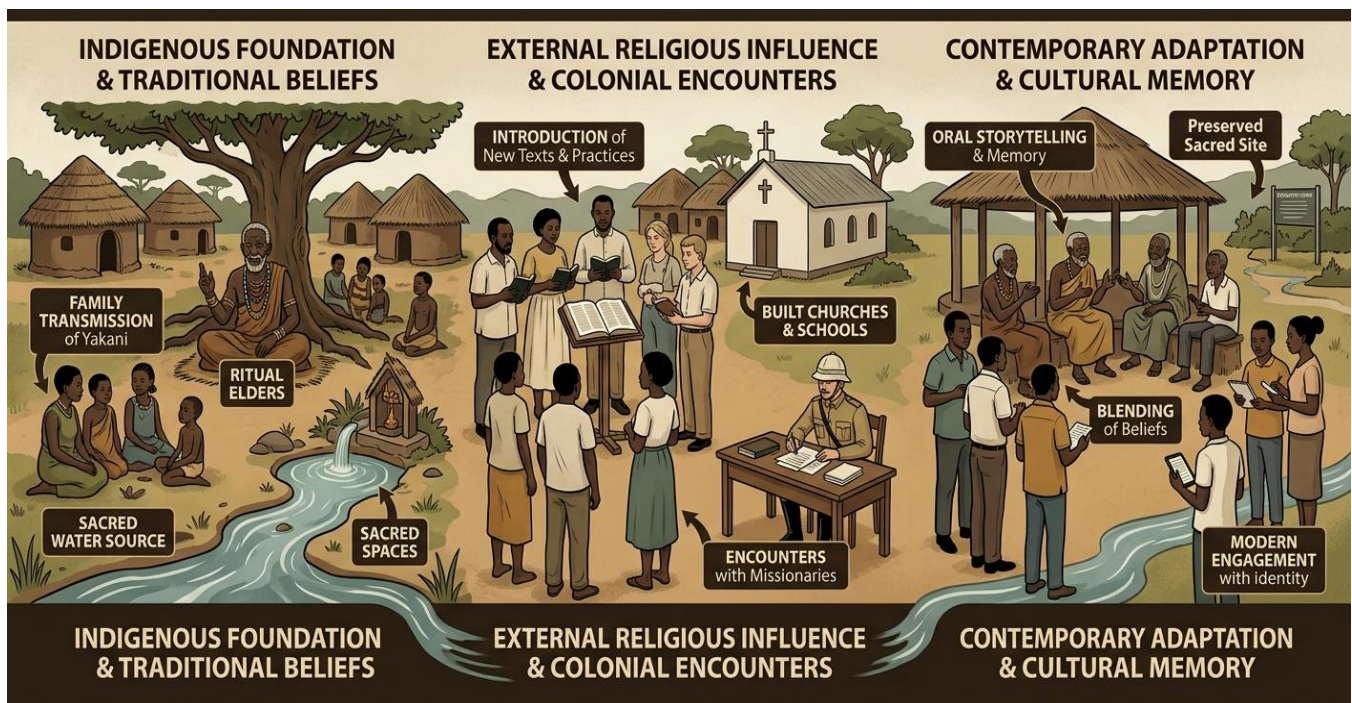


Figure 9. illustration showing how different people have different perspective on the Yakani Spirit after the invasion of Uganda by whites

More so, modernization and education introduced new worldviews that encouraged critical thinking, and scientific thinking, often discouraging belief in spirits. However, this did not remove cultural memory. The process aligns with Mead’s theory of symbolic interactionism, which holds that cultural symbols evolve through social negotiation (Mead, 1934, p. 46). The transformation of Yakani Spirit from an object of worship to a cultural heritage symbol shows how meaning changes with shifting social contexts. Therefore, external influences have restructured rather than replaced Yakani Spirit beliefs, producing a syncretic spiritual setting in which elements of Christianity, Islam, and indigenous tradition coexist within the Terego community.

6.4 The influence of Christianity, Islam, and modernization on Yakani Spirit beliefs and practices

Participant were asked to indicate when Christianity, Islam, and modernization began affecting Yakani Spirit beliefs among the Terego people. The elders traced the earliest influence to the late 19th and early 20th centuries, corresponding with the arrival of European missionaries and Sudanese traders.



Figure 11. Photo showing a church constructed at one of the Yakani Spirit Shrine by Church of Uganda (source: internet)

An elder from Pilima in Uriama are called, *“The first European missionaries, the Comboni missionaries, arrived in the West Nile District between 1910 and 1911. While the Africa Inland Mission Arrived in 1917.”* He added that, much as the Islamic missionary societies like Ahmadiyya Missionaries who arrived with Emin Pasha’s soldiers around the 1850s converted the people to Islam, they preached against the Yakani Spirit spirits and told the natives to follow Jesus Christ. That was when people began leaving Yakani Spirit rituals. Other religious Participant mentioned that the introduction of Islam through Sudanese trade in the same period. The parish chief of Odupi noted, *“Traders from Sudan brought Islam. Some families accepted it, especially those who traded across the border. Slowly, prayers and fasting replaced some Yakani Spirit offerings”*.

This account highlights the economically driven transition from Yakani Spirit to Islam, where cross-border trade with Sudan facilitated the adoption of new religious practices like prayer and fasting. This shift, corroborated by J.S. Trimingham in *The Influence of Islam upon Africa* (1968), shows that Islam followed commercial routes, offering traders a “transnational identity” that eased business interactions. As Anne King (1970) notes, this gradual replacement allowed families to maintain a structured spiritual life while moving away from the Yakani Spirit, which had become a target of colonial suppression, eventually favoring a religion that provided better integration into the emerging regional economy.

Modernization, formal education, urban migration, and introduction to Western ideas was made to have sped up after Uganda's independence in 1962. A youth teacher remarked, "*When schools began, we were taught science and Western religion. Many parents stopped taking their children to Yakani Spirit shrines. Towns and trading centers became more focused on modern life than traditional rituals.*" The account illustrates how Western education and urbanization systematically displaced Yakani Spirit by introducing scientific and Christian worldviews that labeled traditional rituals as obsolete. By prioritizing schools over shrines, parents effectively severed the generational transmission of the Spirit, a process corroborated by Oshita O. Oshita in *Ethics of African Philosophy* (2001). As Sokiri (1972) argues, the rise of trading centers further marginalized Yakani Spirit, as these hubs favored a modern identity that viewed traditional spiritualism as an obstacle to social and economic advancement in the colonial and post-colonial era.

The FGD Participant highlighted exact events marking these changes, such as the establishment of the first Catholic and Anglican churches in Aripea and Katrini, Muslim mosques, the introduction of schools along trade routes, and near churches and mosques and the creation of government administrative centers during the colonial period. These events corresponded with declines in public Yakani Spirit ceremonies and adaptations of rituals into private forms. The findings point out a historically phased effect of external influences on Yakani Spirit beliefs, aligning with documented regional trends. Said and Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o describe colonialism as a process that gradually imposed new ways of knowing, which parallels Participant' accounts of missionary-led dominance of Yakani Spirit practices beginning around 1900 (Said, 1978, pp. 1–2, and Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, 1986, p. 5).

Christianity's influence in Terego relates to Pirouet's findings on Uganda, showing that mission stations operated as both religious and social agents, introducing moral codes and educational systems that challenged indigenous belief systems (Pirouet, 1995, p. 112). Similarly, Islam's coming through trade networks is consistent with wider East African forms, where commercial and religious relations influenced local belief systems (Mbembe, 2001, p. 3). Modernization post-1962 brought urbanization, formal education, and worldwide cultural exposure, which contributed to changes across generations in belief and practice. Symbolic Interactionism Mead explains how younger generations reinterpret Yakani Spirit rituals in light of new cultural norms, treating them as cultural memory rather than active worship (Mead, 1934, p. 46).



Figure 13. Photo illustrating a Hirai Mosque also constructed at one of the Yakani Spirit Shrines (photo source: internet)

Thus, the Participant' timelines demonstrate that external influence on Yakani Spirit was gradual, beginning with missionary and Islamic involvements in late 19th and early 20th century, and intensifying with modernization after independence. This gradual process explains why some Yakani Spirit practices continue in syncretic forms today.

6.5 Changes in the role, respect, and influence of Yakani Spirit mediums (1883-2025)

The status and influence of the Yakani Spirit medium have undergone a significant transformation, reflecting the historical path of the Terego people.

Elders narrated that in the pre-colonial to early colonial period (1883 to 1914), mediums were "highly respected and feared," exercising great spiritual, judicial, and political power. Their authority was central to upholding social order. Participant revealed that the Yakani Spirit mediums were central to community life as a respected intermediary who regulated moral order, led rituals, provided protection, healed people, mediated, and settled disputes. Authority was localized and sacred, grounded in regular ritual cycles. This period featured strong communal recognition of mediumship as essential to social cohesion and cosmological balance.

Colonial and Missionary period from 1914 to 1962, this was a period of crisis. Colonial administrators and Christian missionaries systematically considered spirit mediums as witchdoctors or agents of satanic forces. This public demonization, a main belief of the colonial spiritual order described

by Mbembe (2001), severely undermined their authority and forced them into secrecy; their influence continued but was driven underground, as families continued to consult them secretly.

Post-Independence to Late 20th Century, from 1962 to the 1990s, in times of unrest, such as during the Idi Amin regime, communities briefly revived their dependence on mediums for guidance and protection. However, the stable progress of modernization through formal schools, healthcare facilities, and state governance has gradually reduced dependence on traditional mediums. Their role transformed from comprehensive authority to a more focused spiritual and moral influence.

Contemporary Period from 2000 to 2025, nowadays, the spirit medium's role is more symbolic and cultural, and they are respected as mediums of tradition, but operate in a varied place. Community insights are divided; they are still consulted for unmanageable problems, but are also envied, criticized as manipulative, or dismissed as outdated. This reflects the ongoing negotiation of cultural symbols, as clarified by Symbolic Interactionism (Blumer, 1969; Mead, 1934).

This historical development vividly explains the disruptive effect of colonialism and the postcolonial condition. The spirit medium's journey from domination to a negotiated role is a local manifestation of the worldwide processes evaluated by Said and Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o (1978) and Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o (1986). Their continued, although transformed, existence proves Ngũgĩ's point about the perseverance of indigenous traditions.

6.6 Changes and continuities in the beliefs and practices among the Terego people in West Nile

Participant demonstrated that the impact of external influences, Christianity, Islam, and modernization was not uniform all over Terego, but varied depending on the accessibility, location, and exposure to colonial or religious institutions. Local historians, teachers, local government officials, and Elders consistently reported that urbanized areas and trading centers, such as Aripea, Katrini, and Owaffa, experienced the strongest influence of Christianity and modernization. One of the elders explained: *"In trading centers, people had more interaction with the church, schools, and government offices. They stopped visiting the Yakani Spirit shrines and adopted new religions and ways of life."* This illustrates how urbanization and institutional proximity accelerated the decline of Yakani Spirit, as trading centers served as hubs for the church, schools, and government to displace traditional rituals. This transition, corroborated by Sokiri (1972), shows that increased interaction with colonial and modern structures forced a shift toward "new ways of life" that prioritized social and economic integration over ancestral spiritualism. As John Middleton (1971) argues, while the rural periphery remained a sanctuary for the

Spirit, the "centers" became the primary sites of conversion, where the convenience and prestige of modern institutions eventually outweighed the communal pull of the Yakani Spirit shrines.

Equally, younger Participant in town areas noted that educational institutions and government offices encouraged devotion to modern values and discouraged indigenous rituals. In contrast, more remote rural areas, such as Uriama, Agurua, and Leju, maintained stronger traditional devotion to the Yakani Spirit. Here, rituals continued, though sometimes in secrecy, due to limited missionary presence or slower penetration of modernization. A custodian from Pilima in Uriama observed: *"In the villages far from the trading centers, people still go to the shrine secretly. They are careful not to draw attention from the church or government, but Yakani Spirit is still booming there."* The above account illustrates the spatial survival of Yakani Spirit, where the movement remains "booming" in remote villages by operating as a "hidden transcript" to avoid state and church interference. This strategic secrecy, corroborated by James C. Scott in *Domination and the Arts of Resistance* (1990), shows how rural communities maintain indigenous spiritual systems as a form of private defiance against external modernization. As John Middleton (1971) argues, while urban centers adopted "modern" religions, the geographical periphery remained a sanctuary for Yakani Spirit, as it continued to provide the essential communal and judicial functions that formal institutions could not effectively reach or replace.

The study also observed that churches and mosques themselves served as important points for transformation. Defendants emphasized that closeness to a church or mosque is often associated with reduced involvement in Yakani Spirit rituals. Specifically, children attending religious schools were often discouraged from joining in traditional rites, leading to generational differences in belief. Despite urban and institutional pressures, sacred locations such as the home-based shrine remained important for ritual connection. Mediums termed these places as resilient spiritual centers where Yakani Spirit practices continued, although adapted to changing social settings. These results align with wider scholarship on religious transformation and modernization in Africa. Mbembe notes that spatial closeness to colonial and Christian missionary centers significantly formed the acceptance or rejection of indigenous practices (Mbembe, 2001, p. 3). Likewise, Pirouet emphasizes that mission stations and schools in Uganda served as representatives of cultural transformation, particularly in accessible towns (Pirouet, 1995, p. 112).

The rural-urban divide observed in Terego reflects Middleton's results on West Nile communities, where remote villages preserved indigenous rituals more effectively than areas near administrative or religious centers (Middleton, 1965, pp. 12–30). This recommends that geography and social networks played a serious role in mediating the influence of Christianity, Islam, and modernization.

In addition, Symbolic Interactionism (Mead, 1934, p. 46) helps explain how context shapes meaning. In urban centers, Yakani Spirit rituals were increasingly symbolic, while in rural areas, they reserved functional spiritual significance. These dynamic highlights both continuity and adaptation in the look of external pressures. Therefore, Participant highlighted that the strength of external influence depended on exposure, access, and social systems. Urban and religiously central areas experienced rapid transformation, while remote communities retained extra traditional practices.

6.7.1 Reasons for changes and decline of Yakani Spirit belief and Practices

When the elders and the Yakani Spirit mediums were asked why the Yakani Spirit practice declined among the Lugbara of Terego, they noted the following as reasons:

The high demands of Yakani Spirit: According to elders, the spirit is very demanding in its maintenance. In the old days, families had a lot of livestock to maintain the required rituals. Nevertheless, with the decline in wealth and the loss of many animals and poultry, which Yakani Spirit needs for appeasement, it became difficult to sustain. Participant clarified that the Yakani Spirit “*loves timely feeding and offering*”, and when resources diminished, the owners struggled to get its needs.

The introduction of Christianity and Islam: These were observed to have played a key role in the decline of public Yakani Spirit rituals. Missionaries labeled Yakani Spirit as pagan, and Muslim preachers stressed monotheism, leading families to abandon some ceremonies. One custodian from Pilima noted, “*People stopped approaching to the shrine openly because they feared being admonished by the church or mosque. Some rituals diminished, especially those done in large groups.*” The account highlights the fragmentation of communal identity, where the fear of religious “admonishment” from the church or mosque forced Yakani Spirit rituals out of the public square. This pressure specifically targeted large-scale gatherings, dismantling the “social glue” of the movement and forcing it into a private, clandestine existence. Corroborated by John Middleton in *Prophets and Resistance* (1971), this transition shows how new religious institutions used social stigma to “atomize” practitioners, effectively breaking the collective political and social power of the Yakani Spirit even as individual beliefs persisted in secret.

In addition, Participant added that as Christian revival movements developed, the new religions started expelling out traditional spirits through prayers and the “*influence of the Holy Spirit.*” This active attempt to chase away spirits made many families to abandon Yakani Spirit, out of pressure, fear from the church and belief that the spirit was no longer socially acceptable.

Effects of Western Education on Yakani Spirit Practice: Elders highlighted that the introduction of Western education and modern cultural principles gradually transformed people's views. Young generations have been exposed to new means of thinking, leading to changes in attitudes toward traditional beliefs. As people become more educated, they regularly reserve themselves from such practices such as Yakani Spirit, observing them as outdated.

High burdens and charges in cases of offense: Participant noted that Yakani Spirit can enforce high fines and demands when someone offends and fails in their responsibilities. One of the Participant shared an example: "My bicycle tube was removed and I presented it to Yakani Spirit after public announcement. As the person responsible failed to show up, Yakani Spirit acted. A big he-goat, a chicken, and money were paid to me, and after that, the sickness was cured immediately. "This explains that Yakani Spirit imposes responsibility through punishments and compensations.

Associated damages once not appeased on time: Participant clarified that when Yakani Spirit is not appeased on time with food and brew, it can cause destruction to the property of its owner. It may kill livestock such as goats, cows, or chickens. This is interpreted as a notice that the spirit is hungry and dissatisfied. Hence, the sickness related to Yakani Spirit can be serious and severe. Participant described signs such as swollen stomach and trouble breathing, signifying that the spirit's presence and anger can cause intense physical suffering. These signs are alleged to end only after the right rituals have been performed.

Participant testified that the physical side effects of Yakani Spirit affliction are often very serious. When a person has dissatisfied the spirit and has not performed the required rituals, observable changes occur in their physical appearance. The affected person's hair may drop out or become scattered and messy, and the person may become noticeably by being thin and weak. Some Participant stated that the eyes may appear unbalanced, and the eyebrows may even turn gray, symbolizing the harshness of the spirit's influence. These physical signs are understood culturally as clear indicators that Yakani Spirit is demanding attention or restitution.

Participant specified that when Yakani Spirit has not been offered a sacrifice at the right time, and any person attempts to eat meals before addressing the spirit, the individual will experience piercing stomach pain. This pain is described as immediate and severe, ending only when the person first performs the needed appeasement. The condition reinforces the belief that Yakani Spirit must be respected and prioritized and that neglecting it can directly affect an individual's physical well-being.

Some elderly Participant interpreted that Yakani Spirit may also raise a person to rare and risk places, such as the top of a tree or the roof of a house, making them highly noticeable to the community. This action places the individual in a vulnerable and embarrassing situation, drawing public attention. When such events occur, community members view the person as being under the direct manage of the spirit, which often directs to stigma and social mockery. This public display is interpreted as the spirit's way of showing its presence and demanding recognition.

6.7.2 Reasons for continuity and persistence of Yakani Spirit belief and practices

Participant emphasized that Yakani Spirit practices play a major role in maintaining moral conduct, especially concerning sexual conduct. The fear of offending the spirit acts as a warning against sexual immorality and other socially unacceptable engagements. Members explained that the existence of the Yakani Spirit reinforces societal norms, ensuring that individuals maintain proper behavior to avoid sanctions, illness, or spiritual punishment. One participant noted that people fear the Yakani Spirit, and if anyone committed adultery or stole, the spirit would make one sick or humiliate them publicly. This keeps the community morally upright.

Yakani Spirit Spirits provides spiritual security for both the mediums and their property. Defendants reported that once an individual owns Yakani Spirit, the spirit acts as a protector, guarding them against theft, misfortune, and even external pressures. This safety ensures that the medium and their family feel secure, which encourages continued devotion to the practices. The spirit's presence is observed as a living protective force within the home.

Those who are acknowledged as mediums of the Yakani Spirit get high respect from community members. Participant clarified that this respect extends not only to the person but also to their property. The community recognize Yakani Spirit mediums with honor and respect, recognizing the spiritual authority that they exercise. This raised social status emphasizes the persistence of traditional practices, as it makes both actual and intangible incentives for people to maintain the spirit.

Yakani Spirit also works as a source of material wealth for the mediums. Participant explained that people who wrong the spirit or its owner are often required to pay for charges, which may include livestock, money, or other valuable items. Moreover, obtaining a Yakani Spirit it often involves payment creating an economic system round spiritual authority. These economic benefits encourage the medium to withstand the practice, as it provides both spiritual influence and economic gain.

Participant noted that Yakani Spirit rituals are regularly related with the preparation and eating of food, such as chicken or meat. Such feasts generally happen at the beginning and at the end of the month, marking vital spiritual and social occasions. These shared meals serve both as offerings to the spirit and as social gatherings, strengthening community unity and ensuring involvement in traditional practices.

Another reason for the persistence of Yakani Spirit practices is perceived as an automatic defender in conflict. Several Participant stated that the spirit can fight on behalf of its owner and community, abolishing the need for physical conflict. The Yakani Spirit protective power in war or disputes is perceived as an active and dependable form of protection, making it highly valued in traditional society.

Participant emphasized that Yakani Spirit assists as a foundation of justice in the community. When crimes arise, the spirit is thought to act definitively. For example, persons who commit evils may be elevated onto trees or house tops, experience stomach swelling, severe pain, or other observable conditions, and suffer public embarrassment. These actions are understood as divine justification of the spirit's judgment, confirming that justice is enforced in a visible, undeniable way. This mechanism emphasizes faith in the Yakani Spirit and withstands the practice over generations.

Thus, the persistence of Yakani Spirit Spirit-related traditional practices thus multi-dimensional, encompassing moral, spiritual, social, and economic factors. By regulating conduct, protecting people, conferring social respect, providing economic wealth, and enforcing justice, Yakani Spirit continues to hold significance among the Terego, in spite of pressures from religion, modern education, and cultural change.

The decline and persistence of Yakani Spirit practices show the dynamic interaction between external influence and cultural resilience. External religions and modernization drove the decline of open rituals, consistent with Said and Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o who said that colonialism and missionary activity marginalized indigenous belief systems (Said 1978, pp. 1–2 and Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o 1986, p. 5). At similar times, the persistence of Yakani Spirit in private or symbolic forms establishes adaptive resilience, aligning with Mbembe's observation that African spiritual traditions often survive through modification rather than complete elimination (Mbembe, 2001, p. 3). Mbiti also highlights that African cosmologies are deeply rooted in community life, making them resistant to total suppression (Mbiti 1969, p. 3).

Modern education and urbanization contributed to intergenerational changes, with youth interpreting the Yakani Spirit more as cultural heritage than active spiritual practice. This course reflects Mead's

Symbolic Interactionism, where cultural symbols evolve and are renegotiated across generations (Mead 1934, p. 46).

Therefore, the persistence of some Yakani Spirit practices together with the decline of others shows a hybrid spiritual landscape, merging traditional beliefs, modern religious practices, and adaptive approaches for preserving cultural identity.

6.8 Balancing between Yakani Spirit beliefs with new religious or modern systems among the Terego people

The narratives noted that the Terego people had established various approaches to resolve traditional Yakani Spirit beliefs with Christianity, Islam, and modern life, resulting in a form of spiritual and cultural syncretism.

The elders and spirit mediums described that some community members combine Yakani Spirit rituals with Christian or Muslim devotions. For example, during times of illness, families may first invoke Yakani Spirit privately and then attend church or mosque services. An elder from Pilima remarked that: *“We silently honor Yakani Spirit, and we also pray to God. We cannot abandon our ancestors’ beliefs, but we follow the church too. It is not a conflict; it is harmony.”* This text serves as a poignant articulation of religious syncretism, specifically illustrating how the Lugbara people of East Africa integrated the Yakani Spirit, a traditional belief system rooted in ancestral honour and historical resistance, with the teachings of the Christian church. By framing this coexistence as harmony rather than conflict, the speaker rejects a binary view of faith, asserting that spiritual identity can be multifaceted without being contradictory. The "silent" honouring of ancestors suggests a deep-seated cultural continuity that provides an ontological foundation, while the church represents a newer layer of community and ritual; together, they form a unified worldview where the modern and the ancestral are not competing forces, but complementary elements of a single, lived reality.

Nearly most Participant stressed the role of cultural education in maintaining Yakani Spirit knowledge without invading on new religious contexts. Elders and Parents teach children stories of Yakani Spirit historical significance, emphasizing values like, unity, community protection, and respect for ancestors, rather than ritual worship.

In some cases, rituals have been improved to appear more culturally suitable to modern or religious authorities rather than involving animals, and ceremonies do occur privately or in homes instead of communal spaces.

Participant also mentioned syncretic celebrations where Yakani Spirit festivals coincide with Christian feasts or local cultural events. These adaptations permit communities to uphold identity while regarding external religious or contemporary norms.

The findings clarify the adaptive and syncretical nature of Terego spirituality in reply to external influence. The balancing of Yakani Spirit with Christianity and Islam aligns with Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's opinion that indigenous traditions do not disappear but instead adapt and resist while coexisting with main systems (Thiong'o, 1986, p. 5).

Mbembe highlights that such integration reflects the Perseverance of African spiritual systems under hegemonic influences (Mbembe, 2001, p. 3). Similarly, Mbiti founds those African cosmologies are deeply integrated into social life, allowing communities to reinterpret rituals in ways compatible with new religions (Mbiti, 1969, p. 3).

Mead, clarifies how these practices are negotiated and redefined socially, producing meanings that accommodate both tradition and modernity. For instance, combining Yakani Spirit invocation with Christian prayer which does not weaken spiritual significance but creates a dual framework that satisfies both ancestral and contemporary religious expectations (Mead, 1934, p. 46).

General, the Terego people determined spiritual flexibility, preserving the cultural memory and ritual importance while integrating external religious and modern practices into daily life. This harmonizing act emphasizes both cultural continuity and social unity amidst changing times

6.9 Conclusion

The findings revealed that Christianity, Islam, and modernization reshaped Yakani Spirit beliefs among the Terego people, discouraging public rituals and introducing new worldviews. Despite this, Yakani Spirit persisted privately, through syncretic practices, and as a cultural memory maintained by mediums and families. It continues to influence moral conduct, social cohesion, and spiritual protection. The Terego case shows the resilience and adaptability of indigenous spirituality, where traditional practices coexist with modern and religious systems.

CHAPTER SEVEN

EFFECTS OF YAKANI SPIRIT ON THE PEOPLE OF TEREGO IN THE WEST NILE REGION 1883-2025

7.0 Introduction

This chapter examines the social, economic, and political effects of Yakani Spirit beliefs and practices among the Lugbara of Terego in the West Nile Region of Uganda between 1883 and 2025. Drawing on oral interviews, available historical records, and relevant scholarly literature, it investigates how Yakani Spirit influenced family and clan relationships, dispute resolution, economic activities, indigenous authority, and community decision-making.

The discussion considers these effects within the changing historical circumstances of the study period. It examines the early development of Yakani Spirit-related practices, their encounters with colonial administration and missionary activity, and their subsequent place in postcolonial and contemporary Terego society. Particular attention is given to changes in the authority attributed to Yakani Spirit, the practices through which its influence was expressed, and the ways community members remember or continue to engage with these traditions. These developments are examined in relation to the available evidence rather than assuming that Yakani Spirit's effects remained constant throughout the period.

The chapter is organized into three sections: social effects, economic effects, and political effects. Each section analyses specific findings from oral testimonies alongside relevant documentary and scholarly sources. Interview evidence is attributed to identifiable sources wherever the records permit, while differences between individual accounts and gaps in the historical record are acknowledged. This approach establishes both the reported significance of Yakani Spirit in Terego society and the ways its effects may have changed between 1883 and 2025.

The Evolution of Yakani Spirit among the Lugbara of Terego, West Nile, Uganda (1883–2025)

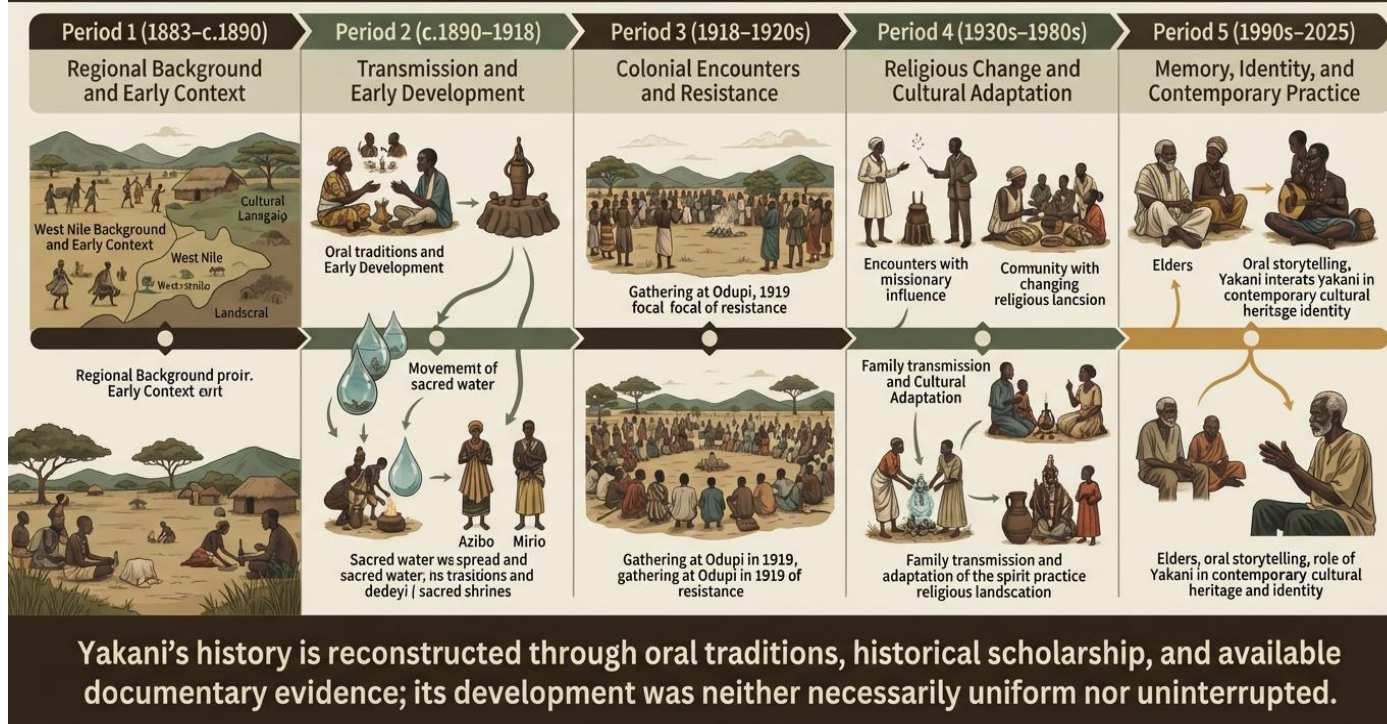


Figure 14. Illustration showing the evolution of Yakani Spirit among the Lugbara of Terego, West Nile, Uganda. (source: internet)

7.1 Social Effect of Yakani Spirit belief and practices on the People of Terego in the West Nile Region, 1883-2025

7.1.1 Influence on Family and Clan Relationships

Oral accounts indicate that Yakani Spirit belief influenced family and clan relationships among the Terego people by reinforcing shared obligations, moral expectations, and collective responsibility. The accounts associate Yakani Spirit with concerns such as adultery, theft, and inheritance disputes, which were believed to risk spiritual sanctions and disrupt social harmony. Its authority was therefore understood to extend beyond individual households, connecting different clans, including Orivu and Luruja.

Historically, these accounts suggest that Yakani Spirit provided a shared spiritual framework through which certain social expectations were reinforced. Middleton (1963, pp. 90–92) provides relevant historical context for understanding the social role of the Yakan cult among the Lugbara. However, the extent to which these practices operated uniformly across Terego clans, particularly from 1883 onward, cannot be established from the cited material alone.

The effects of Yakani Spirit on family and clan relationships also need to be considered in light of subsequent historical changes. Colonial administration, missionary activity, Christianity, and modernization may have altered how customary obligations were understood or practiced.

Nevertheless, the available evidence presented here does not establish precisely when or how these changes affected family relationships in Terego.

In my assessment, the reported influence of Yakani Spirit lay in its connection between spiritual accountability and customary social obligations. Establishing how that influence evolved between 1883 and 2025 requires comparison of dated oral testimonies, historical records, and accounts of contemporary practice.

7.1.2 Conflicts and Dispute Resolution

Oral accounts indicate that Yakani Spirit was consulted in disputes involving land, adultery, theft, and accusations of wrongdoing. Elders described it as an authority before which disputing parties could seek resolution, with spiritual sanctions believed to discourage dishonesty. One account recalled that when people failed to agree, they were taken to Yakani Spirit because a person who lied was believed unable to escape its consequences.

These accounts suggest that Yakani Spirit consultation served as a customary means of addressing disputes and reinforcing social accountability. Alidri (2025, pp. 81–85) similarly discusses the role attributed to Yakani Spirit in maintaining order and regulating conduct among the Lugbara. However, the effectiveness of these practices should be understood through the reported experiences and beliefs of community members rather than assumed to have prevented all conflict.

The historical influence of Yakani Spirit in dispute resolution requires attention to changing political and legal circumstances. Colonial administration and, later, state institutions introduced other channels for handling disputes. The extent to which these developments displaced, restricted, or coexisted with Yakani Spirit practices among the Terego needs to be established through dated testimonies and documentary evidence.

In my assessment, Yakani Spirit's significance in dispute resolution lay in the spiritual authority that community members attributed to it and the expectations of accountability associated with consultation. Nevertheless, the available accounts do not establish that Yakani Spirit operated as a uniform judicial system across all clans or throughout 1883–2025.

7.1.3 Respect and Fear for Yakani Spirit Mediums

Yakani Spirit mediums were remembered as figures who commanded both respect and fear among the Terego people. Maburuka Ezaruku, aged 60, from Odupi, explained that mediums were respected for their roles in spiritual guidance, healing, and dispute resolution, but feared because disobedience was

believed to bring illness, misfortune, or death. This account reflects the spiritual authority attributed to mediums and the perceived consequences of violating Yakani Spirit's requirements.

The influence of this authority may have changed over time as colonial administration, missionary activity, Christianity, and other social changes affected customary practices. However, the available testimony does not establish precisely when or to what extent respect and fear associated with mediums changed between 1883 and 2025.

Alidri (2025, p. 81) discusses the authority attributed to Yakani Spirit in regulating social conduct. In my assessment, respect for mediums was associated with their perceived spiritual responsibilities, while fear arose from beliefs about the consequences of disobedience. The extent to which these beliefs influenced behaviour across different periods requires further historical and oral evidence.

7.1.4 Maintenance of Peace and Unity among the Terego People

Oral accounts associate Yakani Spirit with efforts to maintain peace, reconcile family disputes, and prevent conflict between clans. Elders reportedly consulted Yakani Spirit when disagreements threatened communal harmony. One account state, “When clans were about to fight, elders would take the matter to Yakani Spirit” (oral interview, elder, Terego). This recollection suggests that Yakani Spirit was regarded as a recognized spiritual authority for addressing disputes and encouraging reconciliation.

Middleton (1963, pp. 90–92) and Alidri (2025, p. 82) provide related discussions of Yakani Spirit’s social authority among the Lugbara. However, the extent to which Yakani Spirit consistently prevented violence or coordinated responses to drought and epidemics requires specific supporting evidence. In my assessment, the testimony indicates that Yakani Spirit’s perceived authority could support peacekeeping, although its effects should not be assumed to have been uniform across all clans or throughout the study period.

Overall, the accounts presented in Sections 7.1.1–7.1.4 associate Yakani Spirit with family and clan obligations, dispute resolution, respect for spiritual mediums, and efforts to maintain peace. These findings suggest that Yakani Spirit contributed to social regulation and cohesion in Terego, but the extent and changing nature of its influence between 1883 and 2025 require evidence from different historical periods.

7.2 Economic effect of Yakani Spirit belief and practices on the People of Terego in the West Nile Region, 1883-2025

7.2.1 Environmental Resource Management

Oral testimonies among the people of Terego indicate that belief in Yakani Spirit influenced economic activities, particularly farming and land use. Elders recalled that rainmaking rituals were performed during prolonged droughts, farming activities were guided by spiritual consultation, certain crops and fields were ritually protected, and hunting was subject to spiritual permissions and taboos. Yakani Spirit was associated with rainfall, land fertility, and success in hunting. One elder recalled, “When rain delayed, elders went to Yakani Spirit before planting” (oral interview; details to be supplied). This testimony suggests that spiritual consultation formed part of agricultural decision-making, linking farming activities to the community's spiritual beliefs and customary obligations. In this way, Yakani Spirit belief may have influenced how people approached cultivation, protected crops, and used natural resources. Alidri (2025, p. 85) and Storer (2025, p. 117) should be cited here insofar as their discussions directly support these practices.

Yakani Spirit-related taboos also reportedly regulated access to certain natural resources. Oral accounts identify shrines, sacred groves and forests, protected water sources, and restricted hills or areas of land associated with the Spirit. Participant recalled that cultivation was prohibited near places associated with Yakani Spirit. Where such restrictions prevented farming, tree-cutting, or unauthorized entry, they may have limited the exploitation of particular areas and protected resources important to community livelihoods. Similarly, reported restrictions on hunting and the ritual protection of crops may have helped safeguard food resources and agricultural production. These practices therefore provide a basis for examining how spiritual beliefs influenced customary resource management among the people of Terego. However, the extent of their contribution to environmental conservation and economic sustainability must be established through specific testimonies or corroborating evidence.

The economic significance of Yakani Spirit belief also appears in its reported community-wide authority. An elder explained, “Yakani Spirit was not for one home. When it spoke, all clans listened” (oral interview; details to be supplied). This account suggests that the authority associated with Yakani Spirit extended beyond an individual household. In relation to resource management, such authority may have encouraged collective observance of taboos and shared responsibility for protecting crops and designated areas. If supported by accounts describing how these rules were communicated and enforced, this evidence would help explain how Yakani Spirit belief contributed to the customary regulation of economic activities across the community. The quotation alone, however, does not

establish the extent of compliance or demonstrate that the Spirit directly improved agricultural productivity.

The influence of Yakani Spirit belief on environmental resource management must also be considered in relation to historical change between 1883 and 2025. The reported influence of Christianity and modernization raises questions about whether changing religious practices and social conditions affected the observance of Yakani Spirit-related taboos and customary restrictions on land use. Where such changes can be established through oral testimonies or documentary evidence, they may help explain the transformation of indigenous resource-management practices. Their consequences for cultivation, access to natural resources, and community livelihoods should nevertheless be demonstrated rather than assumed.

Overall, the available oral accounts suggest that Yakani Spirit belief was associated with the regulation of farming activities, crop protection, hunting, and access to selected natural resources among the people of Terego. These practices indicate that spiritual beliefs formed part of the customary arrangements through which economic activities and resource use were understood and regulated. Their precise effects on agricultural production, environmental conservation, and livelihood sustainability require further corroboration. The evidence nevertheless provides a basis for examining the relationship between Yakani Spirit belief and indigenous environmental resource management in Terego during the period 1883–2025.

7.2.2 Spiritual Protection and Material Benefits

Yakani Spirit was believed to provide spiritual protection to its mediums and the wider community. According to Alidri (2025, p. 75), the Spirit was associated with protection against misfortune, the revival of ancestors, and the restoration of dead cattle. These beliefs were economically significant because cattle constituted material wealth, while protection against misfortune was associated with the security of community livelihoods. The reported belief in Yakani Spirit's ability to restore dead cattle illustrates how spiritual expectations were connected to concerns about livestock and the preservation of wealth. However, this account reflects the powers attributed to Yakani Spirit rather than independently verified evidence that dead cattle were physically restored.

The material benefits associated with Yakani Spirit practices also included payments made to mediums by community members in the form of livestock or money. These payments reportedly took the form of fines or tributes, linking spiritual authority to the transfer of material resources. Fines could impose an economic cost on those required to pay them, while tributes could provide mediums with livestock or money. Such arrangements may have reinforced the mediums' material position within the

community while sustaining the practices associated with Yakani Spirit. Their precise economic implications depended on the circumstances under which payments were made, the reasons for them, and how the resources were subsequently used. The distinction between compulsory fines and tributes should therefore be maintained when interpreting their effects on community members and spiritual specialists.

Yakani Spirit belief thus had a material dimension alongside its spiritual significance. Expectations of protection against misfortune and the preservation of livestock connected spiritual practices to concerns about economic security, while fines and tributes created channels through which livestock and money could change hands. These practices suggest that Yakani Spirit's influence extended into the economic relationships between mediums and community members. Nevertheless, the extent to which they protected livelihoods, redistributed wealth, or improved the economic position of particular individuals must be established through oral testimonies and other available historical evidence.

Overall, Yakani Spirit belief was associated with spiritual protection, concerns about safeguarding material wealth, and the transfer of livestock and money through fines and tributes. These relationships demonstrate the importance of examining spiritual practices not only in religious terms but also in relation to the economic lives of the people of Terego between 1883 and 2025.

7.3 Political Effects of Yakani Spirit Belief and Practices on the People of Terego in the West Nile Region, 1883–2025

The findings suggest that belief in Yakani Spirit influenced indigenous leadership, communal decision-making, and the resolution of disputes among the people of Terego. Through the authority attributed to the Spirit and its mediums, Yakani Spirit-related practices formed part of the customary institutions through which community affairs were discussed and decisions were made. The introduction of colonial administration and subsequent post-independence governance may have altered the position of these institutions, although the extent and timing of these changes require supporting historical evidence.

7.3.1 Leadership and Indigenous Authority

Oral testimonies indicate that Yakani Spirit mediums exercised influence over leadership and governance, particularly in matters requiring communal consultation. Although mediums were not necessarily political chiefs, their spiritual standing reportedly enabled them to advise elders and clan leaders, participate in the resolution of serious disputes, and interpret spiritual messages believed to guide communal decisions. Major matters, including warfare, migration, and disputes between clans, were reportedly brought before the Spirit for consultation. A parish chief from Odupi observed that

“No big decision was without asking Yakani Spirit” (Alidri, 2025, p. 81). This testimony suggests that consultation with Yakani Spirit could form an important part of decision-making and that its authority extended beyond individual households.

The reported relationship between Yakani Spirit mediums and traditional leaders also indicates that spiritual authority could influence the exercise of indigenous political power. Ownership or control of Yakani Spirit reportedly increased the influence and independence of its mediums, potentially placing them in positions where they could challenge, complement, or influence the decisions of councils of elders. This relationship is significant because it suggests that leadership in Terego could involve more than formal lineage-based authority: spiritual standing could also provide a basis for influence over communal affairs. However, the extent to which mediums challenged traditional councils, and the circumstances in which such challenges occurred, must be established through specific oral testimonies or documentary evidence.

Yakani Spirit therefore appears to have functioned as a source of spiritual authority with political implications for leadership and communal decision-making. Its significance lay in the reported ability of mediums to influence important decisions and participate in the resolution of disputes. The extent of this authority, and how it changed under colonial and post-independence governance between 1883 and 2025, requires examination through the historical evidence available for the period.

7.3.2 Justice, Law, and Order

Oral testimonies suggest that Yakani Spirit played a role in resolving disputes and maintaining social order among the people of Terego through oath-taking, truth verification, punishment, and reparation. Participant recalled that individuals accused of wrongdoing could be required to swear oaths before Yakani Spirit, touch sacred objects, or undergo ritual procedures supervised by a spirit medium. These practices were intended to establish the truth, identify wrongdoing, and encourage individuals to comply with customary expectations. They indicate that spiritual authority formed part of the indigenous mechanisms through which disputes were addressed.

Participant also reported that false oath-taking before Yakani Spirit was believed to attract severe spiritual punishment, including illness, madness, or death. The belief that no one dared to lie before Yakani Spirit suggests that fear of spiritual sanctions could discourage dishonesty and encourage compliance with customary rules. In this context, the authority of Yakani Spirit depended partly on the community's shared belief in its power to punish wrongdoing. Such beliefs may have strengthened the standing of spirit mediums in dispute resolution and supported the observance of customary norms without requiring physical enforcement in every case.

The reported use of Yakani Spirit in justice and conflict resolution therefore illustrates the relationship between spiritual authority and indigenous systems of law and order in Terego. However, the extent to which these practices prevented wrongdoing, secured truthful testimony, or produced lasting resolutions must be assessed through specific accounts of disputes and their outcomes. Distinguishing the community's belief in the effectiveness of spiritual sanctions from evidence of their actual outcomes is necessary to establish Yakani Spirit's role in maintaining social order during the period 1883–2025.

7.3.3 Community Decision-Making

Oral testimonies suggest that Yakani Spirit continued to influence community decision-making in Terego during the post-colonial period, although its role increasingly operated alongside formal state institutions and religious authorities. Participant reported that consultations with Yakani Spirit were sometimes conducted privately and that elders continued to seek spiritual guidance away from public attention. One elder recalled, “Yakani Spirit was still there, but people consulted it quietly.” This testimony suggests that Yakani Spirit-related practices persisted even when consultation was no longer openly acknowledged or practiced in the same way as before.

The reported continuation of private consultations indicates that Yakani Spirit may have retained a place in community affairs despite changes in formal political and religious authority. Its influence appears to have shifted, at least in some settings, from publicly acknowledged participation in communal decisions towards less visible spiritual consultation. However, the extent of this change may have varied between communities and across the post-colonial period. The claim that Yakani Spirit remained influential in remote rural areas therefore requires supporting testimonies or other evidence identifying where and how these practices continued.

The persistence of private consultation alongside the growing role of state institutions and religious authorities illustrates the changing position of Yakani Spirit in community decision-making. Rather than assuming that its influence disappeared, the evidence suggests that traditional spiritual practices may have continued in less public forms. This transformation provides insight into the changing relationship between indigenous authority and formal governance among the people of Terego between 1883 and 2025.

7.4 Conclusion

Yakani Spirit belief and practices had social, economic, political, and judicial significance among the people of Terego in the West Nile Region of Uganda between 1883 and 2025. The findings indicate that Yakani Spirit was associated with community relationships, agricultural activities, environmental

resource management, spiritual protection, indigenous leadership, dispute resolution, and communal decision-making. Across the precolonial, colonial, and post-colonial periods, the authority attributed to Yakani Spirit and its mediums formed part of the customary practices through which community affairs were understood and regulated. Although colonial administration, post-independence governance, and changing religious and social conditions may have altered its public authority, oral testimonies suggest that some Yakani Spirit-related practices continued in less visible forms. The extent and nature of these changes must be understood in relation to the historical evidence available for each period. Overall, Yakani Spirit provides an important historical lens through which to examine the relationship between indigenous belief systems, community authority, and the social, economic, political, and judicial organization of the people of Terego.

CHAPTER EIGHT

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

8.0 Introduction

This chapter presents a summary of the study, draws conclusions from its findings, and outlines recommendations and areas for further research. The study examined the history of Yakani Spirit among the Lugbara of Terego in the West Nile Region of Uganda between 1883 and 2025. The chapter is organized around the four specific objectives: the origin and evolution of Yakani Spirit belief; the spiritual rituals and practices associated with Yakani Spirit; the impact of external influences on the belief and its practices; and the social, economic, and political effects of Yakani Spirit among the people of Terego. The conclusions bring together the historical findings and their theoretical implications, while the recommendations identify possible ways of documenting the tradition and supporting further research into its history and cultural significance.

8.1 Summary of Findings

The findings are summarized according to the four specific research objectives.

8.1.1 Specific Objective One: The Origin and Evolution of Yakani Spirit Belief

The study examined the origin and historical development of Yakani Spirit belief among the Lugbara of Terego. The accounts presented in the study associate its introduction with Azibo of the Orivu Agorovu clan and Mirio Omba of the Luruja clan, who reportedly acquired the Spirit from Yondu in present-day South Sudan through a Kakwa mediator identified as Rembe. According to the accounts examined, Yondu was associated with the Spirit's earlier sacred location, while Pilima in Uganda became an important site in its subsequent history.

The findings also associate the emergence and growth of Yakani Spirit with concerns about justice, external threats, protection, wealth, and the regulation of communal life. These concerns help explain the significance attributed to the Spirit by its adherents. The study further indicates that Yakani Spirit was understood not merely as a source of spiritual assistance but also as an authority associated with social order and the resolution of community concerns.

The historical development of Yakani Spirit must, however, be understood in relation to the nature of the available evidence. Oral accounts provide important information about remembered origins, transmission, and cultural meaning, but the chronology and details of particular events require corroboration wherever documentary or other historical evidence is available. The study therefore contributes to the reconstruction of Yakani Spirit's history while recognizing the importance of distinguishing remembered traditions from independently established historical events.

8.1.2 Specific Objective Two: Yakani Spirit Rituals and Practices

The study identified a range of rituals and practices associated with Yakani Spirit. These included the Dedeyi ceremony involving sacred water, sacrificial offerings known as *owinga*, healing practices, cleansing rites, and divination associated with the resolution of disputes. The accounts examined also indicate that these practices were conducted by individuals with recognized spiritual responsibilities, particularly spirit mediums.

The performance of rituals was associated with particular circumstances, including illness, other personal or communal difficulties, agricultural activities, and disputes. Sacred spaces, including shrines and designated locations within households, were also important in the practice of Yakani Spirit belief. The significance of particular rituals and locations depended on the purposes attributed to them and the customary practices observed by adherents.

Beyond their spiritual meanings, Yakani Spirit-related rituals were associated with the transmission of cultural knowledge, the maintenance of customary expectations, and relationships among individuals and clans. The findings therefore suggest that the rituals formed part of the wider social and cultural life of the people of Terego. Their historical significance lies in the ways they connected spiritual belief with community relationships and customary practices. The precise meaning, timing, and performance of individual rituals should nevertheless be understood from the relevant testimonies and historical evidence rather than assumed to have remained uniform throughout the period under study.

8.1.3 Specific Objective Three: The Impact of External Influences on Yakani Spirit Belief and Practices

The study examined how external religious, political, and social influences affected Yakani Spirit belief and its practices between 1883 and 2025. The findings indicate that the expansion of colonial administration and Christian missionary activity created changing conditions for indigenous spiritual traditions. Where the historical evidence documents opposition to Yakani Spirit practices, this

opposition helps explain why some activities may have become less publicly visible and why adherents may have altered the ways in which they expressed their beliefs.

The study also considered developments during the postcolonial period, including the growth of Christianity and Islam, formal education, urbanization, and changing attitudes towards indigenous spiritual practices. These developments formed part of the wider environment in which Yakani Spirit was practiced, understood, and transmitted. The available accounts suggest that its history cannot be adequately explained as a simple process of disappearance. Instead, its practices and meanings need to be examined in relation to the different responses of adherents and the changing social conditions in which the tradition existed.

The findings thus point to both pressures on Yakani Spirit and the possibility of adaptation and continued practice. However, the extent of secrecy, religious blending, and symbolic reinterpretation varied according to circumstances and requires specific supporting evidence. The study consequently treats continuity and change as historical processes to be investigated rather than assuming that all communities or adherents responded to external influences in the same way.

8.1.4 Specific Objective Four: The Effects of Yakani Spirit Beliefs and Practices

The study examined the social, economic, and political effects associated with Yakani Spirit belief and practices among the people of Terego. Socially, the findings indicate that Yakani Spirit was associated with customary expectations, relationships among families and clans, dispute resolution, and the promotion of communal order. Beliefs concerning the authority of the Spirit and its mediums could influence how individuals understood wrongdoing, obligations, and appropriate conduct. The extent to which these practices consistently produced peace or prevented conflict, however, depends on evidence from particular cases and community experiences.

Economically, Yakani Spirit was associated with agricultural activities, rainmaking, crop protection, hunting, and customary restrictions concerning access to selected places and resources. Oral accounts also describe the transfer of livestock and money through payments characterized as fines or tributes. These practices indicate connections between spiritual belief and material life, including the protection of livelihoods and the economic relationships between mediums and community members. Nevertheless, claims about improved agricultural production, environmental conservation, or the redistribution of wealth require evidence demonstrating the relevant outcomes rather than relying solely on beliefs about the Spirit's powers.

Politically, the findings suggest that Yakani Spirit and its mediums could influence indigenous leadership, communal consultation, and the resolution of disputes. The authority attributed to the Spirit reportedly formed part of the processes through which certain decisions were considered and customary rules upheld. Oral testimonies also suggest that some consultations continued during the postcolonial period, although their visibility and relationship with formal political and religious institutions may have changed.

Taken together, these findings demonstrate that Yakani Spirit should be examined not only as a spiritual tradition but also in relation to the social relationships, economic activities, and customary authority associated with it. Its effects were shaped by historical circumstances, community practices, and the meanings attributed to the Spirit. The nature and extent of those effects must therefore be assessed in relation to the evidence available for the different periods between 1883 and 2025.

8.2 Conclusion

The study concludes that the history of Yakani Spirit among the Lugbara of Terego is best understood through the relationship between spiritual belief, customary practices, and historical change. The findings indicate that Yakani Spirit was associated with community concerns extending beyond religious observance, including leadership, dispute resolution, agricultural activities, material security, and relationships among families and clans. The study also demonstrates the importance of examining the ways in which indigenous spiritual traditions encountered changing political, religious, and social conditions.

The conclusions are presented at two levels: theoretical and historical.

8.2.1 Theoretical Conclusion

The study demonstrates the value of Postcolonial Theory for examining the relationship between external authority and indigenous spiritual traditions. The framework provides a way of interpreting how colonial and missionary encounters could challenge, marginalize, or change the public expression of Yakani Spirit belief. It also helps frame questions about the responses of local communities, including the possible continuation, adaptation, or reinterpretation of practices under changing conditions.

The study's findings suggest that the history of Yakani Spirit should not automatically be interpreted as a straightforward transition from flourishing tradition to disappearance. Where the evidence

demonstrates continued practice or adaptation, these developments indicate that indigenous traditions could respond to changing circumstances in different ways. Such responses should not, however, be treated as proof that colonial influence was ineffective or that all adherents resisted it in the same manner.

Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's *Decolonising the Mind* (1986) provides a relevant intellectual point of reference for considering the relationship between colonial power, cultural expression, and indigenous knowledge. Its relevance to Yakani Spirit lies in the questions it raises about cultural authority and the consequences of colonial domination. The study uses this perspective to interpret the historical evidence rather than treating the theory as independent proof of events in Terego.

Overall, the theoretical conclusion is that Postcolonial Theory offers a useful framework for understanding the pressures and responses associated with Yakani Spirit, provided that the framework remains grounded in the particular historical experiences documented by the study.

8.2.2 Historical Conclusion

Historically, the study reconstructs the origin, development, practices, and changing significance of Yakani Spirit among the Lugbara of Terego between 1883 and 2025. The accounts examined associate its origins with particular individuals, clans, and places across the present-day Uganda–South Sudan border. They also connect the Spirit with concerns about protection, justice, material security, and the regulation of communal affairs.

The study further establishes the importance of examining Yakani Spirit through its rituals, the roles of its mediums, and its relationship with customary social and political arrangements. The findings suggest that Yakani Spirit was associated with several dimensions of community life and that its historical significance cannot be understood exclusively in religious terms.

Colonial administration, missionary activity, postcolonial governance, and changing religious and social conditions provide important contexts for understanding the subsequent history of Yakani Spirit. The evidence suggests that its public role and forms of practice may have changed over time. Where the continuation of private consultations or other practices is supported by oral testimony, these accounts point to forms of persistence that should be distinguished from the continued existence of an unchanged institution.

The study therefore concludes that Yakani Spirit has a significant place in the history and cultural experience of the people of Terego. Its history reveals the importance of examining indigenous belief systems within their specific historical contexts and of recognizing both continuity and change. The precise chronology, geographical reach, and extent of its influence must remain subject to the quality and coverage of the available evidence.

8.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are proposed.

8.3.1 Documentation and Preservation of Sacred Sites

Relevant cultural heritage authorities, working with Terego District Local Government, clan leaders, and custodians of Yakani Spirit-related sites, should consider documenting locations associated with the history of Yakani Spirit, including Pilima where its historical association can be established. Documentation should record the historical accounts, cultural significance, condition, and custodianship of each site. Any proposal for formal heritage recognition or gazetting should follow verification of the site's significance and consultation with the relevant community custodians. This approach would support the preservation of historical knowledge while respecting community interests and the cultural status of sacred places.

8.3.2 Integration of Indigenous History into Education

The Ministry of Education and Sports, curriculum developers, and relevant educational institutions should consider how well-documented local histories and indigenous knowledge systems can contribute to teaching about Uganda's cultural and historical diversity. The history of Yakani Spirit could provide a case study of the relationship between indigenous beliefs, community organization, and historical change. Any curriculum material should be developed through consultation with knowledgeable community members and historians, with clear distinctions between oral traditions, corroborated historical evidence, and interpretation.

8.3.3 Establishment of Community Archives and Cultural Documentation Initiatives

Terego District Local Government, cultural leaders, researchers, and community organizations should consider establishing a community archive or cultural documentation initiative for preserving oral testimonies, photographs, historical records, and relevant material objects associated with Yakani

Spirit. Items mentioned in the study, such as the Ngara spear and Otakua pot, should be documented where their association with Yakani Spirit can be established and where custodians consent to recording them.

Documentation should include the names or agreed identifiers of contributors, dates and locations of interviews, contextual information, and any restrictions on access. Community consent and culturally appropriate arrangements should guide the recording, storage, and sharing of knowledge, particularly where information or objects are considered sacred or restricted.

8.3.4 Documentation of Knowledge Held by Spirit Mediums and Elders

Researchers and community cultural institutions should work with willing elderly mediums, elders, and other knowledgeable Participant to document oral histories, ritual terminology, accounts of customary practices, and recollections of historical change. Such work would help preserve knowledge that may become difficult to recover as knowledgeable Participant pass away or community practices change. Participation should be voluntary, and contributors should retain appropriate control over culturally sensitive information. Documentation should preserve differences in testimony rather than forcing all accounts into a single version of Yakani Spirit's history.

8.3.5 Further Study of Indigenous Dispute Resolution

Researchers, legal scholars, cultural leaders, and relevant government institutions should consider examining the historical dispute-resolution practices associated with Yakani Spirit. Such research could investigate the use of oaths, ritual sanctions, mediation, and customary obligations, paying attention to the experiences of different Participant and the outcomes of particular disputes. Any consideration of lessons for contemporary restorative justice should distinguish historical description from present-day policy proposals and assess compatibility with applicable law, human rights, and safeguards against coercion.

8.4 Areas for Further Study

The study has identified several areas that would benefit from further research.

8.4.1 Comparative Regional Analysis

Further research could compare Yakani Spirit traditions among the Lugbara of Terego, relevant Lugbara communities in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and the Kakwa of South Sudan. Such

a study could investigate oral accounts of transmission, similarities and differences in ritual practices, the movement of spiritual knowledge across borders, and the historical relationships between communities. Comparative claims should be based on evidence gathered from each community rather than assuming that shared names or reported connections necessarily indicate identical practices.

8.4.2 Linguistic and Symbolic Analysis of Yakani Spirit Rituals

A focused linguistic and ethnographic study could examine ritual expressions, prayers, incantations, and specialized terms associated with Yakani Spirit, including *Dedeyi* and *Yondu au*, where these terms are confirmed by the relevant speakers and sources. Research could investigate their meanings, pronunciation, usage, and cultural significance in context. Collaboration with Lugbara-speaking researchers and knowledgeable custodians would help reduce the risk of mistranslation and preserve meanings that may not be adequately conveyed in English.

8.4.3 Gender Roles in Yakani Spirit Spirituality

Further research should investigate the roles of women and men in Yakani Spirit belief and practice, including participation in rituals, the transmission of knowledge, household observances, spiritual leadership, and community decision-making. Oral histories from Participant of different ages, genders, clans, and social positions could help establish whether responsibilities and experiences varied over time. This would provide a fuller understanding of the tradition without assuming in advance that particular roles were either inclusive or restrictive.

8.4.4 Digitalization and the Transmission of Oral Traditions

Research could examine how digital recording, community archives, and social media are being used, or could be used, to preserve and transmit Yakani Spirit-related oral traditions. Such a study might explore the experiences of younger community members and the Lugbara diaspora, the circulation of historical narratives, and the ways digital platforms may influence interpretations of cultural heritage. It should also consider consent, ownership, access restrictions, and the risks of circulating sacred or sensitive material without community authorization.

8.4.5 Historical Study of Healing Practices and Sacred Materials

An interdisciplinary historical and ethnographic study could document the plants, materials, and procedures associated with healing practices attributed to Yakani Spirit mediums, including the use of sacred water known as *Dedeyi* were supported by the evidence. The research could examine how

practitioners explain these materials, how knowledge is transmitted, and how the practices have changed over time. Any investigation of therapeutic or pharmacological effects would require appropriate scientific methods, ethical approval, and safeguards for Participant. Historical accounts of healing should not, by themselves, be treated as proof of clinical efficacy.

8.5 Final Concluding Statement

This study has examined the history of Yakani Spirit among the Lugbara of Terego in the West Nile Region of Uganda between 1883 and 2025. It has explored the tradition's reported origins, rituals and practices, encounters with external influences, and connections with social, economic, and political life. The findings indicate that Yakani Spirit provides an important subject for understanding indigenous belief and customary institutions within a changing historical context. They also demonstrate the value of oral testimony for reconstructing community histories, while underscoring the need to assess such testimony critically and corroborate it wherever possible. Further documentation and research, undertaken in collaboration with community custodians, can deepen historical understanding of Yakani Spirit and contribute to the preservation of the cultural knowledge associated with the people of Terego.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Research Work Plan

Table 1. Table showing the research workplan

S/N	ACTIVITY	TIME FRAME
1	Research concept development	March - April 2025
2	Presentation and corrections	April 2025
3	Pre-field testing	May 2025
4	Proposal writing	June – July 2025
5	Proposal defense and corrections	August 2025
6	Data collection and analysis	August– November 2025
7	Presentation of preliminary findings	December 2025
8	Corrections of the first draft	January – February 2026
9	Submission of the Dissertation and clearance	March - April 2026
10	Viva voce	May – June 2026
11	Corrections	July 2026
12	Publication and dissemination	Whenever possible

Appendix B: Consent Form

History of Yakani Spirit Among the Lugbara of Terego of West Nile of Uganda From 1883-2025

Consent to participate in research

I..... hereby agree to voluntarily participate in this research

I understand that I will not be coerced into giving answers and can withdraw from the process anytime

I accept data from my interview to be used for the research

I have been clearly told the nature and purpose of the research

I understand that the participation will involve interview that takes time but attracts no financial compensation, nor will I gain any direct individual benefit from it

I agree to be audio recorded during the interview

I have been informed that the information I give will be handled with confidentiality and my identity concealed

I understand that I have the freedom to access the recorded audio of my interview within one year from the interview date

Affirmations

Research Participant

.....

Signature

.....

Date

Researcher

I confirm that the participant read/ was explained the consent form and appeared to have understood before signing

.....

Signature of researcher

.....

Date

Appendix C: Interview Guide for In-depth Interviews

Section A: Origins of Yakani Spirit Beliefs

Main Question: What is the origin of Yakani Spirit beliefs among the Terego people, and how have these beliefs developed over time?

1. Who introduced the Yakani Spirit to the Terego people?
 - Follow-up: Can you tell me more about the person(s) or group(s) who are believed to have brought the Yakani Spirit to your community?
2. What events or circumstances led to the origin of Yakani Spirit beliefs?
 - Follow-up: Are there specific historical events that are linked to the origin of Yakani Spirit beliefs?
3. When did the belief in Yakani Spirit begin among the Terego people?
 - Follow-up: Is there a specific year or time period that is considered the beginning of this belief?
4. Where did the Yakani Spirit originate (specific location, clan, or shrine)?
 - Follow-up: Are there any sacred sites or locations associated with the origin of Yakani Spirit?
5. Why was the Yakani Spirit accepted or revered by the Terego community?
 - Follow-up: What role did it play in the daily lives or spiritual practices of the people?
6. How did the beliefs and practices around Yakani Spirit evolve from 1883 to 2025?
 - Follow-up: Have there been significant changes in the way people practice or believe in Yakani Spirit over time?

Section B: Rituals and Practices Associated with Yakani Spirit Spirit

Main Question: What are the key rituals and practices associated with Yakani Spirit Spirits among the Terego people, and what is their significance?

1. Who performs the rituals related to Yakani Spirit Spirit?
 - Follow-up: Are there specific people, clans, or spiritual leaders who are responsible for performing these rituals?
2. What are the specific rituals and ceremonies performed for or with Yakani Spirit Spirit?
 - Follow-up: Can you describe the most important rituals or ceremonies linked to the Yakani Spirit Spirit?
3. When are Yakani Spirit rituals performed?
 - Follow-up: Are there specific seasons, events, or situations in which these rituals are conducted?

4. Where are the rituals and practices conducted?
 - Follow-up: Are there particular sacred places, shrines, or homes where these rituals typically occur?
5. Why are these rituals important to the Terego people's spiritual and cultural identity?
 - Follow-up: How do these rituals connect the community to their heritage and beliefs?
6. How are these rituals organized, and what are their spiritual or symbolic meanings?
 - Follow-up: What steps are involved in a typical ritual? What do these actions signify for the Participant?

Section C: External Influences on Yakani Spirit Beliefs and Practices

Main Question: How have external influences, such as Christianity, Islam, and modernization, impacted the traditional beliefs and practices related to Yakani Spirit Spirits among the Terego people?

1. Who among the Terego people has resisted or accepted external influences on Yakani Spirit beliefs?
 - Follow-up: What has been the general reaction of the community to the introduction of Christianity, Islam, or modern ideas?
2. What changes have occurred in the way Yakani Spirit is viewed or practiced due to external religions?
 - Follow-up: Have there been new practices, beliefs, or adaptations related to Yakani Spirit due to the influence of Christianity, Islam, or modernization?
3. When did the influence of Christianity, Islam, and modernization start affecting Yakani Spirit beliefs?
 - Follow-up: Can you identify a specific event or period when the change began to occur?
4. Where were these changes most prominent (e.g., rural areas, towns, churches)?
 - Follow-up: Were there any specific locations where the impact of these external influences was stronger?
5. Why have some traditional practices declined while others have persisted?
 - Follow-up: What factors have contributed to the persistence or decline of Yakani Spirit practices?
6. How have the Terego people balanced Yakani Spirit beliefs with new religious or modern systems?
 - Follow-up: Can you describe how some community members have adapted or combined the traditional Yakani Spirit with new religious practices?
7. How did Yakani Spirit belief and practice interface with colonialism?

Section 4: Role of Yakani Spirit Mediums

Main Question: What is the role of Yakani Spirit mediums among the Terego people, and how has this role evolved over time?

1. Who qualifies or becomes a Yakani Spirit medium among the Terego people?
 - Follow-up: Are there specific criteria or experiences that make someone suitable to become a medium?
2. What duties, powers, and responsibilities do Yakani Spirit mediums perform or hold?
 - Follow-up: Can you explain the role of mediums in rituals, healing, or decision-making?
3. When are mediums consulted or engaged (e.g., times of illness, misfortune, or conflict)?
 - Follow-up: What circumstances call for the intervention of a Yakani Spirit medium?
4. Where do Yakani Spirit mediums operate from (e.g., shrines, sacred forests, households)?
 - Follow-up: Are there specific locations that mediums use when carrying out their work?
5. Why are Yakani Spirit mediums considered important or powerful in the community?
 - Follow-up: What qualities or abilities make mediums essential in the practice and belief of the Yakani Spirit Spirit?
6. How has the role, respect, or influence of Yakani Spirit mediums changed from 1883 to 2025?
 - Follow-up: Have there been shifts in how mediums are viewed or treated by the community over time?

Appendix D: Key Informant Interview (KII) Guide

Target Participant: Spirit mediums (mediums), elderly clan leaders, and academic/cultural experts.

Introduction & Consent:

Brief introduction of the researcher and the study's purpose.

Assurance of confidentiality and request for oral consent.

Section A: Origin and Evolution (Objective 1)

Can you share the oral history regarding how the Yakani Spirit first arrived in Terego?.

Who are the key historical figures (e.g., Azibo, Mirio Omba, Rembe) associated with bringing the spirit from South Sudan or DRC?

How did the practice spread among different sub-clans like Orivu and Luruja between 1883 and the present?

Section B: Rituals and Practices (Objective 2)

What are the primary rituals performed today, and how do they differ from those in the early 20th century?

Could you describe the significance of sacred items like the *Ngara* (spear), *Otakua* (pot), and *Dedeyi* (spirit water)?

What is the process for selecting and initiating a new Yakani Spirit medium?

Section C: External Influences and Adaptation (Objective 3)

How did colonial policies (e.g., the 1921 Witchcraft Ordinance) affect the public practice of Yakani Spirit?

In what ways have Christianity and Islam changed the way people view or practice Yakani Spirit today?

How do modern-day followers balance traditional spiritual beliefs with formal education and scientific medicine?

Section D: Socio-Political and Economic Effects (Objective 4)

How does the Yakani Spirit continue to influence local dispute resolution and the maintenance of "moral order" in the community?

What role does the spirit play in environmental management or agricultural success (e.g., during droughts or planting seasons)?

How has the spirit contributed to the sense of cultural identity and resilience for the people of Terego?

Appendix E: Focus Group Discussion (FGD) Guide

Target Participant: Youth groups, women's groups, and community elders (separated to encourage open dialogue).

Section 1: Community Perception and Origins

What have you heard from your parents or grandparents about the "Allah Water cult" or Yakani Spirit Spirit?

Is the spirit viewed today more as a religion, a healing practice, or a piece of history?

Section 2: Rituals in Daily Life

Are there still "private" household rituals or offerings (e.g., food sacrifices) made to the spirit that the wider community might not see?

How do community members identify a site as a "sacred shrine" in modern Terego?

Section 3: Change and Conflict

Discuss the tensions, if any, between following Yakani Spirit traditions and being a practicing member of a church or mosque.

Why do you think many young people are moving away from these traditional practices, or why do some still hold onto them?

Section 4: Impact and Legacy

Does the belief in Yakani Spirit still provide a sense of protection or security for families in this village?

What would happen to the culture of Terego if the history of the Yakani Spirit was no longer taught or remembered?

Appendix F: Categories of Participant involved in the study

Table 2. Categories of Participant involved in the study

SN	Name/Code	Age	Designation	Village	Date of Interview
1	Ocotoko Rechar	69	Institutional leader	Aii-vu	13/08/2025
2	Ajobe Michael	69	Institutional leader	Odupi	
3	Ojidio Alu	78	Institutional leader	Omugo	
4	Candia Primo	52	Institutional leader	Uriama	
5	Oyizia Mark	78	Institutional leader	Bileafe	
6	Bugale Otazio	80	Clan council of elders	Leju town council	
7	Korino Candia	64	Clan council of elders	Uriama	
8	Tom Anguyo	65	Clan council of elders	Leju Town council	
9	Torah Gilbert	68	Clan council of elders	Aii-vu	
10	Taban Silman	68	Clan council of elders	Omugo	
11	Edeke John	78	Clan council of elders	Odupi	
12	Adiga Kemish Jabir	69	Clan council of elders	Aii-vu	14/08/2025
13	Butele kelil	70	Clan council of elders	Bileafe	
14	Yanga Ezaruku	69	Clan council of elders	Leju Town Council	
15	Candia Micheal	59	Clan council of elders	Bileafe	
16	Maburuka Ezaruku	60	Elderly man	Odupi	
17	Toma Haruna	78	Elderly man	Odupi	

18	Kaja Ramadhan	65	Elderly man	Odupi	
19	Okuvuru Matha	45	Elderly woman	Odupi	
20	Maturu Magreta	46	Elderly woman	Katrine	
21	Onvitiku Cecilia	46	Elderly woman	Katrine	
22	Badaru Margret	50	Elderly woman	Aii-vu	15/08/2025
23	Candiru Rose	55	Elderly woman	Aii-vu	
24	Lekuru Beatrice	48	Elderly woman	Aii-vu	
24	Yesko Flora	50	Elderly woman	Aii-vu	
26	Amaguru polina	50	Elderly woman	Uriama	
27	Avako Matilida	49	Elderly woman	Uriama	
28	Orodriyo Christina	25	Youth	Uriama	16/08/2025
29	Tiperu Naima	33	Youth	Omugo	
30	Tawusi Martha	27	Youth	Omugo	
31	Anguparu Maria	30	Youth	Omugo	
32	Munduru priscila	30	Youth	Odupi	
33	Ocokoru Mary	21	Youth	Odupi	
34	Amviko Salome	32	Youth	Odupi	
35	Ojobiru Alice	19	Youth	Bileafe	17/08/2025
36	Driciru Zainab	27	Youth	Bileafe	
37	Obaru Mary	27	Youth	Bileafe	
38	Onvitiku Sally	35	Youth	Bileafe	

39	Onzima Juda	19	Youth	Odupi	
40	Obiga kana Joseph	66	Elderly man	Odupi	
41	Drabele Saverio	72	Elderly man	Odupi	
42	Tabua Marico	78	Elderly woman	Odupi	
43	Abala Maricele	56	Elderly woman	Katrin	19/08/2025
44	Acidri James	45	Elderly man	Katrin	
45	Apangu Geoffrey	50	Elderly man	Omugo	
46	Andeezo Jafar	69	Elderly man	Omugo	
47	Andema John	48	Elderly man	Omugo	
48	Butele Santory	46	Elderly man	Omugo	
49	Ambayo Franco	60	Elderly man	Uriama	
50	Omviti Francis	55	Elderly man	Uriama	
51	Acidri John	62	Elderly man	Uriama	
52	Driwale Patrick	25	Youth	Omugo	
53	Odobbo cisman	18	Youth	Omugo	
54	Matua Lorence nagara	30	Youth	Omugo	
55	Amabua Cosmas	26	Youth	Omugo	
56	Ngaya jimmy	29	Youth	Bileafe	
57	Fadumula Haruna	34	Youth	Bileafe	
58	Amabua Marico	19	Youth	Bileafe	

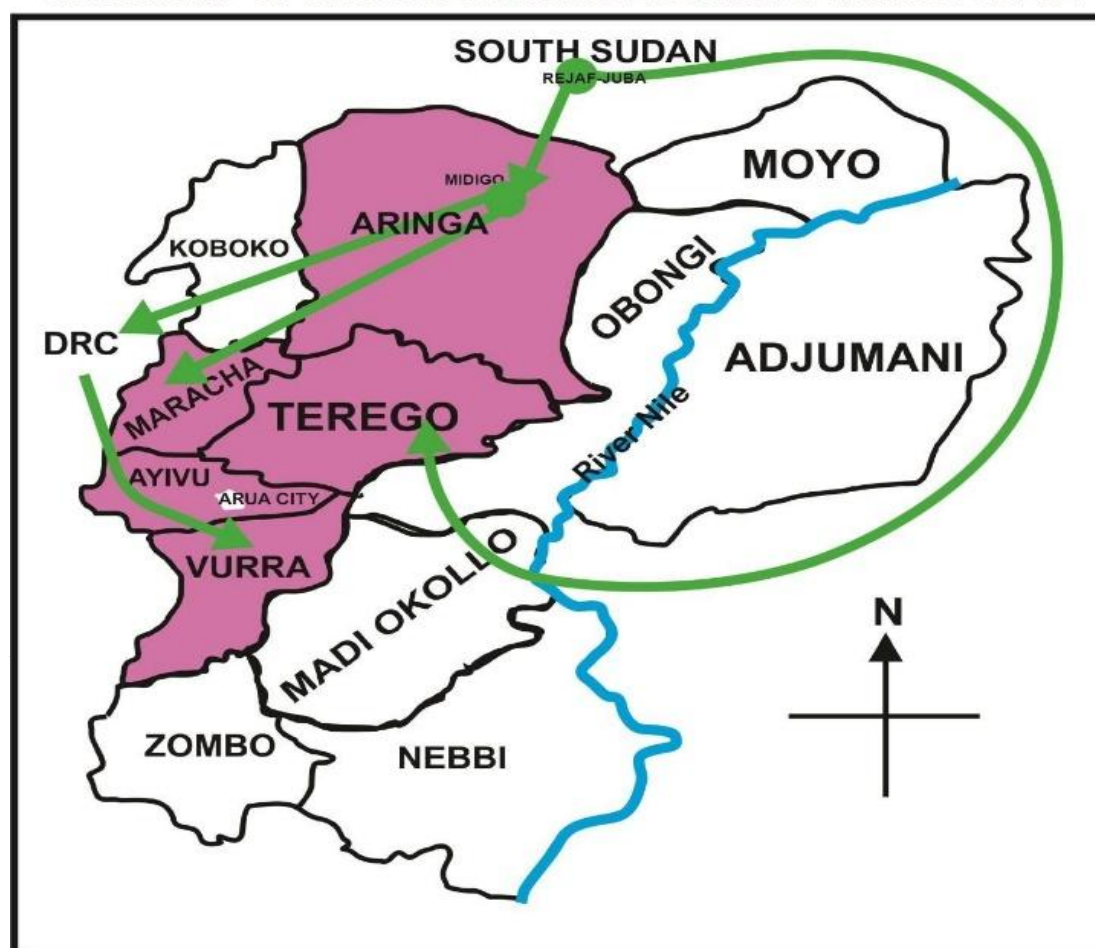
59	Ambayo Jino	30	Youth	Bileafe	
60	Ogama tukutuku safi	19	Youth	Bileafe	
61	Anguyo William	69	Religious leader	Aii-vu	21/08/2025
62	Silvio Draja	68	Religious leader	Aii-vu	
63	Maturu Ester	52	Religious leader	Leju Town Council	
64	Babanga Batista	69	Religious leader	Uriama	
65	Osua Saverino	72	Religious leader	Uriama	
66	Amamva Robert	40	Religious leader	Uriama	
67	Afeku Paul	62	Religious leader	Aii-vu	22/08/2025
68	Inima Justine	55	Religious leader	Bileafe	
69	Erema Natal	44	Religious leader	Leju Town Council	
70	Candia Kurimo	60	Religious leader	Uriama	
71	Alli Abdulhaman	52	Religious leader	Uriama	
72	Rashid Haruna	69	Religious leader	Omugo	
73	Buni Hadad	49	Religious leader	Aii-vu	23/08/2025
74	Toko Jbiri	46	Religious leader	Odupi	
75	Ajusia Abdul	51	Religious leader	Bileafe	
76	Ayipia Mark	72	Opinion leader	Bileafe	
77	Ocima Mario	45	Opinion leaders	Omugo	

78	Buleru Janet	58	Opinion leader	Omugo	
79	Agasiru Rose	68	Opinion leader	Uriama	
80	Driciru Devuta	58	Opinion leader	Omugo	
81	Arima Nathan	60	Opinion leader	Odupi	
82	mawa Eliaya	70	Opinion leaders	Odupi	
83	Alezo Auriela	51	Opinion leader	Bileafe	
84	Afeku Paul	66	Opinion leader	Aii-vu	
85	Anguparu Edina	70	Opinion leader	Aii-vu	
86	Swali Hssien	50	Teacher	Bileafe	24/08/2025
87	Angdrua Albert	40	Teacher	Bileafe	
88	Buga Alex	46	Teacher	Bileafe	
89	Apangu Steven	33	Teacher	Aii-vu	
90	Kemisi Laa Aliku	76	Teacher	Odupi	
91	Bako Salama	34	Teachers	Odupi	
92	Ajobe Baba Henery	64	Civic leader (LC I)	Odupi	25/08/2025
93	Afadrioyo Denis	52	Civic leader (LC I)	Aii-vu	
94	Nyakuci John Bosco	36	Civic leader (LC II)	Town council	
95	Niku Geofrey	54	Civic leader (LC 1)	Omugo	
96	Tabua Jokino Abas	67	Yakani Spirit medium	Leju Town Council	26/08/2025

97	Ocima Patrick	39	Yakani Spirit medium	Uriama	
98	Nikodemus Onzima	76	Yakani Spirit medium	Aii-vu	

Appendix G: A Map of Areas of Lugbara Speaking People

SKETCH MAP OF WEST NILE SHOWING LUGBARA SPEAKING PEOPLE

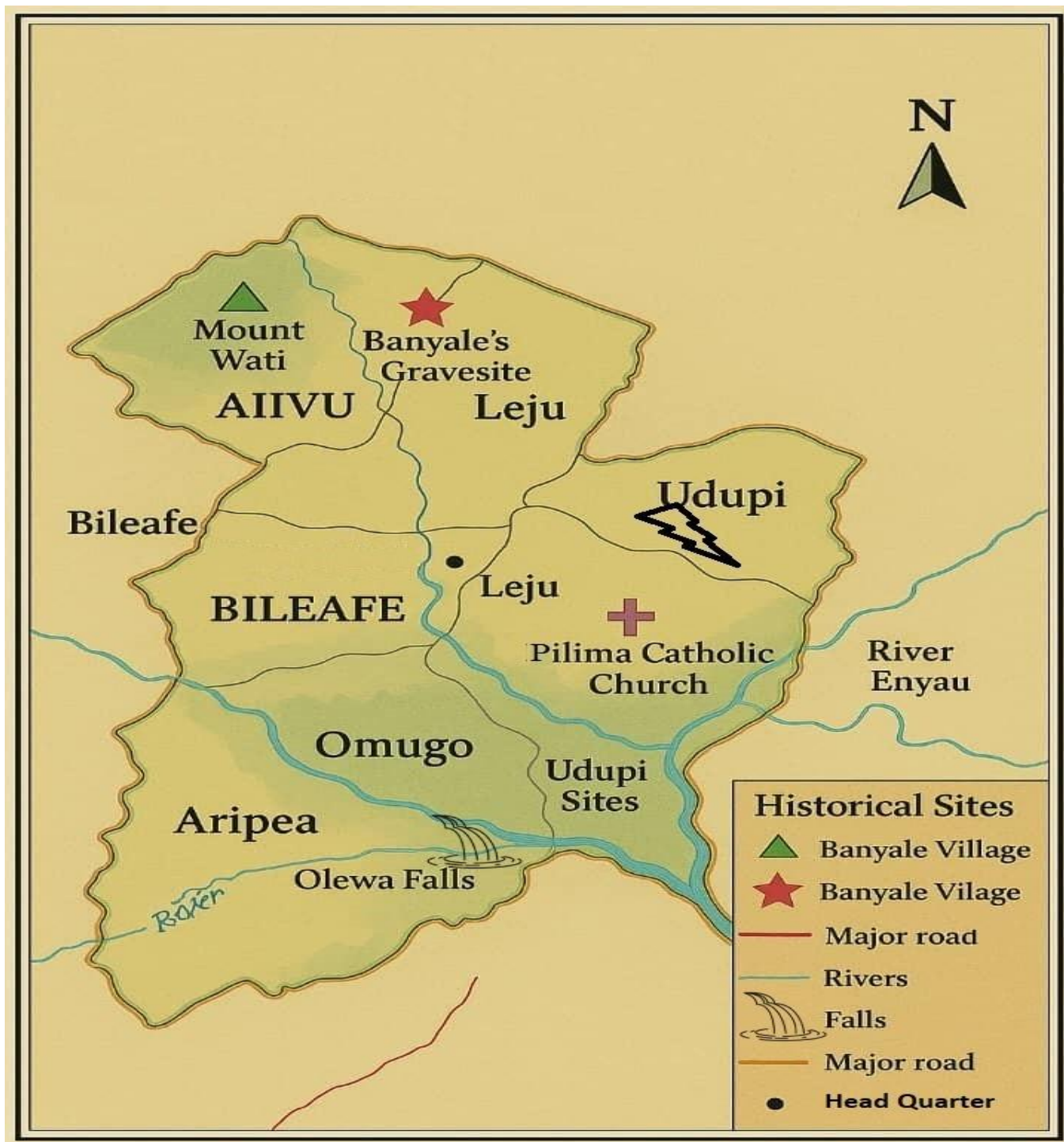


KEY

- Lugbara speaking areas
- Non Lugbara speaking areas
- River Nile
- Lugbara Migrations

Figure 15. Map of Areas of Lugbara Speaking People

Appendix H: Historical Sites in Terego



Appendix I: Items Bought Together with Yakani Spirit

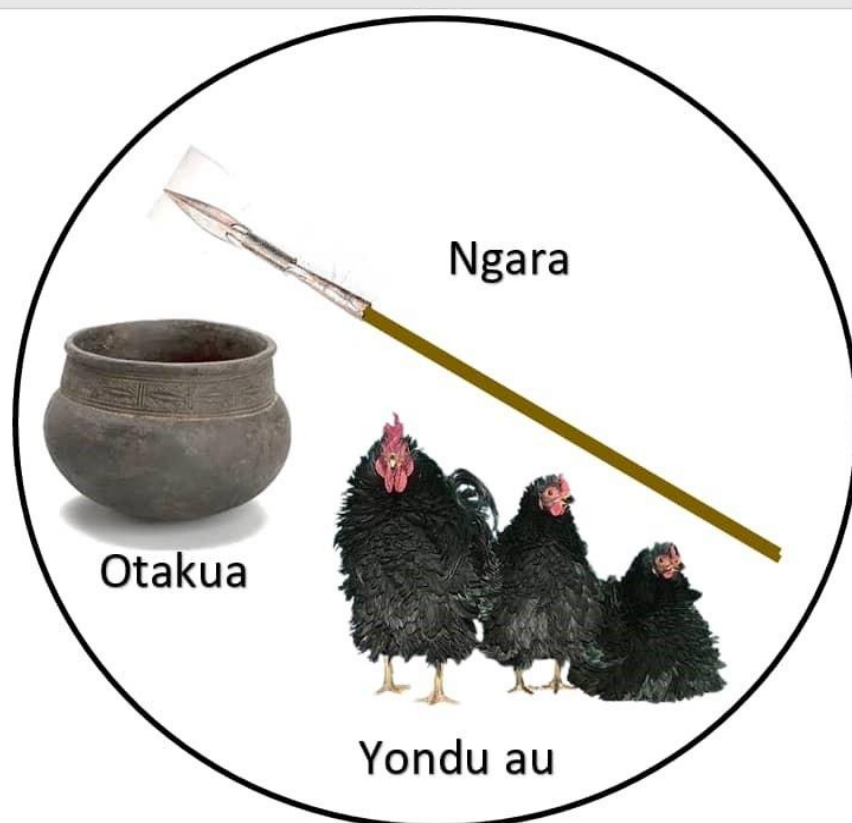


Figure 18. picture showing Items Bought Together with Yakani Spirit

Source: Uganda Heritage Sites and Tales

Appendix J: Figures (photos) indicating key field activities/engagements



Figure 19. Photograph for Focus group discussion Participant in Omugo sub-county

Source: Field photograph Candiru Zainab



Figure 20. Photograph of Yakani Spirit mediums with the interviewer at Leju and Uriama

Source: Field photograph Candiru Zainab



Figure 21: Photograph of Ngara, which was brought by Azibo from Yondu in South Sudan



Source: *Field photograph* Candiru Zainab