

**A PRAGMATIC ANALYSIS OF IGBO ORAL TRADITIONAL DIRGE: A
CASE STUDY OF OWERRE-EBEIRI**

BY

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**DEPARTMENT OF LINGUISTIC STUDIES
FACULTY OF ARTS
UNIVERSITY OF BENIN
BENIN CITY**

SEPTEMBER, 2023.

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**A PROJECT WORK SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF
LINGUISTICS STUDIES, FACULTY OF ARTS, UNIVERSITY OF BENIN,
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FOR THE AWARD OF BACHELOR OF ART (B.A) DEGREE IN
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CERTIFICATION

I, Pamela Ogochukwu Nwadike, an undergraduate student in the Department of Linguistics Studies of the University of Benin, with the matriculation number ART1801547 has completed the requirement for course work and research for Bachelor of Arts degree, Linguistics.

The work embodied in this project is an original and has not been submitted in part or in full for any other degree or diploma programme of this or any other University or institution.

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Dr. M.S. Agbo
Head of Department

Date

DEDICATION

I dedicate this project to Almighty God my source of inspiration, wisdom, knowledge and understanding. I also dedicate this work to my lovely mother Late Mrs Nwadike Blessing.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would love to express my special thanks of gratitude to ALMIGHTY GOD for his love, grace and wisdom which He bestowed on me in the course of this project. My sincere gratitude to my project supervisor Dr. A.E Ideh for the immeasurable role she played in the actualization of this project by providing me the necessary academic guidance and support to see that this project is successful. To Dr. J.O. Onu and Mr. F. Duru thank you for being a father figure to me and I really appreciate your kind words of encouragement. To the Head of the department Dr. M.S Agbo, Prof. L.C Yuka the Dean of Faculty of Arts, Prof. C.U.C Ugorji, Prof. Mrs. Omoregbe, Dr. Mrs. E.O Ikoyo-Eweto, Dr. G.O Ikhimwin, Dr. Mrs. George-Essien, Dr. Mrs. O.R Osewa, Dr. W. Aigbedo, Dr. G.O Agharuwa, Mr. J. Edionhon, Dr. Mrs. O.V Evbayiro, Mr. F. Ajala, Dr. O. Evbuomwa, Dr. Mrs. S. Etefia, and all the amiable team of lecturers and staffs in the department, thank you and may GOD bless you all. I am thankful to my daddy Chief Nwadike Anthony who made sure I got the informations I needed for my project and also helped me in doing a lot of research and I came to know so many new things about oral traditional funeral dirges in my village Owerre-ebeiri. I am grateful to my ever loving Aunty Mrs Virginia Onumaegbu, my dearest brother Chiemerie and my uncles Mr Onumaegbu Ifeanyi, Mr Onumaegbu Elochukwu, Mr Gerald Nwadike, Mr Okechukwu Nwadike and Mr Charles Ojukwu for their constant encouragement, support and love. I express my profound love to my friends Eghobamien Steven, Samuel, Sonia, Benita, Emilia, Michael, Nosa, Manny, Amarachi, Benjamin, Ezekiel, Ekene, Rosella and Oti for their unflinching support, fruitful academic interactions and encouragement. I also appreciate all my LST and LIL coursemates who have been my family in this citadel of learning.

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ABSTRACT

This study is a pragmatic analysis of Igbo oral traditional dirge. It examined the contextual usage of Igbo oral traditional dirge. The study aims at analyzing how pragmatic elements such as speech acts contribute to the meaning and function of Igbo dirges. It investigates the meaning and contextual usage of the Igbo dirge specifically Owerre-Ebeiri dirges. The study also ascertains how dirges affect communication strategies in Igbo language. A qualitative approach was applied. The approach allows for an in-depth exploration of the context, language choices, and communicative intentions embedded in the dirges.

Data for this study was collected through oral interviews with native Igbo speakers who are rooted in the dirge singing. The researcher also listened to recordings of the songs and translated them from Igbo to English to get primary information. Additionally, written sources like journals, dissertations, and previous research by scholars were used as secondary sources. The theoretical framework used for this study is the Ethnography of communication, using Dell Hymes SPEAKING MODEL for its analysis theory. The theoretical framework adopted in this work help to ascertain the settings of the data as used in various context, participants involved, the ends or goals of the data, the key or tone of the data as it depicts the feelings of the participants, the medium of conveying the data, the various norms used in the data and the genre which the data belong.

The findings reveal how the role of pragmatics elements, such as speech acts, in Igbo dirges in Owerre-Ebeiri is crucial for conveying specific intentions and emotions. These dirges use poetic and metaphorical language to capture the essence of the deceased and express grief. They serve as a means of cultural expression and communication, fostering a collective sense of mourning and facilitating the sharing of memories.

CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.0 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Igbo oral traditional dirges are an integral part of the Igbo cultural heritage and hold immense sociocultural significance within the community. The Igbo people, who are primarily located in South-eastern Nigeria, have a rich oral tradition that encompasses various forms of expressive arts, including music, dance, and storytelling. Dirges, in particular, serve as a powerful means of communication, allowing for the expression of deep emotions and communal mourning.

The history of dirges in Igbo culture can be traced back to ancient times, where they were used as lamentations during times of loss and tragedy. These songs are passed down from generation to generation, ensuring a continuous link between the past and present. Dirges, often performed by skilled singers, contain poetic language, melodic patterns, and rhythmic elements that make them unique and captivating.

In addition to their artistic and emotional aspects, Igbo dirges also serve as historical records. They convey important cultural information, historical narratives, and genealogical connections. Through dirges, the Igbo people commemorate the lives and achievements of their ancestors, while also reinforcing the collective identity of the community.

Despite their cultural significance and widespread usage, the pragmatic analysis of Igbo oral traditional dirges remains limited. While some studies have focused on the musical and linguistic aspects of dirges, few have delved into the pragmatic dimensions of these performances. Pragmatics, as a subfield of linguistics, examines how language is used in context and explores the social, cultural, and communicative functions of language.

This Study seeks to contribute to the existing body of knowledge on Igbo dirges by conducting a pragmatic analysis, particularly within the Owerre-ebeiri community. Investigating Owerre-ebeiri dirges provides an opportunity to understand the specific variations and nuances present within this particular community. As each Igbo community has its own unique dialects, customs, and traditions, studying the dirges of Owerre-ebeiri give insights into the cultural diversity within the Igbo cultural framework.

1.1 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Oral traditional dirges are an integral part of the Igbo culture, there is a relative shortage of research that specifically explores the pragmatic aspects of these dirges. Previous studies have primarily focused on broader aspects of Igbo oral traditions, such as proverbs, folktales, and masquerades. However, there is a need for a specific investigation into the pragmatic elements and social functions of Igbo oral traditional dirges, particularly in the context of Owerre-ebeiri.

1.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research questions that will guide this study are:

1. What are the roles of pragmatics elements such as speech acts, contribute to the meaning and function of Igbo dirges in Owerre-Ebeiri?
2. What are the semantic and contextual usage of the Igbo dirges?
3. How does dirges affect communication strategies in igbo language?

1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objectives of this research project are:

1. To analyze how pragmatic elements, such as speech acts, contribute to the meaning and function of Igbo dirges.
2. To investigate the meaning, and contextual usage of the igbo and specifically Owerre-ebeiri dirges
3. To ascertain how dirges affect communication strategies in Igbo language

1.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The significance of this study lies in the exploration of a lesser-researched area within Igbo oral traditions. By conducting a pragmatic analysis of Igbo oral traditional dirges, we aim to contribute to the existing body of knowledge on African oral literature and linguistic anthropology. Understanding the pragmatic elements of these dirges can shed light on the social and cultural dynamics within the Owerre-ebeiri community, providing valuable insights into the communication practices, cultural expressions, and historical narratives of the Igbo people.

1.5 OWERRE-EBEIRI PEOPLE

The Owerre-ebeiri community is located in the Imo State of south-eastern Nigeria and is predominantly inhabited by the Igbo people. The community has a population of approximately 15,000 people, who have a strong cultural identity and pride in their Igbo heritage. The Owerre-ebeiri people have a rich history, with their lineage tracing back to their ancestors who have occupied the area for centuries.

The Owerre-ebeiri community is known for its vibrant cultural traditions, which include music, dance, storytelling, and other forms of expressive arts. Music plays a significant role in the lives of the Owerre-ebeiri people, and they have a strong tradition of performing dirges during various occasions, particularly at funerals. These dirges, accompanied by melodious tunes and rhythmic beats, serve as a means to express grief, honour the deceased, and provide solace to the bereaved.

The Owerre-ebeiri people have a deep reverence for their ancestral roots and maintain a strong connection to their cultural heritage. They have preserved their rich traditions and customs over the years, passing them down from one generation to another. In the context of dirge performances, the Owerre-ebeiri people place great importance on the correct pronunciation of words, the evocative use of metaphorical language, and the emotional depth conveyed through their singing. They believe that these dirges have the power to communicate with the spirits of their ancestors, seeking their blessings and guidance in times of mourning.

The community's social fabric is built on strong kinship ties and communal values. Owerre-ebeiri is organized around extended families, with each family belonging to a larger clan. The kinship system forms the basis of social relationships and plays a significant role in the performance of dirges. The dirge singers, known as "Umu-mgboto," are often chosen from specific lineages within the community, ensuring the preservation of ancestral knowledge and traditions.

In recent years, the Owerre-ebeiri people have faced various challenges due to modernization, urbanization, and globalization. These changes have had an impact on their cultural practices, including the performance of dirges. Younger generations are increasingly exposed to global influences, and there is a concern among the community members about the potential loss of their cultural heritage. Therefore, the study of Owerre-ebeiri dirges through the prism of pragmatic analysis not only promotes a deeper understanding of their linguistic and cultural dimensions but also serves as a means to document and preserve their rich cultural heritage for future generations.

1.6 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This section set to show how the data were collected and analysed, data for the study is collected through primary and secondary sources. The primary source of data collection process involves audio recording from oral interview and transcribing of the dirges. The dirges gathered from the field was transcribed and

converted from Igbo to English. It's transcription involved listening to the songs on tape and writing them down.

The secondary data was collected from library and online sources. Hence, making use of both the primary and secondary method of data collection made the data valid and reliable.

The analysis of data involves a combination of qualitative methods rooted in pragmatics and discourse analysis. The dirges will be examined for their pragmatic features and communicative functions. The data collected is studied immersely and analysed by identifying the pragmatic features of the funeral dirges, effect of death in the life of Owerre-ebeiri people. The speaking model of Dell Hymes was employed for the analysis.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 INTRODUCTION

This section reviews previous related pertinent literature for the study as follows;

1. Conceptual Framework
2. Review on previous studies and concerns of the present study

2.1 CONCEPTUAL REVIEW

The study of the pragmatic analysis of Igbo oral traditional dirges is grounded in several key conceptual frameworks and theories. This conceptual review explores some of the foundational concepts that underpin study in this field.

2.1.1 Igbo Perspective on Death

The Igbo understanding of death centers around the termination of breath, which halts the heart's activity, thereby ceasing the functions of the body's organs and systems. The passing away of an individual evokes a profound sense of sorrow and sympathy among those closely associated with the deceased. In broader terms, death is an inescapable reality, representing the logical culmination of birth, which initiates life in our world (Opata, 1988: 172). This phenomenon is universally inescapable for all living entities, emerging through birth or existing life forms.

It is essential to emphasize that this study focuses on dirges sung during moments of death within the Igbo culture. Whether it's the demise of a male or female, son or daughter, spouse, cousin, sibling, or other familial relationships, this research

zeroes in on the funeral songs dedicated to these occasions. The Igbo ethnic group occupies the South-Eastern region of Nigeria, establishing themselves as one of the most widely dispersed ethnic communities across Africa. Their influence extends far and wide, with their fame permeating various realms and reaching distant corners of the globe (Onanuga et al., 2012: 23).

Within Igboland, as well as other regions of Africa, death manifests in three distinct forms. The first form encompasses natural death, arising from the natural aging process. Alternatively, death can result from self-inflicted harm, such as excessive drinking or eating, disease contraction, or malevolent spirits. These spirits might be associated with witches, wizards, magic, or charms, capable of causing death either as punishment or revenge (Nwosu, 2009, p. 143). An individual's life can come to an end due to the depletion of vitality, much like a tree or plant wilts when its body can no longer sustain itself. Moreover, sudden, unexplained deaths can occur even when bodily organs and tissues are in good condition. In the Igbo context, such mysterious deaths can partly be attributed to the influence of the "ogbanje" spirit, which complicates an individual's life by intertwining human and spiritual obligations (Achebe, 1986: 27).

Beyond spiritual influences, careless living can lead to severe harm to the body's organs and eventual death. Both malevolent spirits and humans, known as "akara ogiri," can inflict fatal illnesses on individuals. Within the intricate fabric of African society, funeral ceremonies within Igbo communities inherently involve singing,

chanting, and recitations. This cultural practice stems from the belief that the demise of any community member warrants musical tributes, particularly for prominent individuals. This expression of grief through song is specific to each community and is influenced by factors such as status, family connections, and achievements of the deceased (Onyeji, 2004, p. 92). This spontaneous outpouring of emotion spans a range from anger at loss to the sorrow of helplessness in the face of death's inevitability.

2.1.2 Dirge

Singing holds a profound connection with the essence of humanity, as "man is ontologically an expressive being..." (Avorgbedor, 1990, p. 208). A song represents a melodious vocal expression, either individual or communal, often accompanied by musical instruments that enhance its melodic qualities. Although various expressive acts exist, singing transcends them by providing the highest level of vocal manipulation. It shines particularly through its interplay with instrumental accompaniments and audience participation, showcasing its superiority over other modes of performance (Okpewho, 1992: 132).

Distinguishing a song from poetic forms like chant and recitation, Okpewho establishes that chanting and recitation reside midway between regular speech and song. A song's performance typically includes music and dance, incorporating culturally familiar steps or styles dictated by the song's essence (Okpewho, 1992: 133). Importantly, a song can be an individual or group endeavor, with group

singing often involving participation through clapping and dancing, setting it apart from solo performances (Okpewho, 1992: 133).

Singing and dancing are integral to African traditional society, including the Igbo people, where "virtually every occasion necessitates singing..." (Okoh, 2002: 156).

Singing is intrinsic to various events, and the songs derive their names from the specific occasions they accompany. Funerals hold particular significance within this framework, seen as major rites of passage. Birth, marriage, and death shape these passages and inspire powerful poetic expressions (Uzochukwu, 2012: 273).

Igbo dirge embrace somber, reflective singing and dancing performed by community members during funeral or memorial events that commemorate a departed member, relative, or friend. The shared experience and collective expression are crucial facets of this tradition. Group performance is a hallmark of Igbo funeral songs, distinguishing them from other forms of poetic expression.

The mournful context that necessitates these songs gives them meaning and dictates their mode of performance. Performance breathes life into dormant oral texts, with the term 'performance' encompassing a wide spectrum of actions in various disciplines. In the arts, it encompasses putting on displays, plays, dances, or accounts, manifesting observable physical acts. Performance involves the active presence of both performers and witnesses, characterized by intentionality (McAuley, 2009: 45).

In Igboland, men, women, and youth collectively form the audience of sympathizers. These individuals are connected through kinship, friendship, and other ties to the deceased. Funeral announcements follow distinct procedures, especially in rural areas, where access to hospitals is limited. Informing the immediate family initiates cries and wailings by women and children. The deceased's age and marital status dictate burial procedures, with group chanting, singing, and dancing taking place as part of the wake and during the lying-in-state period.

Singing and dancing persist on the day following the interment, marking the continuation of the funeral event. Notably, the scholarship on Igbo oral funeral poetry has been explored in various works, with Sam Uzochukwu pioneering the critical analysis of Igbo funeral poetry. Uzochukwu classifies Igbo funeral poetry into dirges and laments, further dissecting their characteristics and core ideas.

2.1.3 Pragmatics

Pragmatics is a branch of linguistics that examines how language is used in context and how meaning is derived from linguistic expressions. In the context of the study of Igbo oral traditional dirges, the pragmatic analysis looks beyond the literal meaning of words and delves into the intended meanings, speaker intentions, and the social and cultural implications embedded within the dirges. Pragmatic analysis helps uncover how speakers use language effectively to achieve communicative goals, evoke emotions, and communicate cultural messages.

Levinson (1983) conducts an extensive examination of the realm of pragmatics, emphasizing the role context plays in shaping language understanding. His insights align with the notion that idiomatic expressions in the Igbo language, particularly within dirges, derive their significance not solely from their individual components but also from the broader contextual factors in which they are employed. Levinson's work underscores the need for pragmatic analysis to uncover the implied meanings and intentions embedded in idiomatic expressions.

The exploration of pragmatic analysis within the study of Igbo oral traditional dirges, with a specific focus on the case study of Owerre-Ebeirri, delves into the ways language operates within real-world contexts. Pragmatics investigates how the surrounding context shapes language interpretation and how speakers go beyond literal meanings to convey nuanced messages.

Existing literature demonstrates a consensus among scholars across different time periods regarding the importance of pragmatics when studying pragmatics, particularly within the scope of the Igbo language and its oral dirges.

Sperber and Wilson (1986) introduce the concept of "relevance theory," which resonates profoundly with the study within Igbo oral dirges. Their theory asserts that communication is governed by relevance, where speakers aim to convey information most pertinent to the context. This aligns with the idea that speakers of Igbo, specifically within the context of dirges, employ idiomatic expressions to

communicate socio-cultural nuances and convey messages that are contextually relevant.

Yule (1996), in his exploration of pragmatics, emphasizes the role of implicature and inference in communication. This perspective corresponds with Igbo oral dirges, where the implied meanings of words, phrases or sentences or statement often rely on the listener's ability to infer meanings based on shared cultural knowledge. Yule's insights shed light on the intricate relationship between language, context, and interpretation within the usage of idiomatic expressions.

Blum-Kulka et al. (1989) delve into cross-cultural pragmatics, highlighting the influence of cultural norms and values on communicative practices. This perspective resonates with the socio-cultural intricacies inherent in within the Igbo language and its dirges. The shared cultural knowledge necessary to understand and use idioms reflects the cultural norms and values of the Igbo community.

In summary, scholars such as Levinson (1983), Sperber and Wilson (1986), Yule (1996), and Blum-Kulka et al. (1989) collectively underscore the significance of pragmatics in deciphering the implied meanings, intentions, and socio-cultural nuances embedded in dirges. The study of idiomatic expressions within the context of Igbo oral dirges demands a pragmatic approach to unravel the layers of meaning that extend beyond literal interpretations. This sheds light on how speakers utilize idiomatic expressions to convey specific messages, attitudes, and shared cultural knowledge within the realm of Owerre-Ebeirri's oral dirges. In the exploration of

idiomatic expressions, pragmatics emerges as a critical tool for unraveling implied meanings and intentions. It deepens our understanding of the socio-cultural intricacies and communicative purposes that idioms serve within Igbo oral dirges, unveiling how speakers employ idiomatic expressions to convey specific messages and attitudes, often drawing on shared cultural knowledge.

2.2 PREVIOUS STUDIES

Egwuagu (1995) worked on the content of funeral dirge in Ezinifite community. He found out in the study that dirge is a creative verbal musical expression which takes place alongside the poetry of songs, drums, horns and pipes. He also found out in the study that living situations provide the contexts in which dirges are created and re-created. Ezinifite dirges are seen to have figures of speech such as idioms, personification, metaphor, and hyperbole, and also some stylistic features such as rhythm, dialect words, proverbs. Some Ezinifite funeral dirges take the form of lyrics and the musical element is more pronounced and verbal aspect less developed than dirges without instruments, which are delivered in a spoken or recitative style.

Onu (2012) worked on the ethnopoetic analysis of Igbo oral funeral poetry in Elugwu Ezike. He analyzed oral funeral poetry performance of the Elugwu Ezike people with emphasis on the form and structure of Elugwu Ezike dirges and impact of Christianity, Islam on igbo dirges. He used aspect of ethnopoetic theory known as infracultural model in folklore analysis developed by Alembi (2002) in analysing

the data. Onu used recording and tape recording in gathering his data. He noticed that solo and response form is the basic structural features in most Elugwu Ezike dirges and also constant repetition of words and sentences in the dirges. Funeral artist makes use of linguistic and para-linguistic features at their disposal to realize the aim of their performance and various imageries are used in the dirges to showcase emotions, events and objects such as loss, death and hunting, lion, kite, forest, and mountain respectively. Onu's findings revealed that the dirges poetically reiterate the theme of satire, praise for the dead, theme of vulnerability of death and theme of the death as a universal phenomenon. Christianity, Islam and Western education have negatively and positively affected the performance of dirges in such a way that Christian music is used in funeral ceremonies in recent time.

Nwosu (2009) identified some strands of meaning which most Igbo oral funeral songs convey. He worked on Igbo funeral songs in general, He highlighted their basic thematic constructs or the artistic representations exposed on most of them, by applying contextual analysis as the conceptual theoretical framework. He analysed the content of selected Igbo oral funeral songs and He concluded that they have clear identifiable preoccupations because they express multifaceted shades of grief and serve valuable purposes in the various communities where they are rendered. Uzochukwu (1985) worked on Mbem Akwamozu, He classified funeral dirge into three forms: mbem (chant), egwu (song) and Ngugo (recitation). He stated that the difference between these classes can be seen from the voice used in rendering these

dirges. According to Uzochukwu death causes grief to the bereaved and people who come to comfort them. Dirge is used as a means of comfort in Igbo land. In most African countries there are professional mourners, this case is same In Igbo land. There are professional mourners in Igbo land who specializes in performing dirges and some that chants dirge and also rendering chants in the praise of the deceased. When someone dies and in the funeral of a deceased person these professionals are invited by the relation of the deceased to grace the occasion with their unique performances. The professionals who specialize in chanting can chant with or without instruments but must always chant while flute is being played. And this activity is usually in the funeral of an elderly man. According to Uzochukwu, the idea or thought behind any dirge has come to bear on death as it is universal and always bring grief to the bereaved. Some dirges console the bereaved and reduces sorrow or grief caused by death.

Ogede (1995) carried out investigation on the context, form and poetic expression in Igede funeral dirges. Igede, a minority tribe in Benue state has a tradition of expression that is as vibrant as that of any of Africa's large language group. As a storehouse of Igede beliefs, practices and wisdom, the dirge leads us into a world of spirits, a dreadful world of ancestors fearfully conjured up as a universe of monstrous, malignant forces before whom man is a vulnerable being, constantly constrained to plead for protection. Ogede demonstrates in the study that there is

genuine creativity in Igede dirges which compares favourably with those found among other people of the world.

Ohwovoriola (2013) carried out a study on Urhobo funeral poetry. She looked at the ethnopoetic and archetypal images. According to her funeral poetry is perceived as an art that recurs in the life of Urhobo people. Used in the dirge are archetypal, images that are evoked and are often connected with the people's history, values and physical environment. She also stated that mourners in performing dirges during a funeral makes profuse use of images which do not only reflect the people's physical environment but also their worldview.

Darah (2004) also carried out a study on Urhobo funeral poetry. Darah categorized Urhobo art performance into two broad groups, performances associated with ritual and religious observances and another kind which comprises ceremonial event.

2.3 CONCERNS OF PRESENT STUDIES

This research work sets out to examine the pragmatic analysis of Igbo oral traditional dirge: A case study of Owerre-ebeiri. The majority of the literature that has been examined is generally focused and only a small portion has been dedicated to a specific community. None of the previous studies have examined the oral traditional dirge of the Owerre-ebeiri community, which is why it is necessary to investigate the contextual usage of this poetry in the current study.

Although the literature review may not have been extensive, it did provide a sufficient foundation for guiding the researcher in the current study.

2.4 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Ethnography of communication

The Ethnography of Communication framework is a sociolinguistic and anthropological approach that examines how communication occurs within specific cultural contexts. It explores how language is used, the cultural norms that shape communication, and the social functions of communication practices. The framework was developed to understand language as a means of expressing cultural identity, social relationships, and power dynamics within a community.

The Ethnography of Communication framework was introduced by Dell Hymes, an American linguist and anthropologist, in the mid-1960s. Hymes aimed to provide a comprehensive framework that goes beyond just linguistic analysis to encompass the broader cultural and social aspects of communication.

In the context of the pragmatic analysis of Igbo oral traditional dirge, specifically the case study of Owerre-Ebeiri, the Ethnography of Communication framework would be employed to examine not only the linguistic aspects of the dirge but also the cultural and social factors that shape its usage. This would involve analyzing how the dirge is performed, the specific linguistic features and rhetorical devices employed, and the cultural meanings and social functions it carries within the Owerre-Ebeiri community.

The SPEAKING framework is a mnemonic used within the Ethnography of Communication approach to analyze various aspects of communication within a cultural context.

S – SETTING AND SCENE

Identify the physical and cultural context in which the dirge is performed within the Owerre-Ebeiri community.

Consider the location, occasion, and any specific cultural practices associated with the performance of the dirge.

P – PARTICIPANTS

Analyze the roles of the participants involved in the dirge performance. This includes the dirge performer, the audience, and any cultural experts present.

Examine the social relationships and hierarchies among participants that influence the communication.

E - ENDS (Goals)

Explore the goals and purposes of the dirge performance. Is it meant to mourn the deceased, express emotions, honor cultural traditions, or convey a message to the community?

Understand the intended outcomes of the dirge in terms of its impact on the participants and the community.

A – ACTS

Study the linguistic and non-linguistic acts involved in the dirge. Analyze the specific language choices, metaphors, symbols, and rhetorical devices used.

Examine how these acts contribute to conveying the intended meanings and emotions within the dirge.

K – KEY

Identify the key cultural and linguistic features that are unique to the dirge in the Owerre-Ebeiri context.

Consider any linguistic or cultural symbols, metaphors, or idiomatic expressions that hold special significance within the dirge performance.

I – INSTRUMENTALITIES

Investigate the linguistic resources and communicative strategies used in the dirge performance.

Examine how language, tone, rhythm, and other vocal features are manipulated to enhance the emotional and cultural impact of the dirge.

N – NORMS

Explore the cultural norms and social rules that guide communication within the Owerre-Ebeiri community.

Consider any taboos, politeness conventions, or traditional communication norms that influence how the dirge is performed and received.

G – GENRE

Place the dirge within the broader genre of oral traditional practices in the Igbo culture.

Understand how the dirge fits into the larger repertoire of cultural expressions and communication forms within the community.

By applying the SPEAKING framework to the analysis of the Igbo oral traditional dirge in Owerre-Ebeiri, researchers can gain a comprehensive understanding of how communication unfolds within a specific cultural context. This approach allows for a different exploration of the linguistic, cultural, and social dimensions of the dirge and its significance within the community.

CHAPTER THREE
DATA PRESENTATION

3.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the dirges sang during funeral ceremonies in Owerre-ebeiri community.

3.1 DATA PRESENTATION

Datum 1

Ọnwụ bụ onye oshi ooo	Death is a thief ooo
Ọnwụ bụ onye oshi oooo	Death is a thief ooo
Ozuru ọgbalaga	It steals and runs away
Ọnwụ ezuru le nu nne anyị oo	Death has stolen our mother oo
Ọnwụ ezuru le nu nwanne anyị oo	Death has stolen our sister
Ozuru ọgbalaga	It steals and runs away

Datum 2

Ğinị mere nwanne anyị o jiri nwụọ na ọnuma na iwe.	What made our brother to die in pain and anger
Ihe ahu anyị jikwara ya ogu na ọfo	That thing, we uphold justice and truth for it
Ka ala kugbuo ya oooo	May the land beat it to death oooo
Ğinị mere nwanne anyị o jiri nwụọ na ọnuma na iwe	What made our brother to die in pain and anger

Ihe ahu, anyị jikwara ya ogu na ọfọ

That thing, we uphold justice and
truth for it

Ka ala kugbuo ya oooo

May the land beat it to death oooo

Datum 3

Iwe iwe e iwe

Anger anger e anger

Iwe iwe e iwe

Anger anger e anger

Iwe na ewe anyị ooo iwe

We are angry ooo anger

Iwe na ewe anyị ooo iwe

We are angry ooo anger

Anyị ahudị papa anyị

We can't find our father

Anyị ahudị nna anyị

We can't find our father

Ya mere iwe ji ewe anyị oo

That is why we are angry

Iwe e e

Anger e e

Datum 4

Abali abụọ ka mmadu nwere na uwa

Two nights does a person have on
earth

Ụbọchị ọmụmụ na ụbọchị ọnwụ ya

The day of birth and the day of
death

Abali abụọ ọ

Two nights o

Abali abụọ ka mmadu nwere na uwa

Two nights does a person have on
earth

Ụbọchị ọmụmụ na ụbọchị ọnwụ ya

The day of birth and the day of
death

Datum 5

Olee mgbe olee mgbe

When when

Ole mgbe ka ọ b́jara na ụwa

When did she come to this world

Olee mgbe olee mgbe

When when

Ole mgbe ka ọ b́jara na ụwa

When did she come to this world

Wee buru onye nwuru anwu

To become a dead person so soon

Datum 6

Dibee Dibee

Endure Endure

Ndidi ka mma

Patience is a virtue

Onye ọ b́jara ya dibe

Whoever it comes to should endure

Ndidi ka mma

Patience is a virtue

Dibee Dibee

Endure Endure

Ọ bu ọnwu b́jara

It is death that came

Onye ọ b́jara la ya dibe

Whoever it comes to should endure

Ndidi ka mma

Patience is a virtue

Datum

Ugegbe etiwala o tiwala

A mirror has broken, it has broken

Ezigbo ugegbe etiwala o tiwara

A good mirror has broken, it has
broken

O tiwara n'ike

It broke all of a sudden

Ugegbe etiwala o tiwala aaa

A mirror has broken, it has broken

Ezigbo ugegbe etiwala o tiwara

A good mirror has broken, it has
broken

O tiwara n'ike

It broke all of a sudden

Datum 8

Oke osisi anyị adala

Our great tree has fallen

Ewooo ọ dala ewoo

Ewooo it has fallen ewoo

Ọ bụ gịni buturu ya

What brought it down?

Ewoo ọ dala ewoo

Ewooo it has fallen ewoo

Ọ bụ oke ifufe buturu ya

It is a strong wind that brought it
down

Ewoo ọ dala ewoo

Ewoo it has fallen ewoo

Nnụkwụ ụlọ anyị adala

Our great house has fallen

Ewoo ọ dala ewoo

Ewoo it has fallen ewoo

Ọ bụ gịni kwadara ya

What pushed it down?

Ọ bụ oke mmiri ozuzo kwadara ya

It is a heavy rainfall that pushed it
down

Ewoo ọ dala ewoo

Ewoo it has fallen ewoo

Nwanne anyị anwụọla

Our brother has died

Ewoo ọ nwụọla ewo

Ewoo he has died ewoo

Ọ bụ gịni gburu ya

What killed him?

Ọ bụ ọnwụ na egbu ọha gburu ya

It is death that kills all that killed
him

Ewoo ọ nwụọla ewoo

Ewoo He has died ewoo

Datum 9

Ọ laa Ọ laa Ọ laa

He has gone He has gone He has
gone

Ọ laa na udo

He has gone in peace

Ọ lawala n'ebe o siri bịa n'ụwa

He has gone back to where he
came to earth from

Ọnwụ ọnwụ ọnwụ

Death death death

Ọ lawala n'ebe o siri bịa n'ụwa

He has gone back to where he
came to earth from

Chụkwụ nara ya

God accept him

Datum 10

Chọ chọ chọ

Find find find

Anyị chọ ya, anyị ahụdị ya

We looked for him, we did not see
him

Chọ n'abali

Find in the night

Anyị chọ ya, anyị ahụdị ya

We looked for him, we did not see
him

Chọ n'ehihie

Find in the afternoon

Anyị chọ ya, anyị ahụdi ya

We looked for him, we did not see
him

Chọ n'ụtutu

Find in the morning

Anyị chọ ya, anyị ahụdi ya

We looked for him, we did not see
him

Chọ ebe niile

Looked everywhere

Anyị chọ ya, anyị ahụdi ya

We looked for him, we did not see
him

Datum 11

Onye nwe anyị nara mkpuruobi ya

God accept his soul

Nara mkpuruobi ya

Accept his soul

Onye nwe anyị nara mkpuruobi ya

God accept his soul

Ahụ mmadu na ala n'aja

A person's body will go back to
sand

Datum 12

Onye hụrụ nga mmadu nwurụ

Someone who saw where someone
died

Ya eburu abọ gawa ahịa

And took her basin and went to the
market

Eshi ọ nwurụ, ya eji aka ya lie onwe ya The day she dies, she will bury
herself

Mgbe ahu ebelebe egbuole Then the worst has happened

Datum 13

Onye gburu nwanne ya na ebe akwa Who killed his brother and is
crying

Lekwala Just look

Onye gburu nwanna ya na ebe akwa Who killed his kinsman and is
crying

Lekwala Just look

Egbule nwanne gi oo Do not kill your brother

Egbule nwanna gi ooo Do not kill your kinsman

Ugwọ ka mma Debt is better

Onwụ adịdị mma Death isn't good

Lekwala Just look

Mgbe chi na abọla When morning comes

Anyị mmiri ga ejula gi anya Tears will fill your eyes

Lekwala Just look

Datum 14

Onwụ bụ ihe mgbanwo nke ahu Death is the transformation of the
body

Ọnwụ bụ ihe mgbanwo nke ahu

Death is the transformation of the
body

Ọnwụ bụ ihe mgbanwo nke aahu

Death is the transformation of the
body

Mkpụruobi ga alakwuru onye nwe ya

The soul will go back to its owner

Datum 15

Ọnwụ e ee

Death e ee

A na m aju

I am asking

Gị na onye ga ebi?

Who will you live with?

Ọnwụ b́ara n'abali buru nwanne

Death that came in the night and
took a brother

Gị na onye ga ebi?

Who will you live with?

Ọnwụ e

Death e

A na m aju

I am asking

Gị na onye ga ebi?

Who will you live with?

Datum 16

Onye gara nga mmadu nwuru

Someone who went where
someone died

Ya asi na igirigi na akụ ya

And say time is against him

Mgbe ọ nwuru, Ya eji aka ya lie onwe ya

When he dies, he will bury himself

Mgbe ahụ igirigi ala laa

Then time has gone

Onye gara nga mmadu nwuru	Someone who went where someone died
Ya asi na 12 akwola	And say its past 12
Mgbe o nwuru, Ya eji aka ya lie onwe ya	When he dies, he will bury himself
Mgbe ahụ igerigi ala laa	Then time has gone
Datum 17	
O laa la	He's gone
Nwanna anyi o laa la	Our brother is gone
O laa la	He's gone
Onye otu anyi o laa la	Our member is gone
Ele o	Look at it o
Onye ga akasi anyi obi	Who will comfort us
Ele o	Look at it o
Onye ga akasi anyi obi	Who will comfort us
Uwa bu ahia	The world is a market

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS

4.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter is on the analysis of Igbo oral traditional dirge in Owerre-ebeiri, serving as a crucial component of this study, as it delves into the pragmatic features present within these dirges, the analysis was organized using the S-P-E-A-K-I-N-G model, of the Hymes (1986) Ethnography of communication as shown in the data analysis below

4.1 DATA ANALYSIS

SONG TEXT 1

Setting: The setting is the homes of the deceased where people gathered to mourn the loss of a loved one and reflects on the suddenness of death.

Participants: The community which includes the singers, drummers, family and friends of the deceased who gathered to mourn the loss.

Ends: The dirge aims to express grief, emphasize the unexpected nature of death, and console the bereaved.

Act Sequence: The dirge starts by stating that death is a thief, emphasizing its suddenness and how it steals and escapes. It then laments the loss of "our mother" and "our sister."

Key: The emotional key is sorrow and lamentation.

Instrumentalities: The dirge uses symbolic language to convey the theme of sudden death, stealing, and loss.

Norms: The community gathers to listen and participate in the mourning process as the singers perform the dirges while taking turns in singing.

Genres: The dirge is a poetic expression of grief and loss.

SONG TEXT 2

Setting: The physical setting is the home of the deceased. The dirge questions the circumstances of death and seeks justice.

Participants: The speaker addresses the deceased, the audience, and possibly those responsible for the death.

Ends: The dirge seeks answers about the cause of death, advocates for justice, and expresses anger.

Act Sequence: The dirge begins by asking why the deceased brother died in pain and anger. It emphasizes that justice and truth are upheld for that thing, and the land is urged to beat it to death.

Key: The emotional key is anger, seeking answers and justice.

Instrumentalities: The dirge uses questioning and the demand for justice to convey its message.

Norms: The community participates in expressing anger and seeking answers.

Genres: The dirge combines a quest for justice with emotional expression.

SONG TEXT 3

Setting: The dirge expresses anger over the loss of a loved one.

Participants: The speaker addresses the audience, expressing collective anger and mourning.

Ends: The dirge aims to express collective anger, lament the loss, and evoke shared mourning.

Act Sequence: The dirge starts by repeating "Iwe iwe e iwe" (anger anger e anger) and emphasizes the community's anger and the inability to find "our father" or "our brother."

Key: The emotional key is collective anger and mourning.

Instrumentalities: Repetition and direct expression of anger convey the emotion.

Norms: The community collectively expresses anger and grief.

Genres: The dirge is a communal expression of shared anger and mourning.

SONG TEXT 4

Setting: The dirge reflects on the brevity of life and the inevitability of death.

Participants: The speaker addresses the audience, reflecting on the cycle of life and death.

Ends: The dirge aims to convey the transient nature of life, the inevitability of death, and the cycle of birth and death.

Act Sequence: The dirge emphasizes that a person has only two nights on earth: the day of birth and the day of death. It reflects on the cycle of birth and death.

Key: The emotional key is reflection on mortality and the cycle of life and death.

Instrumentalities: The use of the metaphor of "nights" emphasizes the brevity of life.

Norms: The audience contemplates the transient nature of life and death.

Genres: The dirge serves as a reflective meditation on life's impermanence.

SONG TEXT 5

Setting: The dirge questions the suddenness of death.

Participants: The speaker addresses the deceased and the audience, seeking answers about the timing of death.

Ends: The dirge seeks answers about the timing of death and expresses disbelief.

Act Sequence: The dirge questions when the deceased sister came to the world and expresses disbelief that she became a dead person so soon.

Key: The emotional key is disbelief and seeking answers.

Instrumentalities: The question and emphasis on timing convey the theme.

Norms: The audience contemplates the suddenness of death.

Genres: The dirge combines questioning and reflection on the timing of death.

SONG TEXT 6

Setting: The dirge reflects on the inevitability of death and the need for endurance.

Participants: The speaker addresses the audience, emphasizing the need for endurance in the face of death.

Ends: The dirge encourages endurance and reflects on the inevitability of death.

Act Sequence: The dirge emphasizes the need for endurance in the face of death and reflects on the inevitability of death.

Key: The emotional key is acceptance of death and the call for endurance.

Instrumentalities: Repetition and metaphor convey the theme.

Norms: The audience contemplates the need for endurance in the face of death.

Genres: The dirge combines reflection on death and the call for endurance.

SONG TEXT 7

Setting: The dirge mourns the loss of a significant figure.

Participants: The speaker addresses the deceased and the audience, expressing sorrow and mourning.

Ends: The dirge mourns the loss of the deceased and reflects on the suddenness of death.

Act Sequence: The dirge laments the breaking of a mirror, symbolizing the loss of a significant person.

Key: The emotional key is sorrow and lamentation.

Instrumentalities: The use of metaphor and repetition conveys the theme.

Norms: The community collectively mourns the loss.

Genres: The dirge serves as a symbolic expression of sorrow and loss.

SONG TEXT 8

Setting: The dirge mourns the loss of a great tree and a family member.

Participants: The speaker addresses the deceased great tree, the deceased family member, and the audience.

Ends: The dirge mourns the loss of the great tree, the family member, and reflects on the suddenness of death.

Act Sequence: The dirge reflects on the suddenness of death and the loss of the great tree and family member.

Key: The emotional key is sorrow, lamentation, and reflection.

Instrumentalities: Metaphor, reflection, and question convey the theme.

Norms: The community collectively mourns the loss and reflects on death's suddenness.

Genres: The dirge combines mourning and reflection on death's suddenness.

SONG TEXT 9

Setting: The dirge expresses sorrow and hope for the deceased.

Participants: The speaker addresses the deceased and God, expressing sorrow and hope.

Ends: The dirge expresses sorrow, hope for the deceased, and prays for acceptance by God.

Act Sequence: The dirge expresses sorrow and hope, emphasizing the deceased's departure and praying for acceptance.

Key: The emotional key is sorrow, hope, and prayer.

Instrumentalities: Repetition, metaphor, and prayer convey the themes.

Norms: The community collectively expresses sorrow and prays for the deceased.

Genres: The dirge combines sorrow, hope, and prayer.

SONG TEXT 10

Setting: The dirge expresses the search for the deceased.

Participants: The speaker addresses the deceased and the audience, expressing the search for the deceased.

Ends: The dirge reflects on the futile search for the deceased and emphasizes the absence.

Act Sequence: The dirge repeats the plea to find the deceased and reflects on the unsuccessful search.

Key: The emotional key is longing and reflection.

Instrumentalities: Repetition and reflection convey the theme.

Norms: The community contemplates the absence of the deceased.

Genres: The dirge combines reflection on loss and the theme of absence.

SONG TEXT 11

Setting: The dirge seeks divine acceptance for the deceased.

Participants: The speaker addresses God and the audience, seeking acceptance for the deceased.

Ends: The dirge seeks divine acceptance for the deceased and reflects on the deceased's soul.

Act Sequence: The dirge pleads for God to accept the deceased's soul.

Key: The emotional key is prayer and seeking divine acceptance.

Instrumentalities: Repetition and prayer convey the theme.

Norms: The community collectively prays for the deceased's soul.

Genres: The dirge combines prayer and reflection on divine acceptance.

SONG TEXT 12

Setting: The dirge reflects on witnessing death and its aftermath.

Participants: The speaker addresses the audience, reflecting on witnessing death.

Ends: The dirge reflects on witnessing death and its aftermath, conveying a sense of inevitability.

Act Sequence: The dirge reflects on witnessing death and burial, emphasizing the inevitability of death.

Key: The emotional key is reflection on the inevitability of death.

Instrumentalities: Reflection and metaphor convey the theme.

Norms: The community contemplates the cycle of life and death.

Genres: The dirge serves as a meditation on the process of witnessing death.

SONG TEXT 13

Setting: The dirge emphasizes the need to avoid harm to family members.

Participants: The speaker addresses the audience, warning against harming family members.

Ends: The dirge emphasizes the need to avoid harm to family members and reflects on the consequences of violence.

Act Sequence: The dirge warns against harming family members, stating that debt is better than death.

Key: The emotional key is warning against violence and reflection.

Instrumentalities: Direct advice and metaphor convey the theme.

Norms: The community contemplates the importance of preserving family bonds.

Genres: The dirge combines warning and reflection on family unity.

SONG TEXT 14

Setting: The dirge reflects on the transformation of death.

Participants: The speaker addresses the audience, reflecting on the nature of death.

Ends: The dirge reflects on the transformation of the body and the soul's journey.

Act Sequence: The dirge reflects on death as the transformation of the body and the soul's journey.

Key: The emotional key is reflection on the nature of death and the soul.

Instrumentalities: Metaphor and reflection convey the theme.

Norms: The community contemplates the nature of death and the soul's journey.

Genres: The dirge combines reflection on death's nature and the soul's journey.

SONG TEXT 15

Setting: The dirge reflects on the inevitability of death.

Participants: The speaker addresses the deceased, the audience, and God, reflecting on death's inevitability.

Ends: The dirge reflects on death's inevitability, seeking answers, and invoking God's presence.

Act Sequence: The dirge repeats the question "Gị na onye ga ebi?" (Who will you live with?), reflecting on death's inevitability.

Key: The emotional key is reflection on the inevitability of death.

Instrumentalities: Repetition and questioning convey the theme.

Norms: The community contemplates the inevitability of death.

Genres: The dirge combines reflection on death's inevitability and spiritual invocation.

SONG TEXT 16

Setting: The dirge reflects on death's inevitability.

Participants: The speaker addresses the deceased, the audience, and the passage of time, reflecting on death's certainty.

Ends: The dirge reflects on death's inevitability, the passage of time, and the burial process.

Act Sequence: The dirge reflects on death's certainty and the passage of time, invoking the imagery of self-burial.

Key: The emotional key is reflection on death's inevitability and the passage of time.

Instrumentalities: Reflection and metaphor convey the theme.

Norms: The community contemplates the certainty of death and the passage of time.

Genres: The dirge combines reflection on death's certainty and the passage of time.

SONG TEXT 17

Setting: The dirge reflects on death and the departed.

Participants: The speaker addresses the audience, reflecting on death and expressing sorrow.

Ends: The dirge reflects on death and the departed, conveying sorrow and mourning.

Act Sequence: The dirge repeats the phrase "Ọ laa la" (He has gone) and reflects on the departure of the deceased.

Key: The emotional key is reflection on death and sorrow.

Instrumentalities: Repetition and reflection convey the theme.

Norms: The community contemplates the departure of the deceased.

Genres: The dirge serves as a reflection on death and mourning.

Each of these dirges serves as a unique expression of grief, reflection, and cultural values within the context of Igbo oral traditional dirges.

4.2 ANALYSIS OF DATA BASED ON THE SEMANTIC AND CONTEXTUAL USAGE OF DIRGES IN IGBO LANGUAGE

Analyzing the dirges within the context of the Owerre-ebeirri community, considering their semantic and contextual usage and significance.

SONG TEXT 1

This dirge opens with a vivid metaphor comparing death to a thief, highlighting its sudden and unexpected nature. The repeated phrase “Death is a thief” emphasizes the community’s collective realization of the loss. By lamenting the stolen lives of “our mother” and “our sister,” the dirge brings the community together to mourn their shared grief. This function of communal mourning reflects the dirge’s role in fostering unity during times of loss.

SONG TEXT 2

This dirge focuses on seeking justice for the deceased brother’s untimely death. By questioning the cause of death, advocating for justice, and urging the land to “beat it to death,” the dirge expresses the community’s desire for retribution and closure. This sociocultural function underscores the dirge’s role in channeling communal anger and seeking collective resolution.

SONG TEXT 3

Expressing collective anger and frustration, this dirge highlights the communal nature of mourning. The repeated expression of anger and the inability to find “our father” or “our brother” emphasize the shared emotions and loss. By collectively voicing their anger, the community reinforces the idea of togetherness and mutual support in times of grief.

SONG TEXT 4

This dirge reflects on the transience of life and the inevitability of death. The metaphor of “two nights” symbolizes the brevity of life on earth, while the emphasis on birth and death days underscores the cyclical nature of existence. The dirge functions as a reflection on mortality and encourages contemplation of life’s impermanence within the community.

SONG TEXT 5

Questioning the timing of the deceased sister’s departure, this dirge conveys a sense of disbelief and sorrow. The phrase “To become a dead person so soon” expresses the community’s shock and grief over the untimely loss. By seeking answers to the timing of death, the dirge engages the community in a collective reflection on the unpredictability of life.

SONG TEXT 6

Centered on endurance and acceptance, this dirge encourages the community to cope with death through patience. The repetition of “Endure” emphasizes the need for resilience in the face of death. By invoking the idea that “It is death that came,” the dirge acknowledges death’s inevitability and underscores the importance of patience and acceptance in the community’s mourning process.

SONG TEXT 7

This dirge mourns the breaking of a mirror, symbolizing the loss of a significant figure. The metaphorical language reflects the dirge’s role in conveying emotions

indirectly. The community comes together to share in the sorrow, emphasizing the function of dirges in uniting community members through shared expressions of grief.

SONG TEXT 8

With a focus on sudden loss, this dirge laments the falling of a great tree and various family members. The repeated phrase “It has fallen” captures the shock and sorrow experienced by the community. By asking “What brought it down?” and “What pushed it down?” the dirge engages in a collective reflection on the causes and consequences of death.

SONG TEXT 9

This dirge combines sorrow with hope and prayer for divine acceptance. The repeated phrase “He has gone” expresses the community’s acknowledgment of the departure, while the plea for God’s acceptance reflects their spiritual beliefs. Through prayer and reflection, the dirge engages the community in a shared expression of faith and longing for solace.

SONG TEXT 10

Focused on the search for the deceased, this dirge engages in a repetitive and contemplative reflection on the absence of the deceased. By exploring various times of day and asking “Who will you live with?” the dirge emphasizes the emptiness left behind and invites the community to collectively reflect on the void created by the loss.

SONG TEXT 11

Centered on seeking divine acceptance, this dirge addresses God and the departed. By pleading for God to accept the soul and invoking divine presence, the dirge engages in a spiritual reflection on the afterlife. This function of the dirge reinforces the community's spiritual connection and its belief in an ongoing relationship with the deceased.

SONG TEXT 12

Reflecting on witnessing death and the passage of time, this dirge uses metaphoric imagery to convey a sense of inevitability. By referencing the time of day and the burial process, the dirge engages in a contemplative reflection on the cycle of life and death. This function of the dirge encourages communal contemplation on life's journey and its eventual end.

SONG TEXT 13

Focusing on the consequences of harming family members, this dirge carries a moral lesson. By advising against violence and reflecting on the importance of family unity, the dirge reinforces cultural norms and values. This sociocultural function highlights the dirge's role in transmitting ethical guidelines and promoting community harmony.

SONG TEXT 14

This dirge reflects on the transformation of death and the soul's journey. Through metaphors and reflections, the dirge engages in a contemplative exploration of

death's nature. By invoking the image of the soul returning to its owner, the dirge highlights the community's spiritual beliefs and encourages collective reflection on the mysteries of life and death.

SONG TEXT 15

Questioning the inevitability of death and seeking divine acceptance, this dirge engages in a reflective meditation on life's uncertainty. By repeating the question "Who will you live with?" and invoking God's presence, the dirge encourages communal reflection on the transient nature of life and the significance of spiritual connection.

SONG TEXT 16

Reflecting on death's inevitability and the passage of time, this dirge uses metaphoric imagery to convey a sense of certainty. By referencing the time of day and the number of hours, the dirge engages in a contemplative exploration of life's temporal nature. This function encourages the community to collectively ponder the fleeting nature of existence.

SONG TEXT 17

This dirge reflects on death and expresses sorrow over the departed. By repeating the phrase "He has gone" and inviting the audience to "Just look," the dirge engages in a shared expression of grief and contemplation. This sociocultural function emphasizes the dirge's role in fostering collective mourning and reflection.

The dirges within the Owerre-ebeirri community serve as powerful vehicles for expressing grief, contemplation, spiritual connection, and cultural values. They bring community members together and provide a platform for artistic expression, and contribute to the preservation of the community's cultural heritage. Through their diverse themes and emotive language, dirges play a central role in shaping the sociocultural fabric of the Owerre-ebeirri community.

4.3 ANALYSIS OF DATA BASED THE EFFECTS OF DIRGES TO THE COMMUNICATIVE STRATEGIES OF IGBO LANGUAGE

The dirges within the Owerre-ebeirri community serve as powerful vehicles for preserving and transmitting historical events, cultural values, and collective memories. Through their poetic language and emotional expression, these dirges encapsulate the community's experiences, struggles, and beliefs, making them an essential part of the community's oral tradition.

SONG TEXT 1

The metaphor "Death is a thief" reflects the community's collective understanding of death as something that unexpectedly steals loved ones away. This metaphorical expression might have originated from historical experiences of sudden deaths in the community, becoming a shared representation of their grief and loss.

SONG TEXT 2

The dirge's emphasis on justice reflects the community's historical experiences of seeking fairness and accountability. The call for the land to "beat it to death" might

signify a communal desire to hold responsible parties accountable for the deceased's untimely passing.

SONG TEXT 4

The concept of “two nights” representing a person's life may have originated from historical reflections on the fleeting nature of life. This metaphor reflects a cultural belief that life on earth is temporary, likely rooted in the community's historical experiences of birth, death, and the cyclical nature of existence.

SONG TEXT 7

The breaking of a mirror as a symbol of significant loss might have historical and cultural significance. The use of a mirror could symbolize the reflection of one's existence, reinforcing the idea that death robs the community of its members and their contributions.

SONG TEXT 9

The repeated phrase “He has gone” underscores the dirge's role in commemorating individual lives and their impact on the community. This collective memory function allows the community to remember and honor the departed while passing down their legacies to future generations.

SONG TEXT 10

The repetition of the question “Who will you live with?” reflects a contemplation of life's meaning and purpose within the community's historical context. This

questioning might be rooted in historical experiences of loss and a desire to understand the deeper significance of life and death.

SONG TEXT 12

The imagery of witnessing death and the passage of time reflects the dirge's function in acknowledging the community's historical experiences of mortality. By referencing different times of day, the dirge engages in a reflection on the transience of life, shaped by the community's collective memory of births and deaths.

SONG TEXT 14

The concept of the soul returning to its owner reflects a historical and spiritual understanding of the afterlife. This belief in the soul's journey might be rooted in cultural narratives and historical experiences of death and rebirth within the community.

SONG TEXT 15

The question "Who will you live with?" and the invocation of God's presence reflect historical and spiritual contemplations on life's purpose and afterlife. These inquiries likely stem from the community's historical engagement with existential questions and their spiritual beliefs.

SONG TEXT 17

The repeated phrase "He has gone" serves as a historical marker, encapsulating the collective memory of individual lives and their departures. By inviting the audience

to “Just look,” the dirge engages the community in a reflection on the passage of time and the memories of those who have passed away.

These dirges serve as repositories of historical events, cultural values, and communal memories within the Owerre-ebeirri community. By expressing grief, questioning, and reflecting on the fleeting nature of life, the dirges ensure that the community’s history and shared experiences are passed down to future generations through the oral tradition.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

5.0 INTRODUCTION

The goal of this chapter is to provide a summary of the study, present the findings, draw conclusions, and offer recommendations for scholars who are interested in conducting research on oral traditional funeral poetry.

5.1 SUMMARY

The study focuses on Igbo oral traditional dirges, an important aspect of Igbo cultural heritage with deep sociocultural significance. These dirges are part of the broader Igbo oral tradition that encompasses various forms of artistic expression. Dirges serve as a powerful means of communication, allowing for the expression of emotions and communal mourning. They have a long history, dating back to ancient times, and are passed down through generations. These songs are performed with poetic language, unique melodies, and rhythmic elements that make them captivating. Beyond their artistic and emotional value, dirges also function as historical records, conveying cultural information and genealogical connections. Despite their importance, few studies have analyzed the pragmatic aspects of these dirges.

5.2 FINDINGS

The role of pragmatics elements, such as speech acts, in Igbo dirges in Owerre-Ebeiri is crucial to the meaning and function of these dirges. Through the use of

speech acts, dirges convey specific intentions and emotions, allowing individuals to express their grief and mourn the loss of a loved one.

The semantic and contextual usage of Igbo dirges reveals a rich cultural heritage and tradition. These dirges are often composed in poetic and metaphorical language, using vivid imagery and symbolism to convey deep emotions and capture the essence of the deceased person.

Dirges in Igbo language significantly impact communication strategies. They serve as a means of cultural expression and communication, helping individuals to connect with their community and create a collective sense of mourning. Dirges also facilitate the sharing of memories and stories about the deceased, allowing for a collective grieving process.

5.3 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, Igbo oral traditional dirges are integral to the cultural fabric of the Igbo people. These dirges are more than mourning songs, they are vehicles for emotions, historical narratives, and cultural preservation. The study underscores the need for a deeper understanding of the pragmatic aspects of these dirges, which play a vital role in social interactions and cultural communication. By focusing on the Owerre-ebeiri community, the research enhances our comprehension of how language, culture, and communication intersect in the context of dirges. This study contributes to the broader knowledge of Igbo dirges and paves the way for further exploration of their linguistic and sociocultural dimensions.

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