

**THE STYLISTIC ANALYSIS OF ORAL TRADITIONAL  
FUNERAL POETRY IN AWKUZU**

**BY**

**ANIGBOGU AMARACHI ESTHER**

ART1701233

**DEPARTMENT OF LINGUISTICS STUDIES  
FACULTY OF ARTS**

**UNIVERSITY OF BENIN, BENIN CITY**

**NOVEMBER 2022**

**THE STYLISTIC ANALYSIS OF ORAL TRADITIONAL  
FUNERAL POETRY IN AWKUZU**

**BY**

**ANIGBOGU AMARACHI ESTHER  
ART1701233**

**A PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF  
LINGUISTICS STUDIES IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF  
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF THE  
BACHELOR OF ART (B.A) HONOURS DEGREE IN  
LINGUISTICS STUDIES, UNIVERSITY OF BENIN,  
BENIN CITY.**

**NOVEMBER, 2022**

## **APPROVAL PAGE**

I certify that this research was carried out by ANIGBOGU AMARACHI ESTHER in the department of Linguistics Studies, Faculty of Arts, University of Benin, under my supervision

Dr. J.O ONU

Date

Confirmed By:

Dr. M.S. AGBO  
Head of Department

Date:

## **PLAGIARISM/CERTIFICATION**

This is to certify that this project was carried out by Anigbogu, Amarachi Esther with the matriculation number ART1701233 in fulfillment of the requirement for the award of Bachelor Of Arts Degree (BA) in the department of Linguistics studies, Faculty of Arts, University of Benin, Benin city, Edo state, Nigeria.

## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this project to God Almighty my maker and provider, my source of inspiration, my strength, wisdom, knowledge and understanding. He has guided me throughout this project and made me not to stumble. I also dedicate this work to my lovely family who were very supportive and encouraged me.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

I would love to express my special thanks of gratitude to GOD ALMIGHTY for his love and wisdom which he has given me. My sincere gratitude to my project supervisor Dr. J.O. Onu who gave an immense and thorough guidance on how to write my project. To Dr. Mrs. A.E Ideh, thank you for being a mother figure to me and I really appreciate your kind words of encouragement. I am thankful to my aunt Mrs Anayo Akpu who made sure I got the informations I needed for my work as well as my dad Elder Chike Anumba who also helped me in doing a lot of research and i came to know about so many new things about oral traditional funeral dirges in my village Awkuzu. Also, I am grateful to my lovely mom Mother Sarah Anumba, my dearest siblings Nwike, Chinyere, Emelie, Chizoba, Izu, Mmesoma and my inlaw Mr. Emeka Okafor for they made sure I lacked nothing throughout this research work. And to my amazing friends; Ebube, Chiamaka, Chidi, Ijeoma and Helen, I am privileged that our paths crossed.

## **ABSTRACT**

This research, the Stylistic analysis of oral traditional funeral poetry in Awkuzu, aims to depict the importance of oral traditional funeral poetry in Awkuzu community and its impact in the community's everyday life. Precisely the study seeks to analyze the stylistic features associated with oral traditional funeral poetry in Awkuzu, to examine the effect of death in the life of Awkuzu people as expressed through oral traditional funeral poetry and to convey the gender disparity associated with them. The data for analysis was collected through interview, non-participant observation and library research. The dirges are arranged in to sections according to the gender of the deceased involved. The data are studied immensely and analyzed by identifying the stylistic features of the funeral dirges. The ethnopoetic theory was employed in this study, the study looked at the style, performance, the oral text and also written text in regards of the ethnopoetic analysis. The dirges are compared with one another to find out the language features and as well depict the effect of death and gender disparity in them.

## Table of Contents

APPROVAL PAGE .....	3
PLAGIARISM/CERTIFICATION .....	4
DEDICATION .....	5
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT .....	6
ABSTRACT .....	7
CHAPTER ONE .....	10
INTRODUCTION .....	10
1.1.BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY .....	10
1.1.1 AWKUZU THOUGHT ON DEATH .....	12
1.2.STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM .....	13
1.3. AIM AND OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY .....	14
1.4. RESEARCH QUESTION .....	14
1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY .....	15
1.6. SCOPE OF THE STUDY .....	15
1.7. METHODOLOGY .....	15
1.7.1. RESEARCH DESIGN .....	16
1.7.2. METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION .....	16
1.7.3. METHOD OF DATA ANALYSIS .....	16
1.8. THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK .....	17
1.9. LIMITATION OF THE STUDY .....	19
CHAPTER TWO .....	20
LITERATURE REVIEW .....	20
2.1 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK .....	20
2.1.i.FUNERAL .....	20
2.1.ii.STYLISTIC .....	20
2.1.iii. ORAL POETRY .....	21

2.1.iv. TRADITION .....	22
2.1.v. PERFORMANCE .....	23
2.1.vi. DEATH .....	23
2.1.vii. DIRGE .....	24
2.2. PREVIOUS STUDIES AND THEIR CONCERN .....	24
2.2.i. PREVIOUS STUDIES AND THIER CONCERN ON ORAL FUNERAL POETRY IN IGBO LAND AND NIGERIA. ....	25
2.2.ii. PREVIOUS STUDIES AND THIER CONCERN ON ORAL FUNERAL POETRY ACROSS THE WORLD. ....	27
2.2.iii. SUMMARY .....	30
CHAPTER THREE .....	30
DATA PRESENTATION .....	30
CHAPTER 4 .....	47
DATA ANALYSIS .....	47
4. LINGUISTIC FEATURES .....	48
4.1.1. LEXICAL LEVEL .....	48
4.1.2. PHONOLOGICAL LEVEL .....	54
4.1.3. SYNTACTIC LEVEL .....	69
4.2 THE EFFECT OF DEATH ON AWKUZU PEOPLE .....	75
4.3. GENDER DISPARITY PORTRAYED IN ORAL FUNERAL POETRY OF THE AWKUZU PEOPLE. ....	76
CHAPTER 5 .....	78
SUMMARY OF FINDINGS .....	78
REFERENCE .....	80

# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **INTRODUCTION**

There is no funeral ceremony in Igbo land that doesn't require funeral poetry, be it traditional funeral poetry or modern funeral poetry. The study shows how death gives rise to oral traditional funeral poetry in Awkuzu community in Igbo land located in Anambra State Oyi local government Area. The study expresses the importance of the dirges and the way its being performed, also to ascertain the meaning behind the dirges and its impact in the Community's everyday life.

In analyzing the data for the study, the stylistic and ethnopoetic theory was adopted. The study focuses on the Awkuzu people's concept on death and how it brought about oral traditional funeral poetry.

### **1.1.BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY**

It is obviously known that poetry serves as a medium man uses to express himself such as his emotions, anticipation and even his culture. Poetry is verbalized through unique language which helps to exhibit mans emotions. Oral poetry is a crucial form of poetry that is composed and passed down from generation to generation without the aid of writing, it is composed and delivered by word of mouth. In oral poetry linguistic features such as pitch and tone are crucial which varies the meaning and mood. Also there is often solo and chorus pattern mostly in sung poetry such as dirge accompanied with movements (paralinguistic feature) and dance. Oral poetry with no doubt plays essential role in establishing the cultural roots of the people and restoring people to their history. Poetry also maybe seen as song that touches the soul of man which comes from the heart of man based on his life experience. Traditional poetry according to J.O Onu (2012) is the cultural heritage of indigenou people.

Dirge is a somber song of grief and lamentations which is accompanied with funeral rites. It is a mournful piece of oral poetry which touches the soul of man, through the use of language to express man's experience.

Funeral poetry (dirge) is essential for the mourning of the dead, it is an extremely crucial genre of folklore. Funeral dirge is a highly stylistic form of expression that is governed by specific poetic recitative conversations used to express the feelings of the mourners in a determinate form and performance procedure, Akporobaro (2001).

Death is inevitable in every living being and human has a certain posture towards death, this posture gives a perception on how they control their feelings in times of grief. The Igbo people like every other African ethnic group make use of oral funeral poetry, they use it to celebrate the life of a deceased one. The oral funeral poetry consists of praises, warning, advice among others, in order to view and reflect on the life spent by the deceased.

Awkuzu community, like every other African community is wealthy in poetry drawn from generation to generation orally. This Oral poetry gives insight on their classic culture which showcases the Awkuzu community world view. Oral funeral poetry is not only known to Awkuzu community, but generally by the entire Igbo community, basically the patterns, practice, myth varies across communities. Each community has its own unique view of thought about the universe and practices, therefore thoughts are most likely to vary. Awkuzu like every other Igbo community with valuable culture have a rich poetic heritage. The poetic heritage is seen as a stylistic work of art which portrays their culture. Oral poetry portrays their prevailing activities such as celebration of death, birth, marriages, farming and courtship. Also, Awkuzu religious, cultural beliefs and practice are interlinked which is kept in existence by oral transmission from generation to the next generation. These oral poetry are composed to fulfill desires of one in a given occasion. Although these poems have not been introduced to formal education, they reveal an outstanding verbal mastery of the composers and shows deep thought. There are poems that shows sadness, happiness, merriment, addiction, obsession, and ones composed to serve as a warning, ease tension, entertainment and relaxation.

Death according to Opatá(1988:172) is "an inescapable fact of life....the logical end of birth which in itself is the beginning of life as we know it in this world". As aforementioned death is inevitable which every living being must meet

after the journey of life. After the death of a man he goes to to the world beyond to live as an ancestor in the spirit world known as “Ala ndi mmuo” in Awkuzu, where he becomes a spirit. This belief that the spirit of the ancestors watches over the living is held dear by Awkuzu people, and ancestors are called upon in their prayers to always guide , guard and also make them and their land fertile. During celebrations the ancestors are called upon to come and eat first and guard the ceremony.

In Awkuzu one who lived a reputable life is given a befitting burial and it is believed that one who is given a befitting burial is allowed into the spirit world as an ancestor and continues the after life. A befitting burial shows that the deceased lead a good life and known to be reincarnated but those who didn't live a reputable life is not allowed to enter into the spirit world and would not be reincarnated but wanders the earth as bad spirit known as “Ajo mmuo”, they express grief by bringing bad lucks like death, infertility, among others on the living. Uzochukwu (2001:42) voved the belief of reincarnation in Igbo concept of life quoting “the dead must join the company of the ancestral spirit and to gain entry into this company, the dead must have good character during his life time, be accorded proper burial and have appropriate funeral rites performed for him”. According to him (Uzochukwu) those who do not reincarnate are those who violates some taboos. They are not accorded proper burial when they die.

According to Ilogu (1974) it is only those who lived a good life that are believed to be capable of coming back in human form. Those who lived sinful and unprofitable or purposeless life, by departing from moral code of the clan cannot find human bodies through which they can reincarnate.

Funeral according to Onu (2012) are characterized by deep feelings that are partly expressed through poetry. Therefore, Funeral poetry serves as a way of expressing emotions, grief in a way which it sounds less painful and for the bereaved to suffer less headache. Oral funeral poetry is also used to express joy especially for the death of an aged person, it indicates that the deceased will finally rest in peace in the spirit world and keep watch over the living.

### **1.1.1 AWKUZU THOUGHT ON DEATH**

There is hardly a funeral ceremony in Awkuzu where the dead are not paid last respect with proper funeral rites which accompany's oral funeral poetry (dirge).

They sing dirges in honour of the departed souls and they do this to reflect on the accomplishments the deceased had when he was alive, as well as with those with little or no accomplishments are also honoured, as the custom of Awkuzu demands except for those who committed abomination. These oral funeral poetry are accompanied with emotional outburst, tears and wailing to show their grief over the loss of a beloved one. Ruth Finnegan (1970:143) quotes “ the fact that these songs often involves wailing,sobbing and weeping which makes them particularly suitable for women, for Africa as elsewhere such activity is considered typically female”. Although in Awkuzu most dirges are performed by women this does not mean that dirges are only limited to women in Awkuzu but men also participate and have their own fair share of performing oral traditional funeral poetry but not as much as that of the women.

Ajuwon(1981:272) notes “ Humans often reacts to the occasion of death with passionate expressions of sorrow for the deceased”. In order to assuage the grief, relatives of the bereaved gather around them for consolation as they burst spontaneously into cries and wailing as a means of emotional outlet.

In Awkuzu the dead is believed to transit to the world beyond. They believe in the after life where the dead stays and intervene in the affairs of the living by protecting and providing for the living. Lawal(1977:54) states that “a glorious funeral will no doubt encourage the deceased to use his spiritual power to help his children. On the other hand failure to complete all the funeral rites will delay his departure to spirit world, he will then be forced to wander about the earth, constituting menace to the living”. Regarding to Lawal’s statement, in Awkuzu during the funeral of a deceased, the living provides suitable things for the burial in order to give the deceased a befitting burial. The living performs rituals like slaughtering of cows, goats and sometimes building or renovating the “Obi”(a mini self contain built in the compound of every Igbo man in Igbo land), if it is an elderly man that passed on. All these rites are done in order for the deceased to go to the afterlife in peace. If these rites are not performed they believe that the deceased will use his/her power negatively on the living. Dirges are also an essential part of funeral rite in Awkuzu and both the dead and the living benefits from it.

## **1.2.STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Due to civilization and Christianity most communities in Igbo land abandoned their cultural roots to seek for greener pasture in the white man's land which they consider civilized and they adopted their ways of living, Awkuzu community in Igbo land is not an exception. They do this with the thought that most of their tradition is old fashioned and diabolic. In regards to old fashioned, they consider oral traditional funeral poetry as one of the ancient tradition that should be ignored which made oral traditional funeral poetry and some performance associated with it suffer a lot of threat. They pay little or no attention to oral traditional dirges in some cases and adopted the Christian dirges. In Awkuzu Community, many of the oral traditional funeral poetry and the performances associated with it are little or no longer being preserved in the way it is supposed to, because of civilization, Christianity and pre- colonialism. Although there has been some efforts to preserve the cultural practice of the people, no serious attention has been paid in documenting these oral traditional funeral poetry and performances associated with it, including the meaning behind them in Awkuzu.

### **1.3. AIM AND OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY**

The aim of the study is to depict the importance of oral traditional funeral poetry in Awkuzu Community and its impact in the community's everyday life. Precisely the study seeks to;

- i. Analyse the stylistic features associated with oral traditional funeral poetry in Awkuzu.
- ii. Examine the effect of death in the life of Awkuzu people as expressed through oral traditional funeral poetry.
- iii. Convey the gender disparity associated with oral traditional funeral poetry in Awkuzu.

### **1.4. RESEARCH QUESTION**

- i. What are the stylistic features associated with oral traditional funeral poetry in Awkuzu?.
- ii. What are the effect of death in Awkuzu people's life and how are they expressed through oral traditional funeral poetry?.

iii. How does gender disparity portray in oral funeral poetry in Awkuzu?.

## **1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

The study shade light on the funeral rites that are encouraged and those that are frowned at. The study will also help to document and preserve the oral traditional funeral poetry and the performances associated with it in Awkuzu, for educating the present generation about these oral funeral dirges and passing them down to the future generation, so as for the knowledge not to be extinct. The study as well helps throw more light on gender disparity and status associated with the dirges, that is, it helps to educate the present and future generation/ readers on the dirges that are performed for a particular gender or both genders and dirges performed in the funeral of a titled and untitled men or both, and explains the reason behind them. The study also justify the mythical explanation of funeral practice in Awkuzu Community.

The study also will serve as a helpful means for other researchers who may have passion to work on Oral Traditional Funeral Poetry and wished to use some of the information provided in the study for further research in related field.

## **1.6. SCOPE OF THE STUDY**

The content of the study is restrained to the stylistic features in Oral Traditional Funeral Poetry in Awkuzu, the Community's belief on the effect of death and how it portrays in the dirges. The study is concerned also with the performances, stylistic features and gender disparity in the performance of oral traditional funeral poetry in Awkuzu community.

## **1.7. METHODOLOGY**

This section set to show how the data were collected and analysed. They are presented as follows;

- i. Research design
- ii. Method of data collection
- iii. Method of data analysis

### **1.7.1. RESEARCH DESIGN**

A descriptive survey type of research design is adopted in this study. According to Nassaji (2015) Descriptive survey is the research design in which data is collected in qualitative manner and analysed in quantitative procedure. Descriptive study is a scientific procedure in which a given population is observed through natural surrounding and data are collected from few persons representing the whole population in order to find out its relates to a phenomenon. In this study the researcher got data from individual performers whom are professional artists in funeral poetry. The funeral dirges gotten will be interpreted, transcribed and translated into English in their various context. The texts collected will be examined to ascertain the linguistic and para-linguistic features inherent to the funeral poetry.

### **1.7.2. METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION**

The data for the study was collected through interview, non-participant observation and library research. An interview is a conversation for gathering information. A research interview involves an interviewer, who coordinates the process of the conversation and asks questions, and an interviewee, who responds to those questions (Easwaramoorthy, 2006:159). The researcher adopted oral interview, the library work provided broad information on studied area. Some of the interviews was conducted during live event of the funeral ceremony and also outside the event in order to obtain a better result. The researcher immersely observed and read the data collected and characterized death as the theme that gives rise to the Oral Traditional Funeral Poetry presented in the study.

### **1.7.3. METHOD OF DATA ANALYSIS**

In analyzing “ Awkuzu oral traditional funeral poetry”, the researcher arranged the dirges into sections according to the gender of the deceased person involved (Titled, Untitled men, Female, Teenager or child). The researcher compared each of the dirges according to the dirges devoted to deceased titled men, the ones devoted deceased untitled men or both, those devoted to deceased women, teenagers or a child from age 13. The researcher compared each of these dirges with one another and as well depict gender disparity in them. The data collected is studied immersely and analysed by identifying the stylistic features of the funeral dirges, effect of death in the life of Awkuzu people, gender disparity and also the researcher employed the ethnopoetic theory, the researcher went to the community and collected valuable data from few persons representing the whole population, this process helped to bring the researcher and the community being studied together in order to obtain valid information for the study. The researcher looked at the style, performance, the oral text and also written text in regard of the ethnopoetic analysis. This analysis showed the deep involvement of the researcher in the community being studied.

## **1.8. THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK**

The study used the aspect of ethnopoetic theory known as the infracultural model in folklore analysis in analyzing the data collected. The ethnopoetic was developed by Alembi (2002) for research into oral poetry. Dell Hymes (1982) and Tedlock (1983) developed the infracultural model of oral poetry analysis which combines elements from two strands of ethnopoetic. The term “infracultural” is used in this study to indicate that interpretation of words (linguistic), actions (para-linguistic) and performances (acts) carried out can only be located within the community being studied (Awkuzu Community). The process seeks to bring the writer and the community being studied together in order to gather informations on Oral Traditional Funeral Poetry and to interpret it as partners.

This entry by the researcher into the rhythm of life of the Awkuzu community and their oral traditional funeral poetry act as a good basis to learn, understand and experience the Awkuzu community belief, fears, interpretation, expectations and perception of death and the effect of death.

Thus, instead of concentrating only on Tedlock which laid emphasis on living discourse or Hymes strand of ethnopoetic which emphasizes on writing text, the infracultural model gives cognisance to style, performance, oral text and written

text. The key element of the model are that it demands an insider analysis and interpretation of works of art in a given reality of a community and interpretation of oral literary pieces in their cultural context. It also examines oral text beyond mere concern with stylistically in order to crystallize the theme of the study. It equally emphasizes the researcher's deep involvement in dialogue and interaction in order to understand the structural and underlying issues surrounding a phenomenon and a community. It assigns meaning to oral text based on the cultural Traditions of the performer and audience and a close observation and participation in live performance of a given genre of oral art (Alembi,2002).

The study also adopted a stylistic analysis for proper investigation of data for the study. According to Barry (2009) Stylistic can show how the language features of a literary work contributes to its overall meaning and effect. According to Verdonk (2002) Stylistic examines the language features of the work and gives idea about the interpretation of texts by linking relevant literary effects to Linguistics causes". In support of Barry (2009) and Verdonk (2002) Stylistics analysis can be said to be a useful tool used in analyses of text due to its relation to Linguistic interpretation for better understanding of the text under study or investigation. According to Shorts (1996) analyzing Linguistics structure at various levels (grammar, sounds, words, textual structure) helps to understand the sentences of the text and the relation between them.

These two theories helped to interpret the data obtained from the community being studied in their cultural context and provided tool for the data analysis. Ethnopoetic theory helped the researcher to get deeply involved in dialogue and interaction with the community under study for better understanding of the structural and underlying issues surrounding the community's phenomenon. It helped the researcher to assign meaning to oral text based on the cultural traditions of the performer and audience, and also to obtain close observation in live performances in the genre of oral arts, this helps to bring the researcher and community under study close together for good outcome of the research. Stylistic analysis is used in this study as a tool for analysing the data acquired for the study for better understanding of the data being studied due to its relation to Linguistic interpretation.

## **1.9. LIMITATION OF THE STUDY**

One of the problems the researcher faced was the negligence of traditional dirges by the community being studied. The community mostly uses Christian dirges in funerals, except the case of funeral of a traditional man or woman. The researcher went through some hiccups getting a traditional man, in order to get data known to them, due to the reason that no elderly traditional man was willing to leave his business for the purpose of discussing folklore, while some was harbouring the knowledge to themselves thinking the researcher will use it for selfish purpose.

Another problem is that the performers (women dirge singers) frowned at the sight of video cameras used for recording, they found it suspicious for the researcher being in the midst of them and video recording them. It was a bit challenging for the researcher to educate them on the purpose of the study and that the video recording was to capture most events in order to make crystal analysis, this made them settle for audio recording and written notes instead.

Also, the researcher faced some challenge in transcription, some words like vocal sounds, idiomatic expressions, proverbs and paralinguistic features which could not be easily translated became an illusion to the researcher. The performers used some words which are obsolete, which made the researcher report back to them from time to time to get the meaning for easy analysing of the data. Traveling by road to get the data for analysis was also challenging due to traffic because of the festive period, and it was also hard to meet the performers during their free time.

Despite the challenges the researcher had to face, a generous amount of data was gotten for analysis in the study. Though, getting the informations needed and analyzing them was challenging and energy consuming, it was worth the stress and the researcher did not regret carrying out the research.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

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 FRAMEWORK**

This section discusses some concepts related to the study for appropriate understanding of the study. The concepts are Funeral, Stylistic, Oral poetry, Tradition, Performance, Death and Dirge.

##### **2.1.i.FUNERAL**

The term Funeral was gotten from Latin word “Fūnus” meaning dead body. Funeral is a ritual that surrounds taking care of a dead body (Vocabulary.com, 2008). Funeral is the observation held for a dead person usually before burial or cremation (Merriam Webster.com, 1928). A Funeral is a ceremony connected with the final disposition of a corpse, such as a burial or cremation with the attendant observances (Wikipedia, 2001). Funeral can be referred to as a ceremonial event held in order to honor the deceased, for their spirit to get a perpetual rest in the world beyond.

##### **2.1.ii.STYLISTIC**

Stylistic is the study of the distinctive style found in a particular literary genres and in the works of individual writer (Oxford dictionary, 1989). Stylistic a branch of Applied Linguistics, is the study and interpretation of text of all types and or spoken language in regard to their linguistic and tonal style, where style is the particular variety of language used by different individuals and or in different situations or settings (Wikipedia, 2001). Stylistic is the study of the devices in

language (such as rhetorical figures and syntactical pattern) that are considered to produce expressive or literary style ( Merriam-Webster, 1928). Stylistic is a branch of Linguistics concerned with the study of characteristic choices in use of language, especially literary language, as regards sound, form, or vocabulary made by different individuals or social groups in different situations of use (Collins Dictionary, 1979). Stylistic serves as a tool of analysis in the literary work of a writer.

Wales(2001:373) defined Stylistic as “a branch of Linguistic that focuses on analyzing the language style of a text”. Wales (2001:373) also quotes that “Stylistic goal is to show their interpretation of the text, or in other to relate literary effects to linguistic causes where they are felt to be relevant”. Verdonk(2002:4) defined Stylistic as “the analysis of distinctive expression in language and the description of purpose and effect”. Verdonk (2002:56) also notes that “stylistic examines the language features of works and give an idea about the interpretation of texts by linking relevant literary effects to linguistic causes”. In support of the claim above Barry (2009:196) states that “Stylistic can show how the language features of a literary work contributes to its overall meaning and effect. Richard(1997:39) also states that “ Stylistic attempts to establish principles capable of explaining the particular choices made by individuals and social groups in their use of language. According to David(1995:80) “Stylistic is the study of varieties of language whose properties positions that language in context. For example, the language of advertising, politics, religion, individual authors etc or the language of a period in time, all belong in a particular situation”. According to Onu(2012) Stylistic as the linguistic study of the style of literary text uses modern Linguistic tools to account for meaning in a text. In support of David and Onu Stylistic can be referred to as a useful tool used in analysation of text due to its relation to Linguistic interpretation for better understanding of the text under study or investigation.

### **2.1.iii. ORAL POETRY**

Oral poetry is a kind of poetry that is composed and transmitted verbally. Oral poetry refers to the verbal expression of feelings, ideas, and thoughts using words arranged in their best possible order (Esomake, 2021). Finnegan (1977:16) “Oral poetry essentially circulated by oral rather than written means, in contrast to written poetry, it’s distribution, composition or performance are by word of mouth

and not through reliance on the written or printed word. Murika (1997:88) defined Oral poetry as “the verbal expression of feelings, ideas, and thoughts using verified language”. With the claims of Finnegan and Murika it is overt that oral poetry is not dependent on written text but rather by the use of verbal expressions. On oral poetry Onu (2012) observed that it has the call and response structure and most oral poetry is performed to an audience making it a public affair. Oral poetry serves as a means of entertainment, which has to meet the expectation of an investor depending on the mood of the individual, the mood determines the choice/genre of the poetry, it could be dirge, songs of praise or lamentation etc. In regards to Onu’s quote above, for a poem to be performed orally there must be a performer and audience to listen to the poem making it a public affair. Babalola(1981:7) claims that Oral poetry is “a dynamic art form”. What this claim depict is that in performing oral poetry the original length and duration of the poem can change depending on the audience reaction to the poem performed by the performer. Alembi (1993:2) and Murika (1994:111) claims that oral poetry is said to be dynamic because it has no fixed length of performance. Alembi (1995:95) notes that “ if an audience is bored and uninterested, the artist shortens a performance. Murika (1994:90) and Okpewho (1985:9) explain that repetition in African verse is intended to serve useful purpose such as prolonging a performance, stressing on main points and pressing issues of the verse, adding rhythm to the performance and contributing to the structure of the poem.

#### **2.1.iv. TRADITION**

Wikipedia (2001) Tradition is a belief or a behavior (Folk custom) passed down within a group or society with symbolic meaning or special significance with origin in the past. Tradition is the handing down of statement, belief, legends, customs, information etc from generation to generation, especially by word of mouth or by practice (Collins Dictionary, 1979). Tradition is the way in which a group of people or community has agreed upon to live their life including their belief, custom, language, behavior etc which is also passed down from generation to generation. Tradition is the name given to those cultural features which, in situations of change, were to be continued to be handed on, thought about, preserved and not lost” Genald .N. and Greenbaum .S. (2015:6) they also see Tradition as a reservoir, quoting “Tradition as a reservoir is the concept that tradition is a strength to draw upon, a source of historically defined identity and a source of a sense of safety, specialness or difference.

According to Elliot (1919) Tradition is that part of living culture inherited from the past and functioning in the formation of the present. He also maintained that Tradition is bound up with historical sense, which is a perception that the past is not something lost and invalid.

### **2.1.v. PERFORMANCE**

Performance is extremely important in oral literature because it is used to depict emotions which only the use of words cannot cover. Performance involves the facial expressions, body movements, gestures of the performer when performing. Performance according to Jacobson(1974) is a form of expression which used poetic language, of which body is the vehicle that gives form, that which one wishes to communicate. Finnegan (1970) states that the existence of oral literature is dependent on performance and audience. This depicts that Oral literary performance is subjected to a performer(s) and audience. This means that performance requires a performer and audience in order to be complete. In support of this Manieson and Gyimah P.B(2012) states that “The oral performer employs many resources to enhance and enliven the performance. These include language itself then the dramatic elements such as body language, gesture, facial expression and mimicry to convey messages which, if in print could hardly convey the same impact.

### **2.1.vi. DEATH**

Death is irreversible in every living being. It is certain that anything that has life must pass through this phase called death. Death is an extinction of life. According to Nwosu.O (2019:2) Death is marked by the cessation of breath which stops the functioning of the heart thus bringing the activities of all the organs and system to an end. According to Opata (1988:172) Death is “ an inescapable fact of life....,the logical end of birth which in itself is the beginning of life as we know it in this world”. This shows that anything that comes through birth must face death at a certain point. The definition by Opata shows death as an inevitable fact in every living being. Ohaeri(1989) defined death as the separation or rather extraction of the soul. A more or less subtle material from the body through the mouth. Ndukwe (1986:26) described the concept of death quoting that “ man is made of body and soul, and the body is material while the soul is spiritual. So there is a need for the two to separate permanently and when this happens death

occurs”. Death is the key that opens the spirit world while Birth is the key that opens the human world (Life). Therefore, for one to live one has to be birthed and for one to go the spirit world one has to die. Living being(s) does not live forever, which shows that death is a necessary end. Also when one dies and goes to the spirit world, their spirit doesn't die again.

### **2.1.vii. DIRGE**

Dirge is a song or hymn of grief or lamentation; especially one intended to accompany funeral or memorial rite (Merriam-Webster, 1928). This shows that dirge is relevant, it is necessary in every funeral rite. In Igbo land for a funeral to be complete dirge must be an inclusion to the rites. Dirge makes a funeral to be complete. Dirge is a somber song or lament expressing mourning or grief, such as would be appropriate for performance at a funeral (Wikipedia, 2001). This indicates that dirge is used to depict grief which is caused by death as a means of song. Ohwovoriola (2006:276) views dirge as a “ poem, chant, recitation or song of lamentation expressing sorrow, usually performed at a funeral or memorial rites”. Akporobaro (2001:66) described dirge as “a highly stylistic form of expression that is governed by specific poetic recitative conventions used to express the feelings of the mourners in a determined form and performance procedure”.

## **2.2. PREVIOUS STUDIES AND THEIR CONCERN**

Many scholars have written on oral funeral poetry in Igbo land, Nigeria, Africa and across the world. In this section previous studies and their concern will be reviewed as following;

- i. Previous studies and their concern on oral funeral poetry in Igbo land and in Nigeria.
- ii. Previous studies and their concern on oral funeral poetry across the world.

### **2.2.i. PREVIOUS STUDIES AND THEIR CONCERN ON ORAL FUNERAL POETRY IN IGBO LAND AND NIGERIA.**

Nwosu (2019) 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 rented.

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.

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.

Uzochukwu (1985) worked on Mbem Akwamozu, He classified funeral dirge into three forms: mbem (chant), egwu (song) and Ngugò (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.

Ajuwon (1980) investigated how Yoruba tradition can be preserved through hunter's dirge known as Ìrèmòjé. He notes that one of the important ways through which chanters of Ìrèmòjé helps to preserve Yoruba tradition and culture is by making references to past Yoruba rituals and ancestral skills in their performances. Ajuwon classifies dirges into three major groups. The first group consists of dirges sung by non-professional female mourners of the deceased. Whenever a beloved one dies, female mourners in the household or community of the deceased may come around to mourn him and, in the course of doing this, even though they may not be well equipped in the art of chanting dirges, may start to lament. The second group of dirge comprises the ones by professional dirge singers. These dirge singers are often hired by the family of the deceased for the purpose of mourning and singing dirges. The difference in the performances of these two groups lies in the aesthetics and creativity that the latter usually brings into their performance. The last group of dirges consists in those performed by occupational guilds such as the one often performed by hunters whenever they lose any of their members. Ajuwon observes that irrespective of the geographical or cultural context of dirges, they are usually characterized by the praise of the dead, grief, consolation and proof of the loss sustained by the mourners. He notes that although dirges may differ in terms of the preponderance of stylistic features, most dirges starts with exclamations, makes use of rhetorical questions and extensive dialogues between

the lead chanter and members of her group. Also usually imperative clauses and sentences as well are present. Ajuwon concludes that “in spite of stylistic features occurring in varying degrees in dirges, it is vital to bear in mind that the expression of sorrow and grief for the dead is carried out by mourners in conformity with the traditional norms that governs dirges performances in every culture (pg280).

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.

Ohwovoriole (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.

## **2.2.ii. PREVIOUS STUDIES AND THEIR CONCERN ON ORAL FUNERAL POETRY ACROSS THE WORLD.**

Nketia (1955) carried out a study on the funeral dirges of the Akan people. The study found out that in Akan dirge, verbal prosodies are combined with musical prosodies and the emotional depth of the dirge is maintained and strengthened through the combination of language and music. He also notes that even if the audience is more concerned with the verbal message, the musical components should not be written off as unimportant for the verbal art are

complimentary and interdependent. Nketia further revealed that in Akan, death has four stages of funeral celebration: preparing of the corpse, pre-burial mourning, burial and post-burial mourning. It is the belief of the Akan people that unless the proper rites and ceremonies are performed, the spirit of the dead person may not be able to join the ancestral spirits. This belief is not only restricted to the Akan people but also applicable to other African countries such as in the case of Igbo people.

Finnegan (1970) also investigated on funeral dirge of the Akan people. The study depicts that the most instances of poetry are those poems or songs performed at funeral or memorial rites. According to Finnegan, women are the most frequent singers. To strengthen her point she says “among the Yoruba, women lament at funeral feast, Akan dirges are chanted by women soloist and zintagule songs of Zambia are sung by women mourners. Finnegan buttresses her reason for this point by stating that these songs often involve wailing, sobbing and weeping, make them particularly suitable for women. These dirges are often performed by a chorus of women, sometimes led by dancing or drumming. Occasionally men too are involved. In Limba for instance, the initial mourning over the corpse is invariably by women, in either chorus or antiphonal form. But in case of an adult male the burial itself is by the men’s secret society and the accompanying songs are sung by men.

Finnegan (1978) In her *Oral literature in Africa*, looked at sample dirges from different ethnic groups in Africa. She also identified some of the recurrent themes in African dirges. Also in her work in *Akan Funeral dirges* she highlighted the salient point on the dirge.

Cuddon (1998) looked at the etymology, meaning and performances of dirges. According to him the word dirge is derived from the beginning of the antiphon of the office of the dead. Cuddon was able to trace the development of dirge as a literary genre from the Greek literary tradition, through the Roman and English literary tradition. He explained that dirges in Greek tradition consists of two parts which were both sung; and in the Roman tradition the song of praise for the dead was also chanted. Cuddon also stated that dirges later developed into lyrical poems and Shakespeare’s dirges in both “*The Tempest*” and “*Cymbeline*” are popular.

Alembe (2002) worked on oral funeral poetry in Abanyole in Kenya using ethnopoetic theory in the analysis of data. He found out that majority of deaths among the Abanyole people are blamed on the people exercising mystical powers.

Alembi expressed that people who use mystical powers are greatly feared and hated to the extent that the sons and daughters of such people often fail to get suitors from among the Abanyole for marriage. They then marry from distant ethnic groups or families within Bunyore or outside of it with the same characteristics. Funeral dirge according to Alembi plays a very vital role in the course of funeral ceremony. Without dirge, the ceremony will be incomplete, this is also the same in Awkuzu community . It is the dirge that soothes the soul of the deceased just as music calms a crying baby to sleep. To Him Dirge also invokes the spirit of ancestors. This is to enable the ancestors receive or welcome the soul of the deceased to the spirit world. This indicates that funeral dirge also plays that vital role in Awkuzu community, because dirge plays this essential role in Awkuzu.

Apronti (2007) carried out a study on the structural unity in Akan dirges using some of Nketia's dirges as the basis. He stated the fact that Akan dirges concerns a particular topic which is death, and the fact that they generally draw their vocabulary from a set field and help such dirges to evince coherence of themes and of subject internal devices such as repetition and parallelism further helps in unifying the Askan dirges structurally.

Boadi (2013) also conducted a study in Akan dirge. He worked on the monograph and themes of funeral dirges of the Akan people. Boadi further analysed Nketia's work on Askan people by looking at the monograph and theme of the dirges.

Ayu (2020) in her undergraduate thesis worked on the Analysis in Emily Dickson's poem, using Emily Dickson's poem "I felt a funeral in my Brain" and "If i should Die" as case study. The study found out that Death is one of the most discussed topics in Dickson's poems. The study focused on the theme of the two songs which is death. She aimed to observe how the exposed language features found from the poems reveals their interpretations. She also observed whether the poems revealed similar interpretation. Putri used Language study with Stylistic approach for the study in order to reveal the interpretation of the poems. Using Stylistic analysis she gave a deeper understanding towards the graphical, lexical, phonological and syntactic levels in the poems. Putri covered some language features such as punctuations, sound patterns, tense, and figures of speech found in the poems.

### **2.2.iii. SUMMARY**

This section reviewed study literature related to the current study under investigation in order to identify gaps to be filled by the current study. It is overt that literatures reviewed mostly focuses on the idea death, funeral rites and funeral dirge in Igbo land, African communities and across the world without considering the analysis of the stylistic features of the oral traditional funeral poetry as an integral part of oral funeral poetry. Although it is seen in the reviewed literature that Igbos, Africans and some part of the world share same/almost same thought on the concept of death and funeral dirge as one of important funeral rite that must be preserved and performed in a funeral ceremony. They all believe that death is inevitable in human's life and that oral funeral poetry is used to appease the deceased spirit and that oral funeral poetry serves as a key or partway for the deceased spirit to get to the spirit world.

Most of the reviewed literature is practically on general basis, only few was worked on a particular community. And no work on Awkuzu oral traditional funeral poetry has been conducted by these previous studies, therefore, leaving the need to investigate on stylistic features of oral traditional funeral poetry in Awkuzu community which the current study intends to cover.

Though the reviewed literatures provided not so generous amount of information on oral funeral poetry in Igbo land and every other part of the world, it is certain that funeral poetry performances is mostly responsibility of women, in some part of the world it is solely the women's duty while in other part men participate little in the performance alongside the women as in the case of Igbo people. In Awkuzu men and women perform dirges but women have greater part of the performance.

Although the review seems not to be copious enough, it certainly provided a generous grounds that is essential for guiding the researcher in the current study.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **DATA PRESENTATION**

## **DIRGE ONE**

### **IZU OKIKA 1 (Uvio)**

#### **IGBO**

Ewee!Ewee!  
okwa onwu oo  
nwanne anyi anwuru oo  
onwu e buru ya oo  
nna m oo, nna m oo  
nna m anwuru oo

#### **ENGLISH**

Ewee!Ewee!  
it's death oo  
our brother has died oo  
death has carried him  
my father oo, my father oo  
my father has died

The dirge is performed by only the uvio men in the funeral of an uvio man. They do not sing it rather it is like a lament and chanting. When performing a skilled flutist plays the flute (oja) for them to rhyme with the dirge.

## **DIRGE TWO**

### **IZU OKIKA 2 (IDEM)**

#### **IGBO**

Mmadu aga agwa mu oo!  
na- alusi nwelu ugo  
ga ala muo!  
na- m ma ekwero oo!  
Eric ogo oo!

#### **ENGLISH**

If someone had told me oo!  
that the great oracle  
would go to the spirit world  
I would not have believed oo!  
Eric great man oo!

Here, Eric can be replaced with the name of the deceased person involved. This dirge is sang unlike the previous one. It is performed by the Idem men. They call the deceased honourific names when performing the dirge.

## **DIRGE THREE**

### **ÉGWÚ UVIO**

#### **IGBO**

Koyine koyine

Ọ kwa nwoke nusia ọgụ

nwanyị enwere agụgọ

Eric ogo oo!

Kwenu ndị anyị jelu be va

ke ebiliva, ke ebiliva

ọ bụrụ n' ube, ke ebiliva

ọ bụrụ n' ndụ, ke ebiliva

Anụ ike ee

Eeeh!

n' ebe ee

n' ụlọ

Awkuzu ee

Eeeh!

#### **ENGLISH**

Koyine koyine

after a man's fight

woman takes the pride

Eric a great man!

greetings to the people we came visiting

let us live, let us live

in death, let us live

in life, let us live

strong one

Eeeh!

where

at home

Awkuzu ee

Eeeh!

This dirge is only sang and performed by the uvio men. Eric can be replaced with the name of the deceased in question.

## **DIRGE FOUR**

### **ÉGWÚ IDEM NA UVIO**

#### **IGBO**

Ndịdị amaka oo  
ndịdị amaka,  
nee ka nwata nwanyị  
sị maa nwoke ụla  
wee lili oo!

A sị na- ndịdị amaka  
ya ka nwata nwanyị  
jị maa nwoke ụla  
wee lili oo!

#### **ENGLISH**

Patience is virtue oo  
patience is virtue  
see how a young lady  
slapped a man  
and went scot free

They said patience is virtue  
that is the reason a young lady  
slapped a man  
and went scot free

This dirge is sang and performed by both the Uvio and Idem men.

## **DIRGE FIVE**

### **ÉGWÚ UMUNWANYỊ**

#### **IGBO**

Onwụ ana- elu gị obi oo

#### **ENGLISH**

Is death bothering you oo

nchekasi nke uwa,  
ana- awa gi isi  
cheta na- o bu,  
onye nwe mu, new oge

worrying about the world  
gives you headache  
remember that it is  
my creator, owns time

Mgbe onwu uwa,  
na- nye gi nsogbu eeh!  
nchekasi nke uwa,  
a na- echu gi ula  
cheta na- o bu  
onye nwe mu, new oge

When death of the world,  
is troubling you eeh!  
worrying about the world  
makes you sleepless  
remember that it is  
my owner, owns time

mgbe onye nwe mu,  
na- agwa gi,  
nwa oo  
ndi ndi ndi  
dibe ndidi  
ezi nwa

when the one that owns me  
is telling you,  
child oo  
patience, patience,patience  
have patience  
good child

The professional women that specialise in dirges sing and perform this dirge by doing a dance called “Uya”, the dirge is called “Mbem”. Each funeral ceremony a person or some persons are selected to perform the uya dance.

## **DIRGE SIX**

### **IGBO**

Onu na- eli I've a naa

### **ENGLISH**

The mouth that eats has died

ụwa mee ebele  
onụ na-eli ive a naa  
papa anyị na- ịkpalụ akụ  
ma ị sorozi ị nụ  
ọ dirọ ma,  
ụwa mee ebele  
onụ na- eli ive a naa

world have mercy  
the mouth that eats has left  
our father, that you acquired wealth  
but you didnot enjoy it  
it is not good  
world have mercy  
the mouth that eats has left

papa anyị onye ma ala  
papa m onye ma ala  
ụwa mee ebele  
onụ na-eli ive a naa  
papa anyị kpalụ aku,  
ma ọ nọrọ zị ị  
onwụ ji wee kọọ ya onụ  
ụwa mee ebele  
onụ na- eli ive a naa

our father that knows the land  
daddy that knows the land  
world have mercy  
the mouth that eats has left  
our father that acquired wealth  
but he did not enjoy it  
death insulted him  
world have mercy  
the mouth that eats has left

## **DIRGE SEVEN**

### **IGBO**

Mama anyị oo!

### **ENGLISH**

our mother oo!

ọ rapụ go anyị	she has left us
wee naba n' udo	and went in peace
mama anyị oo!	our mother oo!
ọ naa (Response)	she has left us
mama m oo!	my mother oo!
ọ naa (Response)	she has left
ezigbo mama mụ oo!	my good mother oo!
ọ naa (Response)	she has left
mama mụ oo!	my mother oo!
ọ naa (Response)	she has left
mama na- enye mụ nli	mother that feeds me
ọ naa (Response)	she has left
mama mụ oo!	my mother oo!
ọ naa (Response)	she has left
mama anyị arapụgo anyị	our mother has left us
wee na ba n'udo	and went in peace

It is performed by the professional women dirge mouners in the funeral of an elderly woman.

## **DIRGE EIGHT**

### **IGBO**

Ọ kpalụ akụ,

### **ENGLISH**

One who acquires wealth

live akụ ya  
obi adiṛọ ụwa mma  
mgbe mmadụ kpalụ akụ  
na- eliro ya,  
ndị ilo ewere akụ,  
ga- kpoliwe

should enjoy his/her wealth  
the world is wicked  
when someone acquires wealth  
and did not enjoy it  
enemies will take the wealth,  
and enjoy it

Ọ kpalụ akụ,  
live akụ ya  
obi adiṛọ ụwa mma  
mgbe mmadụ kpalụ akụ  
na- eliro ya,  
ndị ilo ewere akụ,  
ga- kpoliwe  
obi adiṛọ ụwa mma

One who acquires wealth  
should enjoy his/her wealth  
the world is wicked  
when someone acquires wealth  
and did not enjoy it  
enemies will take the wealth,  
and enjoy it  
the world is wicked

This dirge is performed by both professional and unprofessional women dirge mouners in the funeral ceremony of both male and female.

## **DIRGE NINE**

### **IGBO**

Ee nne oo (twice)

### **ENGLISH**

Ee mother oo

ee nne nọ n' owerre

alụ ọlụ

nne na- alụ ọlụ

nwa na- alụ ọlụ

ee nne nọ n' owerre

alụ ọlụ

ee mother is in owerre

working

mother is working

child is working

ee mother is in owerre

working

arụ ọkụ na-else nwa

nwa m je kpowa nne gi

ee nne nọ n' owerre

alụ ọlụ

child has a fever

child go and call your mother

ee mother is in owerre

working

ugwo akwukwo na-avia alụ

nwa je kpowa nne gi

ee nne nọ n' owerre

alụ ọlụ

school fees is expensive

child go and call your mother

ee mother is in owerre

working

ee nne oo!

oyoyo nne

ee nne nọ n' owerre

alụ ọlụ

ee mother oo!

beautiful mother

ee mother is in owerre

working

This dirge is performed by both professional and unprofessional women, it is mostly sang when someone's mother dies. The children of the deceased woman are meant to dance to this dirge and they must, in other for the funeral to be completed.

## **DIRGE TEN**

### **IGBO**

Ebido mụ egwu (twice)

Uyo m Awkuzu

ebido m egwu

ndị anyị bialu be va

eeh! ebido m egwu

ebido m egwu mụ eeh!

### **ENGLISH**

I have started music

women of Awkuzu

i have started music

the people we came visiting

eeh! we have started music

i have started music

This is the first dirge performed by the professional women dirge mourners, it indicates that they have arrived.

## **DIRGE ELEVEN**

### **IGBO**

Ọnwụ eeh!

ị mee mụ alu

ọnwụ (Response)

ọnwụ eeh!

e mee mụ alu

ọnwụ (Response)

ọnwụ gburu nwanyị

### **ENGLISH**

Death eeh!

you have done the worst to me

death

death eeh!

has dealt with me

death

death that killed a woman

e mee m alụ	has death with me
onwụ (Response)	death
na- mgbọsị mmadu	when someone
kwalụ mmadu	buries another
na- mgbọsị avụ	that day
ka ọ na- akwanụ onwe ya	the person is burying herself
onwụ (Response)	death
onwụ eeh!	death eeh!
ị mee mụ alụ	you have done the worst to me
onwụ gburụ nwanyị	death that killed a woman
e mee m alụ	has death with me
onwụ (Response)	death

This dirge is performed by professional women dirge mourners when a woman dies.

## **DIRGE TWELVE**

### **IGBO**

Naanụrụ m ọda,  
na-mụ enwerọ efe

### **ENGLISH**

Make excuses for me,  
that I am busy

(Repeat first stanza twice)

m jee sĩa akwụkwọ ututu	after going to morning school
m jebe salun	I will go to the saloon
nanuru m oda	make excuses for me
na- mu enwerọ efe	that I am busy

This dirge is performed by professional women dirge mourners in the funeral of a teenager.

## **DIRGE THIRTEEN**

### **IGBO**

Ebe nwanne anyị nọna  
anyị ga ejee  
anyị ga eje  
ebe nwanne anyị a nọna  
anyị ga eje oo  
ka anyị fụ ya anya

ebe out anyị anọna  
anyị ga ejee  
anyị ga eje  
ebe onye out anyị nọna  
anyị ga eje oo

### **ENGLISH**

Where our sibling is  
we will go  
we will go  
wherever our sibling is  
we will go oo  
let's see him

where our mate is  
we will go  
we will go  
where our mate is  
we will go

ka anyị fụ ya anya

let's see him

ọ nọdụ Lagos

if he is in Lagos

na- anyị ga ejee

we will go

m ga eje

i will go

ọ nọdụ Lagos

if he is in Lagos

na- anyị ga ejee

we will go

ka anyị fụ ya anya

let's see him

This dirge is performed by both professional and unprofessional women dirge mourners, sometimes men join them in doing so. They do this when the corpse is still laying inside the house, and perform an act called 'Ìkpụ akwa'.

## **DIRGE FORTEEN**

### **IGBO**

Ọ mera go oo

it has happened

ọ mera go oo

it has happened

ebe ọ bụ na,

since,

ọ mera go oo

it has happened

ndịdị ka mmadu,

endurance is what people

ga enwe nwanne m

will have,my sister

ficha anya mmiri

clean the tears

dị gi n' anya

in your eyes

na- o mera go oo

that it has happened

Ọ mera go oo

it has happened

Uyo m Awkuzu

women of Awkuzu

na- o mera go oo

that it has happened

e be ọ bụ na

since it has happened

ọ mera go oo

it has happened

ndịdị ka mmadu ga enwe

endurance is what people will have

biko fịcha anya mmiri

please wipe your tears

na- o merago

that it has happened

Ị welu ututu bewe akwa

If you start crying in the mornings

onwu egbura go

death has already killed

nwanne hịcha anya mmiri

my brother clean your tears

na- o mera go oo

that it has happened

Ị welu abani bewe akwa

If you start crying at night

onwu egbura go

death has already killed

nwanne hịcha anya mmiri

my brother clean your tears

na- o mera go oo

that it has happened

Di ya dibe e

her husband should endure

umuaka ya dibe

her children should endure

e be ọ bụ na

since it has happened

ọ mera go oo

it has happened

ndịdị ka mmadu ga enwe

endurance is what people will have

biko fịcha anya mmiri

please wipe your tears

na- o merago

that it has happened

This dirge is also done by the professional women dirge mourners. The words can change depending if the deceased is married or not.

## **DIRGE FIFTEEN**

### **IGBO**

### **ENGLISH**

Anyị siri ọnwụ naba oó

we told death to go

anyị siri ọnwụ naba oò

we told death to go

anyị ncha siri ọnwụ naba oó

we all told death to go

na- ọnwụ adịro anyị obi mma

that death is not pleasant to us

The unprofessional women sing this dirge when they hear that someone passed on, they rush into the house of the deceased and sing this dirge, sometimes professional women also sing this dirge with them if they happen to be in their midst. They sing this dirge to show that they are not happy with death and through this dirge they express their feelings, broken hearts and curse death.

## **DIRGE SIXTEEN**

### **IGBO**

### **ENGLISH**

Anyị siri ọnwụ ya abiana

we told death not to come

ọ sị na ọ ga abia	it insisted on coming
Ayampe (Response)	Ayampe
anyị rịọ rịọ	we begged and begged
ọ jụ kpọrọ nwanne anyị	he refused, then took our sibling
Ayampe (Response)	Ayampe
anyị chọchọ	we searched and searched
anyị avurọ nwanne anyị	we did not see our sibling
Ayampe (Response)	Ayampe
onwụ biko abiazina	death please do not come
na- i jorọ njo	that you are ugly
Ayampe (Response)	Ayampe
nwanne m naa n' udo	my sibling go in peace
ọ gadị mma	it shall be well
Ayampe (Response)	Ayampe

This is performed by professional women dirge mourners in the funeral of both male and female.

## **DIRGE SEVENTEEN**

### **IGBO**

Onwụ adịrọ mma ma ncha

### **ENGLISH**

Death is not good at all

onwụ adịrọ mma ma ncha  
ma o gburu nwoke  
onwụ adịrọ mma ma ncha  
ma o gburu nwanyị  
onwụ adịrọ mma ma ncha  
ma o gburu nwata  
onwụ adịrọ mma ma ncha  
ma o gburu okenye  
onwụ adịrọ mma ma ncha

death is not good at all  
even if it kills a male  
death is not good at all  
even if it kills a female  
death is not good at all  
even if it kills a child  
death is not good at all  
even if it kills an adult  
death is not good at all

This dirge is performed by the unprofessional women dirge mourners when they go to the house of the deceased to console their relatives. The professional women dirge mourners joins them if they happen to be there.

## **DIRGE EIGHTEEN**

### **IGBO**

Di di dibe  
oo! ndidi ka mma  
onye o mere dibe  
oo! ndidi ka mma

### **ENGLISH**

Endure  
oo! endurance is better  
the victim should endure  
oo! endurance is better

This dirge is also performed by the unprofessional women dirge mourners when they go to the house of the deceased to console their relatives. The professional women dirge mourners joins them if they happen to be there.

## **DIRGE NINETEEN**

### **IGBO**

Nne anyị alụsigo

ọ naba go

ọ naa n' udo

(Repeat twice)

Ezinne m hụrụ n' anya

Keduzi mgbe m

ga ahụzị ya ọzọ

ọ naa n' udo

### **ENGLISH**

our mother has finished work

she is leaving

she has gone in peace

good mother that i love

when will i

see her again

she has gone in peace

This dirge is performed by professional women dirge mourners in the funeral ceremony of an elderly deceased woman showing that she has spent her life well and have left in peace.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **DATA ANALYSIS**

This chapter is divided into three sections. The first section analyses the linguistic features found in the dirges, the second section discusses the effect of

death on Awkuzu people while the third section depicts the gender disparity in oral funeral poetry of the Awkuzu people.

## 4. LINGUISTIC FEATURES

### 4.1.1. LEXICAL LEVEL

Lexical level observes the choice of words and vocabulary of a language (Simpson 2004:5). The linguistic features that are observed in this research are figurative language or figure of speech. Figure of speech is a term that refers to puzzling and interesting words that will bring pleasure (Gill 1995:23).

## IMAGERY

“Imagery in poem occurs when a language is used to represent something in order to give a mental picture in the reader’s mind” (Ayu 2020:55). Imagery is “the patterns of images that are the verbal equivalents of sense experience in a text or portion of a text” (Quinn, 2006:206). Imagery in poem occurs when a language is used to represent something in order to give a mental picture in reader’s mind (Ayu 2020:55). Literary images exist in a literary work to “reveal aspects of experience in a new light or to reinforce theme, setting or characterization” (Wales, 2001: 201).

The imagery in dirge 1 is that of Death, which is seen as a burglar who comes into a home with the intention of stealing one of the family member without notice which results to the person’s immediate demise as represented in the lines “*o kwa onwu oo*” - it's death oo (line 2), “*onwu e buru ya oo*” - death has taken him (line 4).

In dirge 2, the word “*Alusi*” in line 2 and 3,

“*na- alusi nwelu ugo*” (that the great oracle) line 2

“*ga ala muo*” (will go to the spirit world) line 3

This pictures an image in the mind where the great oracle leaves the shrine and goes to the spirit world without considering how its people would fair, the people in turn gets disappointed, confused and feels abandoned leaving the people to ask rhetorical questions such as *kee ive aga akpo nke a?* (what are we going to call this?), *kee etu anyi ga esi mee?* (what are we going to do?), *kee ka etu osi mee?* (how did it happen).

In dirge 3, imagery is found in stanza 1,

“okwa nwoke nusia oḡu” (after a man’s fight) line 2

“nwanyi enwere agugo” (woman takes the pride) line 3.

The imagery is that of a wrestle ground, the deceased is seen as a wrestler while death is seen as a woman who boasts about her husband victory. Death takes the trophy with pride. This prints an image in the mind and explains that the world is a wrestle ground, where humans are expected to fight for their life, at the end death takes the life of the human. Therefore, life is seen as the trophy which death takes proudly because it cannot be avoided.

In dirge 4, the imagery is portrayed in the two stanzas,

“nee ka nwata nwayi” (see how a lady) stanza 1, line 3

“si maa nwoke ula” (slapped a man) stanza 1, line 4

The imagery in this dirge pictures a scenario where a man married the wrong woman because he was impatient to look for a good woman. In stanza 1 line 1 “Ndididi amaka” (patience is virtue) says patience is virtue but the man lacks patience. In stanza 1 line 3 and 4 same as stanza 2 line 3 and 4 depicts how the woman started displaying bad characters and the husband cannot scorn her because he has accepted his faith with her.

Dirge 5, the imagery in the dirge pictures the scenario where death (onwu uwa) is troubling the living, and the thought of death bothers the living (nchekasi nke uwa) but they are reminded that it is the creator (Chi/onyenwem) that decides the time death should take the living.

Dirge 6, pictures the imagery where a person who has acquired great wealth, did not stay (live) to enjoy his wealth. It is seen in the lines “papa anyi na i kpalu aku” (our father you acquired wealth) stanza 1 line 4, “mana i sorozu li nu” (but you did not stay to enjoy it) line 5.

Dirge 7, pictures the imagery where a mother left, leaving behind her little children she is caring for alone. It is shown in the lines below

“mama anyi oo” (our mother oo) line 1

“o rapugo anyi” (has left us) line 2

“wee naba n’ udo” (and went in peace) line 3

Figuratively this refers to a mother who died leaving her children behind in the world.

Dirge 12, the imagery in the dirge pictures a child who is asking his/her friend to make excuses/ cover up for him/her due to the child's intention of going to the saloon after school.

Dirge 13, the imagery in the dirge pictures a family going to visit their loved one who lives in another city "ebe nwanne anyị nọna" (where ever our sibling is) "anyi ga eje" (we will go). However, figuratively it means that they are going to pay their last respect to the deceased where ever the deceased is laid to rest.

Dirge 14, the imagery pictures the scenario where the bereaved is being consoled regarding their lost as seen in stanza 3 and 4 line 4 " nwanne m hịcha anya mmiri" (my sibling clean/wipe your tear). Reminding them that it has happened (o mera go), that the dead cannot be revived even if they cried till their last breath.

Dirge 16, the imagery pictures the scenario where death (ọnwụ) takes its victim despite being pleaded not to. It pictures how the bereaved is explaining how they pleaded with death to spare the deceased life.

Dirge 19, the imagery in the dirge pictures a woman who has completed her work/job in good fate, then leaves for her home. Figuratively it means someone who lived long on earth (long life) then died and goes to the world beyond to live as an ancestor.

## **PERSONIFICATION**

Personification refers to a situation when non-human things are given human qualities (Gill 1995:29). In personification, an inanimate objects, or animate non-human, or abstract quality is given human qualities (wales 2001:294). Personification is when inanimate objects are given the attribution of human qualities (Cuddon 2013:529).

Dirge 1, "ọnwụ e buru ya oo" (death has taken him) line 4. Death (ọnwụ) is an abstract noun, it means the events of dying or departure from life (oxford dictionary). However, in the dirge it is personified as a burglar which has the

ability of stealing a human. Death is also given a human attribute that can take (buru).

Dirge 4, in the dirge death acted as a human who can carry out an action of slapping which is seen in the stanzas below

“nee ka nwata nwanyi” (see how a young lady) stanza 1/ line 3

“si maa nwoke ɔla” (slapped a man) stanza 1/ line 4

“ya ka nwata nwanyi” (that is the reason a young lady) stanza 2/ line 2

“ji maa nwoke ɔra” (slapped a man) stanza 2/ line 3

Dirge 5, in the dirge death is given a human attribute that can exhibit the act of troubling. In the dirge death is seen troubling the human, as seen in lines below

“mgbe ɔnwu ɔwa” (when death of the world) stanza 2/ line 1

“na- enye gi nsogbu eeh” (is troubling you eeh) stanza 2/ line 2

Dirge 6, in the dirge ɔwa (world) is given a human attribute as human who can grant mercy. “ɔwa mee ebele” (world have mercy) here ɔwa (world) is being asked to grant mercy, which is not possible because ɔwa (world) is non-human which does not have the ability to grant the request. Also, in the dirge “ɔnwu gi wee ko ya ɔnu” (Death insulted him) ɔnwu (death) is given a human attribute, which can carry out the act of insulting the deceased.

Dirge 8, in the dirge “obi adiɔ ɔwa mma” (the world is wicked) line 3, ɔwa (world) is given a human attribute, which harbours wickedness in its heart and can express it.

Dirge 11, in the dirge death (ɔnwu) is given a human attribute, carrying out the action of killing “ɔnwu gburu nwanyi” (death that killed a woman). Also, death is given a human attribute, as an agent which can carry out the action of maltreatment “i mee m alu” (you have done the worst to me).

Dirge 15, in the dirge death (ɔnwu) is given a human attribute, as a person who can be spoken to which in literal sense it is not possible “anyi siri ɔnwu naba oo” ( we told death to go) line 1 and 2.

Dirge 16, in the dirge death is given a human attribute as one who can be negotiated with as seen below

“anyị siri ọnwụ ya abiana” (we told death not to come) stanza 1/ line 1

“ọ si na- ọ ga abia” (it insisted on coming) stanza 1/ line 2.

Death is also given a human attribute as one who can take something as seen below

“ọ ju kporo nwanne anyi” (it refused, then took our sibling) stanza 1/ line 5.

Dirge 17, in the dirge death (ọnwụ) is given a human attribute, as an agent which can kill, “ma ọ gburu nwoke” (even if it kills a man) line 3.

## **SYMBOL**

Symbol refers to something which by association or convention represents something else. “Symbol stands for an animate or inanimate objects which represents or stands for something else” (Cuddon 2013:699). Symbol is defined as a word that stands for a reality beyond itself and often shares in the reality it stands for (Gill, 1995:30). In appreciating these songs or the symbolism of any foreign poetry, some knowledge of the locally accepted symbolic associations of words and objects is essential. These maybe symbols which have universal reference. But for the most part, local symbolism is culturally defined (Ruth Finnegan 1977:116).

Dirge 1, the dirge is performed with an instrument called Oja (flute) which symbolizes strength and peace. It is played by a skilled flutist. The natives believes that the melodies coming out of the flute combined with chanting of the dirge gives the deceased spirit strength and peace to transcend to the spirit world.

Dirge 2, in the dirge the symbol is found in line 2 “na alusi nwelu ugo” (that the great oracle), the word “Ugo” (Eagle) symbolizes Greatness and purity in igbo land. Alusi nwere ugo literally means oracle which welds great achievements, honour and importance.

Dirge 3, In the dirge “nwanyi enwere agugo” (woman takes the pride) stanza 1 line 3. In the dirge “agugo” (pride) symbolizes Life which death takes from the living leading to his demise.

Dirge 5, in the dirge “Oge” (time) symbolises death, that is the time death takes the loving as seen in stanza 1/ line 5 and stanza 2/ line 6 “onye nwem, nwe oge” (my creator, owns time).

## METAPHOR

Metaphor is when two different things are brought together and asserted to be one (Gill 1995:25). In metaphor, two distinctively different, yet similar things are compared (Norgard, Montoro, & Busse, 2010, p. 107).

Dirge 2, in line 2 the deceased is referred to “alụsị nwelu ugo” (great oracle), maybe due to his great good accomplishment.

Dirge 3, “ọ kwa nwoke nụsịa ọgụ” (after a man’s fight) stanza1/ line 2

“nwanyị enwere agugo” (woman takes the pride) stanza 1/ line 3

“Ọgụ” (fight) in line 2 is metaphoric to “life struggle”. The dirge singers sees life struggle as a fight/wrestling to survive. “Nwanyị (woman) in line 3 is metaphoric to “death”. The dirge singers refers to death as a woman who takes pride in boasting about the husband’s achievement and taking his trophy. This is taken as a real life scenario where the husband achieves great trophy, the wife takes it and goes about talking of her husband’s achievement.

“Ọ buru n’ ube, ka ebiliva” (in a silent corner, let’s live) stanza 2/ line 3

“Ube” (silent corner) in stanza 2/line3 is metaphoric to “death”. The dirge singers sees death as a silent corner and prays that the deceased lives there as an ancestor and never die again.

Dirge 4, in the dirge death is referred to as a woman (bad wife) while the deceased is referred to as the husband (impatient man).

“Ya ka nwata nwanyị” (that is the reason a lady) stanza 2/line 2

“jị maa nwoke ụla” (slapped a man) stanza 2/ line 3

Death is referred to as “Nwata nwanyị” (young lady) who does what she wants by unapologetically taking people’s life anytime it wants. The deceased is referred to as “Nwoke” (man) who does not have a say when the woman (death) strikes.

Dirge 5, the deceased is referred to as a “spender” (ọ̀nụ̀ n’ eli iva) which literally means ‘the mouth that eats’. However, this does not mean that the deceased spends recklessly, rather he is wealthy.

Dirge 6, in the dirge “Life” is referred to as “akụ” (wealth), “Ọ kpalụ akụ” which literally means someone who has acquired wealth, however, figuratively it means “He who has life”. Also, “Death” (ọ̀nwụ̀) is referred to as “ndị ilo” (enemies), which steals the deceased wealth (akụ) which signifies life (ndu).

Dirge 9, in the dirge the “spirit world” is referred to a city called “owerre”. It is seen in stanza 1 line 2 and 6, stanza 2, 3 and 4 line 3

“Ee nne nọ n’ owerre” (Ee mother is in owerre)

“alụ ọlụ” (working)

This does not mean that the mother is in a city called owerre and that she is working there as it literally denotes, rather, it figuratively means that, the deceased woman has gone to the spirit world, where she performs her duty as an ancestor.

Dirge 10, “Ebido m egwu” (I have started song), the noun ‘egwu’ (song) depicts mourning. ‘Mourning’ is referred to as ‘egwu’ (song), it indicates that the professional dirge singers has started mourning the deceased.

Dirge 12, in the dirge, the child’s early life is referred to as ‘Akụkwọ ụtụ’ (morning school), which is cut short by death. “m jebe salun” (I will go to the salon), The child’s after life is referred to as ‘Salon’ which explains explains that the child’s soul transcends to the afterlife. ‘Salon’ is referred to ‘spirit world’ after life’.

#### **4.1.2. PHONOLOGICAL LEVEL**

Phonology is the study of communicative details of speech sounds in a particular language. Phonology deals with sound pattern in literature as “sound patterning plays a pivotal role in literary discourse in general, and in poetry in

particular” (Simpson, 2004:14). In this part of the study, the sound patterns of the dirges are explained. Sound patterns can be found in alliteration, assonance and consonance. Onomatopoeia is also discussed in this part of study.

## ALLITERATION

Alliteration is the occurrence of the same consonant letter or sound at the beginning of adjacent or closely connected words. Alliteration is the repetition of initial consonant (Wales 2001:14). Alliteration is the repetition of consonants at the beginning of words (Cuddon, 2013:22). Norgaard, Montoro, & Busse add that in order to be qualified as alliteration, a consonantal sound must occur in the beginning of a word (2010:49).

Dirge 2, the alliteration found in the dirge is the consonant sound /m/. The voiceless bilabial nasal /m/ occurred in line 1 of the dirge as seen below

“**M**madu a ga agwa **mu** oo” (if someone had told me) line 1

Dirge 3, the alliteration found in the dirge is the consonant sound /k/ as seen below

“**k**oyine, **k**oyine” (Stanza 1, line 1)

“**k**e ebiliva, **k**oyine ebiliva” (let's live, let's live) stanza 2, line 2

The /k/ voiceless velar plosive is the alliteration which is made possible due to the repetition of the words.

Dirge 4, the alliteration found in the dirge are the consonant sounds /nw/ and /n/. The /nw/ voiced labio-velar nasal occurred in stanza 1 line 3 and also in stanza 2 line 2 as seen below

“nee ka **n**wata **n**wanyi” (see how a young lady) stanza 1/ line 3

“ya ka **n**wata **n**wanyi” (that is the reason a young lady) stanza 2 / line 2

The /n/ voiced alveolar nasal occurred in stanza 2 line 1 as seen below

“A si **n**a **n**didi amaka” (they said patience is virtue) stanza 2/ line 1

Dirge 5, the alliteration found in the dirge is the consonant sound /n/ voiced alveolar nasal, which occurred in stanza 1 line 2, stanza 2 line 2 and 3, stanza 3 line 4 as seen below

“**n**chekasi **n**ke uwa” (troubles of the world) stanza 1/line 2, stanza 2/line 3

“**ndi ndi ndi**” (patience, patience, patience) stanza 3/line 4

“**na-** nye gi **nsogbu**” (is troubling you) stanza 2/line 2

Dirge 7, the alliteration which found in the dirge are the consonant sounds /m/ and /n/. The /m/ voiced bilabial nasal occurred in line 6,8,10,11 and 14 as seen below

“**mama m**” (my mother) line 6,10,14

“ezigbo **mama mụ oo**” (my good mother) line 8

“**mama na-enye mụ nli**” (mother that feeds me) line 11

The /n/ voiced alveolar nasal occurred in line 3,11 and 17 as seen below

“wee **naba n’ udo**” (and went in peace) line 3 and 17

“**mama na-** enye mụ **nli**” (mother that feeds me) line 11

Dirge 8, the alliteration occurred in line 4 of the dirge, which is the consonant sound /m/ voiced bilabial plosive, as seen below

“**mgbe mmadụ kpalụ akụ**” (when a person acquires wealth) line 4

Dirge 9, the alliteration found in the dirge is the consonant sound /n/ voiced alveolar nasal, which occurred in stanza 1 line 2 and 6, stanza 2 line 3, stanza 3 line 3 and stanza 4 line 3, as seen below

“Ee **nne nọ n’ owerre**” (Ee mother is in owerre)

Dirge 10, the alliteration found in the dirge are the consonant sounds /m/ and /b/. The /m/ voiced bilabial nasal occurred in stanza 2 line 3, as seen below

“ebido **m** egwu **mụ**” (I have started my song) stanza 2/ line 3

The /b/ voiced bilabial plosive occurred in stanza 2 line 1, as seen below

“**ndị anyị bialụ be va**” (the people we came visiting) stanza2/line1

Dirge 11, the alliteration found in the dirge is the consonant sound /m/ voiced bilabial nasal, which is occurred in stanza 1 line 2, stanza 3 line 8 and 3, stanza 5 line 8, as seen below

“**ị mee mụ alụ**” (you have done the worst to me).

Dirge 14, the alliteration found in the dirge is the consonant sound /d/ voiced alveolar plosive, which occurred in stanza 6 line 1, as seen below

“**d**ị ya **d**ibee” (her husband should endure) stanza 6/ line 1.

Dirge 16, the alliteration which occurred in the dirge are the consonant sounds /r/ and /ʃ/. The /r/ voiced alveolar trills occurred in stanza 1 line 4, as seen below

“anyị **r**ịọ **r**ịọ” (we begged and begged) stanza 1 line 4

The /ʃ/ voiceless post-alveolar affricate occurred in stanza 2 line 1, as seen below

“anyị **ch**ọ **ch**ọ” (we searched and searched) stanza 2/ line 1.

Dirge 17, the alliteration found in the dirge is the consonant sound /m/ voiced bilabial nasal, which occurred in line 1,2,4,6,8 and 10 of the dirge, as seen below

“**o**nwụ adịrọ **m**ma **m**a ncha” (death is not good at all)

Dirge 18, the alliteration found in the dirge is the consonant sound /d/ voiced alveolar plosive, which occurred in line 1 of the dirge, as seen below

“**D**i, **d**i **d**ibe” (endure) line 1.

Dirge 19, the alliteration found in the dirge are the consonant sounds /n/ and /m/. The /n/ voiced alveolar nasal occurred in stanza 1 line 3, as seen below

“**o** **n**aa **n**' udo” (she has gone in peace) stanza 1 line 3

The /m/ voiced bilabial nasal occurred in stanza 2 line 2, as seen below

“keduzi **m**gbe **m** (when will i) stanza 2 line 2.

## ASSONANCE

Assonance which is also known as vocalic is “the repetition of similar vowel sounds” (Cuddon 2013:56). Assonance refers to “the repetition a vowel sound” (Gill 1995:62).

Dirge 1, the assonance found in the dirge are the monothongs /e/, /a/, /ɔ/and /ʊ/ sounds. The /e/ close mid front unrounded vowel occurred in line 1 as seen below

“ewee! ewee!” (line 1)

The /a/ open front unrounded vowel occurred in line 3, 5 and 6, as seen below

“nwanne anyị anwụọ oo” (our brother has died) line 3

“nna m oo, nna m oo” (my father, my father) line 5

“nna m anwụrụ oo” (my father has died) line 6

The /ɔ/ open back rounded vowel occurred in line 2 as seen below

“ọkwa ọnwụ oo” (it is death oo) line 2

The /ʊ/ close back rounded vowel occurred in line 4 as seen below

“ọnwu e burụ ya oo” (death has taken him) line 4

Dirge 2, the assonance found in the dirge is the vowel sound /a/ open front unrounded vowel, which occurred in line 1,2,3 and 4 of the dirge, as seen below

“mmadụ aga gwa mụ oo (if someone had told me) line 1

“naalụsị nwere ugo” (that the great oracle) line 2

“gaala mụọ” (would go to the spirit world) line 3

“na- m ma ekwerọ oo” (I would not believe it) line 4

Dirge 3, the assonance found in the dirge are the vowel sounds /a/, /ɔ/, and /e/. The /a/ open front unrounded vowel occurred in stanza 1 line 2 and 3, as seen below

“ọ kwa nwoke nusia ọgụ” (after a man’s fight) stanza 1/ line 2

“nwanyị enwere agụgọ” (woman takes the pride) stanza 1/ line 3

The /ɔ/ open-mid back rounded vowel occurred in stanza 1/ line 2, as seen below

“ọ kwa nwoke nusia ọgụ” (after a man’s fight) stanza 1/ line 2

The /e/ close-mid front unrounded vowel occurred in stanza 2 line 1,2and 3,as seen below

“kwenu ndị anyị bialu be va” (greetings to the people we came visiting) stanza 2/line 1

“keebiliva, keebiliva” (let's live, let's live) stanza 2/ line 2

“**ọ** buru n’ ub’e’, k’e’ ‘e’biliva” (in a silent corner, let's live) stanza 2/line3

Dirge 4, the assonance found in the dirge is the vowel sound /a/ open front unrounded vowel, which occurred in stanza 2 line 1, as seen below

“**Asi na- ndidi amaka**” (They said patience is virtue) stanza 2/ line 1

Dirge 5, the assonance found in the dirge are the vowel sounds /o/, /a/, /e/ and /i/. The /o/ close-mid back rounded vowel occurred in stanza 1 line 5 and stanza 2 line 6, as seen below

**onye nwe m, nwe oge**”(my creator, owns time)stanza1/line5,stanza 2/line 6

The /a/ open front unrounded vowel occurred in stanza 1 line2, stanza 2 line 3, stanza 1 line 3, stanza 1 line 4, stanza 2 line 5, as seen below

“**nchekasi nke uwa**” (worrying about the world) stanza1/line 2,stanza2/line 3

“**a na- awa gi isi**” (gives you headache) stanza 1/line 3

“**cheta na- o bu**” (remember that, it is) stanza 1/ line 4, stanza 2/ line 5

The /e/ close-mid front unrounded vowel occurred in stanza 1/line2 and 5, stanza 2 line 3 and 6, as seen below

“**nchekasi nke uwa**” (wording about the world) stanza1/line2, stanza2/line3

“**onye nwe m,nwe oge**(my creator, owns time)stanza1/line5,stanza 2/line6

The /i/ close front unrounded vowel occurred in stanza 1 line 3, stanza 3 line 4and 5, as seen below

“**a na- away giisi** (gives you headache) stanza 1/line3

“**ndi ndi ndi** (patience,patience,patience) stanza 3/line4

“**dibe ndidi** (have patience) stanza 3/line5

Dirge 6, the assonance found in the dirge are the vowel sounds /a/, /e/, /i/ and /o/. The /a/ open front unrounded vowel occurred in stanza 2 line 1, 3 and 8, stanza 2 line 4 and 9 as seen below

“**onu na- eli ive ana**”(the mouth that eats has left)

“**papaanyi na- ikpalu aku** (our father, you acquired wealth)

“**papaanyi onye maala** (our father that knows the land)

The /e/ close-mid front unrounded vowel occurred in stanza 1 line 2 and 7, stanza 2 line 3 and 8, as seen below

“**u**wa mee**e**bele(world have mercy)

The /i/ close front unrounded vowel occurred in stanza 1 line 3, 5, 7 and 8, stanza 2 line 4, 6 and 9, as seen below

“**o**nụ na- eli **i**’ve a naa” (the mouth that eats has left)

“papa any**i** na- **i** kpalụ akụ” (our father, you acquired wealth)

“ma **i** soro zi l**i**nụ (but you did not enjoy it)

The /ɔ/ open-mid back unrounded vowel occurred in stanza 2 line 7, as seen below

“**o**nwụ j**i** wee k**o**ọ ya ọ**o**nụ” (death insulted him)

Dirge 7, the assonance found in the dirge is the vowel sound /a/ open front unrounded vowel, which occurred in line 1,4,12 and 16, as seen below

“**m**ama any**i** oo” (our mother) line 1 and 4

“**m**ama na- enye mụ n**i**” (mother that feeds me) line 12

“**m**amaany**i** arap**u**go any**i**” (our mother has left us) line 16

Dirge 8, the assonance found in the dirge are the vowel sounds /a/, /ʊ/ and /i/. The /a/ open front unrounded vowel occurred in line 1,2,3,4 and 5 as seen below

“**o**kpalụ **a**kụ” (the person that acquired wealth) line 1

“live **a**kụ ya (enjoy your wealth) line 3

“obi **a**dịrọ **u**wa **m**ma (the world is wicked) line 3

“mgbe mmad**u** kpal**u** ak**u**” (when someone acquires wealth) line 4

“**n**a- eliro ya (and did not enjoy it) line 5

The /ʊ/ close back rounded vowel occurred in line 4 as seen below

“mgbe mmad**u** kpal**u** ak**u** (when someone acquires wealth) line 4

The /i/ close front unrounded vowel occurred in line 3 and 6 as seen below

“obi **a**dịrọ **u**wa **m**ma” (the world is wicked) line 3

“**n**d**i**ilo e were ak**u**” (enemies takes the wealth) line 6

Dirge 9, the assonance found in the dirge are the vowel sounds /e/, /a/ and /ɔ/. The /e/ close-mid front unrounded vowel occurred in stanza 1 line 1 and 2, stanza 2 line 2 and 3, stanza 3 line 2 and 3, stanza 4 line 1 and 2 as seen below

“**Ee**’ nne oo” (ee mother oo)

“**ee** nne nọ n’ owerre (mother is in owerre)

“nwa je kpowa nne gi” (child go and call your mother)

The /a/ open front unrounded vowel occurred in stanza 1 line 4 and 5, stanza 2 line 1 and 2, stanza 3 line 1 and 2 as seen below

“nne na- alu ọlu” (mother is working)

“nwa na- alu ọlu” (child is working)

“aru oku na- else nwa (child has a fever)

“nwa je kpowa nne gi” (child go and call your mother)

“ugwo akwukwo na- aviaalu” (school fees is expensive)

The /ɔ/ close back rounded vowel occurred in stanza 1 line 3, 4,5 and 7, stanza 2 line 1 and 4, stanza 3 line 1 and 4, stanza 4 line 4 as seen below

“**alu ọlu** (working)

“nne na- **alu ọlu** (mother is working)

“nwa na- **alu ọlu** (child is working)

“**aru oku** na- ele nwa” (child has a fever)

“**ugwo akwukwo** na- avia alu” (school fees is expensive)

Dirge 10, the assonance found in the dirge are the vowel sounds /e/, /i/ and /a/. The /e/ close-mid front unrounded vowel occurred in stanza 1 line 1 and 3, stanza 2 line 2, 3 and 4 as seen below

“**Ebido mu egwu**” (I have started song)

The /i/ close front unrounded vowel occurred in stanza 2 line 1 as seen below

“**ndi anyi bialu** be va” (people we came visiting)

The /a/ open front unrounded vowel occurred in stanza 2 line 1 as seen below

“ndị anyị bialụ be va (the people we came visiting)

Dirge 11, the assonance found in the dirge are the vowel sounds /a/ and /ʊ/. The /a/ open front unrounded vowel occurred in stanza 2 line 1, 2, 3 and 4 as seen below

“na- mgbosi mmadu” (that the day someone)

“kwalụ mmadu (buries another)

“na- mgbosi avu” (that is the day)

“ka o na- akwanu onwe ya (the person buries him/herself)

The /ʊ/ close back rounded vowel occurred in stanza 1 line 2, stanza 2 line 2 and stanza 3 line 3 as seen below

“onwu gburu nwanyi” (death that killed a woman)

“kwalu mmadu” (buries another)

Dirge 12, the assonance found in the dirge are the vowel sounds /a/ and /e/. The /a/ open front unrounded vowel occurred in stanza 1 line 1, stanza 2 line 3 as seen below

“na nuru m oda (make excuses for me)

The /e/ close-mid front unrounded vowel occurred in stanza 1 line 2 and stanza 2 line 4 as seen below

“na- mu ‘e’nw‘e’ro ‘e’f‘e’ (that I am busy)

Dirge 13, the assonance found in the dirge are the vowel sounds /a/, /e/ and /ɔ/. The open front unrounded vowel occurred in stanza 1 line 1,2,3,4 and 5, stanza 2 line 1,2,3,5 and 6, stanza 3 line 2,5 and 6 as seen below

“Ebe nwanne anyi nona (where ever our sibling is)

“anyi ga eje ee” (we will go)

“kaanyi fu yaanya (let's see him/her)

“ebe onye otu anyi nona (where our mate is)

The /e/ close-mid front unrounded vowel occurred in stanza 1 line 1 and 4, stanza 2 line 4 as seen below

“Ebe nwanne anyị nọna” (where our sibling is)

“ebe onye otu anyị nọna” (where ever our mate is)

The /ɔ/ open-mid back rounded vowel occurred in stanza 3 line 1 and 4 as seen below

“**o** n**o**d**u** lag**o**s” (if s/he is in lagos)

Dirge 14, the assonance found in the dirge are the vowel sounds /a/, /e/ and /i/. The /a/ open front unrounded vowel occurred in stanza 1 line 5,7 and 9, stanza 2 line 6,7 and 8, stanza 3 line 4, stanza 4 line 4 and 6, stanza 5 line 5 as seen below

“ndidi **ka** mm**a**d**u**” (endurance is what people)

“f**ī**cha**a**nya mm**ī**r**ī**” (clean your tears)

“**na-** o mer**a**go” (that it has happened)

“n**w**anne m h**ī**cha**a**nya mm**ī**r**ī**” (my sibling clean your tears)

The /i/ close front unrounded vowel occurred in stanza 1 line 7, stanza 2 line 7, stanza 3 line 3, stanza 4 line 3 and stanza 5 line 5 as seen below

“f**ī**cha any**a** mm**ī**r**ī**” (clean your tears)

“**b**iko f**ī**cha any**a** mm**ī**r**ī**” (please clean your tears)

“n**w**anne m f**ī**cha any**a** mm**ī**r**ī** (my sibling clean your tears)

The /e/ close-mid unrounded vowel occurred in stanza 1 line 6, stanza 3 line 1, stanza 4 line 1 and stanza 5 line 3 as seen below

“ga **e**n**w**e, n**w**anne m” (will have, my sibling)

“i **w**elu **u**t**u**t**u** **b**ew**e** ak**w**a” (if you start crying in the morning)

“i **w**elu **a**ban**ī** **b**ew**e** ak**w**a” (if you start crying at night)

“**e**be **o** b**u** **n**a- **o** mer**a**go” (since it has happened)

Dirge 15, the assonance found in the vowel sounds /a/,/i/ and /ɔ/. The /a/ open front unrounded vowel occurred in line 1,2,3 and 4 as seen below

“**A**ny**ī** s**ī**r**ī** **o**n**w**u **n**a**b**a **o**o” (we told death to leave)

“**a**ny**ī**n**ch**a s**ī**r**ī** **o**n**w**u **n**a**b**a (we all told death to leave)

“**na- ɔnwu adiro anyi obi mma** (that death is not pleasant to us)

The /i/ close front unrounded vowel occurred in all the lines of the dirge as seen below

“**Anyi siri ɔnwu naba oo**” (we told death to leave)

“**anyincha siri ɔnwu naba oo**” (we all told death to leave)

“**na- ɔnwu adiro anyi obi mma**” (that death is not pleasant to us)

The /ɔ/ open-mid back rounded vowel occurred in line 4 as seen below

“**na- ɔnwu adiro anyi obi mma**” (that death is not pleasant to us)

Dirge 16, the assonance found in the dirge are the vowel sounds /a/, /i/ and /ɔ/. The /a/ front open unrounded vowel occurred in stanza 1 line 1,2 and 5, stanza 2 line 1 and stanza 3 line 2 as seen below

“**Anyi siri ɔnwu yaabia** (we told death not to come)

“**o sina o gaabia** (it insisted on coming)

“**o ju kporo nwanne anyi**” (it refused, then took our sibling)

“**anyi avuro nwanne anyi**” (we did not see our sibling)

“**nwanne m naa n' udo**” (my sibling go in peace)

“**o gaadi mma** (it shall be well)

The /i/ close front unrounded vowel occurred in stanza 1 line 1,2 and 3, stanza 2 line 2 and 4 as seen below

“**Anyi siri ɔnwu ya abiana** (we told death not to come)

“**o si na- o ga abia**” (it insisted on coming)

“**anyi riro riro** (we begged and begged)

“**anyi avuro nwanne anyi** (we did not see our sibling)

“**ɔnwu biko abiazina** (death please do not come again)

The /ɔ/ open-mid back rounded vowel occurred in stanza 1 line 2,4 and 5, stanza 2 line 1 and 5 as seen below

“**o si na- o ga abia**” (it insisted on coming)

“anyị ri**o** ri**o** (we begged and begged)

“**o** jụ kp**o** nwanne anyị (it refused, then took our sibling)

“anyị ch**o** ch**o** (we searched and searched)

“na- i j**o** n**o** (that you are ugly)

Dirge 17, the assonance found in the dirge are the vowel sounds /a/ and /ɔ/. The /a/ open front unrounded vowel occurred in line 1,2,4,5,6,7,8 and 10 as seen below

“**o**nwu adir**o** mma man**ch**a (death is not good at all)

“**ma** o gburu nwan**y**i (even if it kills a child)

“**ma** **o** gburu nw**at**a” (even if it kills a child)

The /ɔ/ open-mid back rounded vowel occurred in line 1,2,4,6,8 and 10 as seen below

“**o**nwu adir**o** mma man**ch**a’ (death is not good at all).

Dirge 18, the assonance found in the dirge are the vowel sounds /a/, /i/ and /e/. The /a/ open front unrounded vowel occurred in line 2 and 4 as seen below

“oo ndidi **ka** mma (endurance is better)

The /i/ close front unrounded vowel occurred in line 2 as seen below

“ **di**, **di** dib**e**” (endure)

The /e/ close-mid front unrounded vowel occurred in line 3 as seen below

“onye **o** mere dib**e** (the victim, should endure)

Dirge 19, the assonance found in the dirge are the vowel sounds /i/, /a/ and /e/. The /i/ close front unrounded vowel occurred in stanza 1 line 1 as seen below

“Nne any‘i’ alus‘i’go” (our mother has finished work)

The /a/ open front vowel occurred in stanza 2 line 3 as seen below

“**ga**ahuzi ya **o**zo” (see her again)

The /e/ close-mid front unrounded vowel occurred in stanza 2 line 2 as seen below

“Keduzi mg**e** m” (when will i)

## CONSONANCE

The consonance is a literary device that denotes to the repetition of the same consonant sound in a line of literary work. It is “the repetition of consonants in any position, or to the repetition of consonants in final position only in the fifth line of the poem” (Norgard, Montoro and Busse 2010:63). Consonance is “the close repetition of identical consonant sounds before and after different vowels” (Cuddon 2013:153).

Dirge 1, the consonance found in the dirge are the consonant sounds /nw/, /m/ and /n/. The /nw/ voiced labio-velar nasal occurred in line 3 as seen below

“**n**wanne anyị **anwu**ọ oo” (our sibling is dead)

The /n/ voiced alveolar nasal occurred in line 5 as seen below

“**nna** m oo, **nna** m oo” (my father, my father)

The /m/ voiced bilabial nasal occurred in line 5 as seen below

“**nna m** oo, **nna m** oo” (my father, my father)

Dirge 2, the consonance found in the dirge are the consonant sounds /l/ and /m/. The /l/ voiced alveolar lateral approximant occurred in line 2 of the dirge as seen below

“**na-** alụsị **nwe**lu ugo” (that the great oracle)

The /m/ voiced bilabial nasal occurred in line 4 as seen below

“**na-** **mma** ekwerọ” (i would not believe it)

Dirge 3, the consonance found in the dirge are the consonant sounds /nw/ and /b/. The /nw/ voiced labio-velar nasal occurred in stanza 1 line 3 as seen below

“**nw**anyi **enwe**lu agụgọ” (woman takes the pride)

The /b/ voiced bilabial plosive occurred in stanza 2 line 3 as seen below

“ọ **b**urụ n’ **ube**”, ke **e**biliva” (in a silent corner, let's live)

Dirge 4, the consonance found in the dirge are the consonant sound /nw/, /k/ and /d/. The /nw/ voiced labio-velar nasal occurred in stanza 1 line 5 and stanza 2 line 6 as seen below

“onye **nwe** mụ, **nwe** oge” (my creator, owns time)

The /k/ voiceless velar plosive appeared in stanza 1 line 2 and stanza 2 line 3

“**nchekasi nke** ụwa” (worrying about the world)

The /d/ voiced alveolar plosive occurred in stanza 3 line 4 and 5 as seen below

“**ndi ndi ndi**” (patience,patience,patience)

“**dibe ndidi**” (have patience)

Dirge 7, the consonance found in the dirge is the consonant sound /ɲ/ voiced palatal nasa which occurred in line 13 as seen below

“mama **anyi** arapugo **anyi**” (our mother has left us)

Dirge 9, the consonance found in the dirge is the consonant sound /l/ voiced alveolar lateral-approximant which occurred in stanza 1 line 3 and 4, and also occurred at the last line of each stanza due to repetition of the verb phrase “alụ ọlụ” (working), as seen below

“**alụ ọlụ**” (working)

“**nne na- alụ ọlụ**” (mother is working)

“**nwa na- alụ ọlụ**” (child is working)

Dirge 11, the consonance found in the dirge is the consonant sound /nw/ voiced labio-velar nasal, which occurred in stanza 1 line 7 and stanza 3 line 3, as seen below

“**onwụ** gburu **nnwanyị**” (death that killed a woman)

Dirge 13, the consonance found in the dirge are the consonant sounds /n/ and /ɲ/. The /n/ voiced alveolar nasal occurred in stanza 1 line 1 and 4 as seen below

“Ebe **nwanne** anyi **nona**” (where ever our sibling is)

The /ɲ/ voiced palatal nasal occurred in stanza 1 line 6, stanza 2 line 4 and 6, stanza 3 line 6, as seen below

“ka **anyi** fụ ya **anya**” (let's see him/her)

“ebe **onye** otu **anyi** **nona**” (where our mate is)

Dirge 14, the consonance found in the dirge are the consonant sounds /b/,/nw/,/w/ and /d/. The /b/ voiced bilabial plosive occurred in stanza 1 line 3, stanza 2 line 4, stanza 4 line 1 and stanza 5 line 3, as seen below

“**e**be ọ**b**una” (since)

“i welu **a**ban**i** **b**ewe akwa” (if you start crying at night)

The /nw/ voiced labio-velar nasal occurred in stanza 1 line 6, as seen below

“ga **e**n**w**e **n**wanne m” (will have, my sibling)

The /w/ voiced labio-velar approximant occurred in stanza 3 line 1 and stanza 4 line 1 as seen below

“i welu ụ**w**ụ**w**ụ bewe akwa” (if you start praying in the morning)

“i welu **a**ban**i** **b**ewe akwa” (if you start praying at night)

The /d/ voiced alveolar plosive occurred in stanza 1 line 5 and stanza 2 line 6 as seen below

“**n**did**i** ka mmad**u** ga enwe” (endurance is what people will have)

Dirge 16, the consonance found in the dirge are the consonant sounds /ɲ/,/b/,/dʒ/ and /n/. The /ɲ/ voiced palatal nasal occurred in stanza 2 line 5 as seen below

“**a**ny**i** avur**o** nwan**n**e **a**ny**i**” (we did not see our sibling)

The /b/ voiced bilabial plosive occurred in stanza 2 line 4 as seen below

“on**w**ụ **b**iko ab**i**az**i**na” (death please do not come again)

The /dʒ/ voiced post-alveolar affricate occurred in stanza 2 line 5 as seen below

“na- i j**o**r**o** n**j**o” (that you are ugly)

The /n/ voiced alveolar nasal occurred in stanza 3 line 1 as seen below

“nwan**n**e m naa **n**'udo” (my sibling go in peace)

Dirge 19, the consonance found in the dirge is the consonant sound /n/ voiced alveolar nasal, which occurred in stanza 2 line 1, as seen below

“Ezin**n**e m hur**u** **n**'anya” (good mother that I love)

### 4.1.3. SYNTACTIC LEVEL

Syntax is concerned with how words combine to form phrases, clauses and sentences even sentences to text. Syntactic level or grammatical level focuses on the way words form phrases and sentences (Simpson 2004:5). Tense played an essential roles in the dirges presented in the study. Tense is the location of a situation in time (yule 1998:54). Tense is important in a poem because it can indicate the poem's meaning (Elisabeth Ayu 2020:21).

#### PRESENT TENSE

Dirge 3, the present tense is found in stanza 2 line 1 “Kwenu ndi anyi jelu be va” (greetings to the people we visited), the word “kwenu” (greetings) is in present form, it made the line to be in present form.

Dirge 5, present tense occurred in stanza 1 line 4 and stanza 2 line 5 “cheta na- o bu” (remember that), the verb “cheta” (remember) is in present form. The dirge singers tells the audience to remember something at that particular time. Another present tense occurred in stanza 3 line 5 “dibe ndidi” (endure), the verb “dibe” (have) is in present form, it made the line appear in present form.

Dirge 6, the present tense is seen in both stanzas of the dirge “uwa mee ebele” (world have mercy), the verb “mee” (have/do/happen) is in present tense form. It occurred in stanza 1 line 2 and 7 and stanza 2 line 3 and 8.

Dirge 9, there is overt present tense in the dirge. “Nne no n' owerre” (mother is in owerre) denotes the current location of the mother. “aru oku na- ere nwa” (child has a fever) denotes the current body temperature of the child.

Dirge 10, “Ebido m egwu” (I have start song) which is seen in stanza 1 line 1 and 2 and stanza 2 line 2,3 and 4, the prefix /e-/ is added to the verb ‘bido’ (start) changing the word to present tense ebido (have start), it indicates that the action is carried out presently.

Dirge 12, the lines “nanuru m oda” (make excuses for me) and “na- m enwero efe” (that i am busy) are in present tense form. It states the current scenerio that is taking place. it depicts a scenerio where the first party involved being busy at the moment and asks the second party invovled to make excuses for him at that moment.

Dirge 14, the line “ficha anya mmiri” (clean your tears) which occurred in each stanza of the dirge is in present form, ‘ficha, (clean) is in present form.

Dirge 16, stanza 2 line 4 is in present form, “onwu biko abiazina” (death please do not come again), the line can be considered as direct speech. In stanza 3 line 1 “Nwanne m na n’ udo” (my sibling go in peace), the line is a direct speech which is in present form. The deceased is being told to go well (rest in peace).

Dirge 17, the line “onwu adiwo mma ma ncha” (death is not pleasant at all) is in present tense form. It expressed the current attitude of death and the people's current view of death.

## **PRESENT PROGRESSIVE TENSE**

Present progressive tense are events which is occurring at a present time, it is used to describe action in progress.

Dirge 5, in stanza 2 line 2 “na- nye gi nsogbu” (is troubling you), the verb root “nye” (give) when added the prefix /na-/ changes the word into a present progressive tense “na-nye” (giving), it shows the events is occurring at that present time. When the word ”na- nye” (giving) js used together with “gi” (you) and “nsogbu” (trouble) to construct a sentence, the English translation is “troubling you”.

Dirge 9, the lines “nne na- alu olu” (mother is working) and “nwa na- alu olu” (child is working) is in present progressive form, they are carrying out the action presently. When the verb “alu” (work) is added to the noun ‘olu’ (work) it changes the noun to a verb ‘working’ which is in present progressive form.

Dige 19, stanza 1 line 2 is in present progressive form “o naba go” (she is leaving) when the suffix /-ba/ and the emphasis ‘go’ is added to the verb root ‘na’ (leave) changes the word to ‘leaving’ (naba go) , made the sentence present progressive tense.

## **PAST TENSE**

Past tense refers to actions or situation which occurred in the past. Past tense is a tense that shows actions done in the past (Elizabeth Ayu 2020:22).

Dirge 1, “nwanne anyị anwụọ” (our sibling has died) line 3

“ọnwụ e bụrụ ya oo” (death has taken him) line 4

“nna m anwụrụ oo” (my father has died) line 6

In line 3, ‘anwụọ’ (died) is in past tense due to the prefix /a-/ which is added to the verb root ‘nwụọ’ (die). The verb ‘bụrụ’ (taken/has take) in line 4 is a past tense due to the suffix /-rụ/ which is added to the verb root ‘bụ’ (take). In line 6 the suffix /-rụ/ and the prefix /a-/ is added to the root word ‘nwụ’ (death) changes the word to past tense form.

Dirge 2, “mmadụ a ga- gwa mụ oo” (if someone had told me) line 2

“ga- la mụọ” (would go to the spirit form) line 3

“na- m ma ekwero oo” (I would not believe it) line 4

The verb ‘ga- gwa” (had told) in line 1 is a past tense form of the present verb ‘gwa’ (tell). In line 3 the prefix /ga-/ added to the word ‘la’ (go) turns to a past tense form (would go). In line 4 the suffix /-rọ/ added to the verb /-kwe/ (believe) change the verb to past tense form ‘ekwero’ (believed).

Dirge 4, “sị maa nwoke ụra” (slapped a man) stanza 1 line 4

“a si na- ndidi amaka” (they said that patience is virtue) stanza 2 line 1

‘Maa’ (slap) in stanza 1 line 4 is in past tense form even without the suffix /-ra/ as in ‘ma-ra’ (slapped) is in past tense form. The verb ‘si’ (say) without the suffix /-ri/ as in ‘si-ri’ (said) is in past tense form. The omitting of the suffixes /-ri/ and /-ra/ which should have made the words past tense is due to dialect. In Awkuzu dialect they can omit the suffix and the present tense verb can still change to past tense.

Dirge 6, “papa anyị kpalụ akụ” (our father that acquired wealth) stanza 1 line 4

The suffix /-lu/ (a past tense marker) is added to the verb root kpa (acquire) changing the word to past tense ‘kpalụ’ (acquired). This made the line to appear in past tense form.

Dirge 7, “wee naba n’ udo” (and went in peace) line 3 and 7

The suffix /-ba/ is added to verb ‘na’ (to leave) changing the word to past tense ‘naba’ (went/ left), it made the line appear in past tense form.

Dirge 8, “*o kpalu aku*” (one who acquired wealth) line 1

The suffix /-lu/ is added to the verb root ‘kpa’ (acquire), it changes the word to past tense ‘kpa<sup>u</sup>’ (acquired).

Dirge 11, “*emee mu alu*” (has death with me) which is seen in stanza 1 line 5 and 8 and stanza 3 line 4 is in past tense form due to the prefix /e-/ which is added to the verb ‘mee’ (do/deal) changes it to a past tense ‘emee’ (death/ done). Also “*onwu gburu nwanyi*” (death that killed a woman) which occurred in stanza 1 line 7 and stanza 3 line 3 is in past tense form due to the suffix /-ru/ which is added to the verb ‘gbu’ (kill) changes the verb to past tense ‘gburu’ (killed).

Dirge 14, “*o mera go*” (it has happened) found in every stanza of the dirge is in past tense form due to the suffix /-ra/ which is added to the root word ‘me’ (happen). “*onwu egbura go*” (death has killed) seen in stanza 3 line 2, the prefix /e-/ and the suffix /-ra/ is added to the verb root ‘gbu’ (kill) changing the word to past tense form ‘egbura’ (killed).

Dirge 15, “*Anyi siri onwu naba*” (we told death to leave) line 1

The verb root ‘si’ (tell) when added the suffix /-ri/ it changes the verb to past tense ‘siri’ (told), it made the line appear in past tense form.

Dirge 16, “*Anyi siri onwu ya abiana*” (we told death not to come) stanza 1/ line 1, the suffix /-ri/ is added to the verb root ‘si’ (tell) changes the word to past tense “*siri*” (told), it made the line past tense.

## **PAST PERFECT TENSE**

Past perfect tense makes clear that an action has completely taken place. Dirge 7, “*o rapugo anyi*” (she has left us) line 2, the suffix /-go/ is added to the verb ‘rapu’ (leave) to form a past perfect tense ‘rapugo’ (has left), it indicates that the action is completely done.

## **REPETITION**

Repetition is a technique in literature that can be used as a form of emphasis (Quinn 2006:359). Repetition is used to give emphasis on the dirges and depict the gravity of effect of death caused in the bereaved heart. Nketia (1995:104) states “repetition in dirges are not monotonous neither are they due to barrenness of thought, on the contrary, they may have a musical more of meaning or they may be a means of emphasizing points that mourners might wish to make”. It is also in same more of thinking that Quinn (2006:359) states “repetitions are used to give emphasis on those words as they are important to imprint messages on the reader’s mind.

Dirge 1, the exclamation ‘ewee!’ repeated twice in line 1, ‘ewee’ prints the image of heart broken bereaved which shouted out in pains to emphasis how deep he is hurt. ‘Nna m oo!’ (father oo) is repeated twice in line 5, ‘Nna m oo’ (father oo) prints the image of the bereaved calling out the name of the deceased to show that they will be missed.

Dirge 2, ‘koyine’ is repeated twice in stanza 1 line 1. ‘ke ebiliva’ is repeated severally in the dirge, it shows their great will to live whether as human in the world of human or live as an ancestor in the spirit realm. The exclamation. ‘Eeh!’ is repeated severally in stanza 3, it is used to emphasis their grief.

Dirge 5, the repetition of ‘ndi’ (patience) in stanza 3 line 4 creates an emphasis.

Dirge 6, “ụwa mee ebele” (world have mercy) is repeated twice in each stanza , “onụ na-eli ive a naa” (the mouth that eats has left) is repeated thrice in stanza 1 and twice in stanza two to create an emphasis.

Dirge 7, “mama mụ oo” (my mother oo) is repeated four times in the dirge, “mama anyị oo” (our mother oo) is repeated thrice in the dirge, “ọ naa” (has left) is repeated six times in the dirge to create an emphasis.

Dirge 10, “Ebido m egwu” is repeated five times in the dirge to create an emphasis.

Dirge 11, the word ‘onwụ’ (death) is repeated nine times in the dirge to create an emphasis.

Dirge 14, “ọ mera go” (it has happened) repeated twice in stanza 1 to create an emphasis.

Dirge 16, ‘Ayampe’ which acts as an emphasis, it is in form of response from other dirge singers after the lead singer sings two lines, it is repeated in the dirge after every two lines in each stanza of the dirge in order to add melody to the dirge.

Dirge 17, “*onwu adiro mma ncha*” (death is not pleasant at all) is repeated severally in the dirge in form of response from the other singers when the lead singer sings the lead lines.

Dirge 18, “*oo ndi ka mma*” (oo endurance is better) is repeated twice in the dirge in line 2 and 4.

## **PARALINGUISTIC FEATURES**

Awkuzu dirges like most African dirges have bodily rhythmic activity such as dancing, and other body movement. Paralinguistic feature is the movement of the body while performing a literary work. Onu J.O (2012:54) observes that “the very common songs to strict time, however, have a beat that is articulated with dancing, rhythmic movements, percussion by instruments or hand clapping, all of which contribute to the form and attractiveness of the song”.

Dirge 1 and 3, when performing these dirge, there is arm, leg and body movements involved which is mandatory because it plays a vital role in the performance of the dirge. The men shake their heads to and fro slowly in grief while folding their arms against their chest. Some hump from side to side then step forward and then backward immediately, rushing towards the corps where the corps is laid then pause, steps backward and again proceed to where the corps is laid then starts calling the deceased honorific names like “Dike” (strong one), “Agu” (lion), “Ugo a naa” (the eagle has left) and his title name like “*aku luo uno*” (wealth reach home), “Anumba mgbọ” (Bullet of the mass) this depends on the titled name given to the deceased when he was alive, the onye oja (flutist) plays his flute while they do this.

Dirge 2 and 4, mostly the paralinguistic feature that takes place when performing these dirge is usually the men folding their arms against their chest, shaking their heads in disbelief, raising their shoulders up and down while shaking their head slowly, snapping their fingers and letting out a deep sigh. They do this consciously and most times unconsciously, and it is required for the dirge to be complete because it shows that they are deeply in pain and sad. The flutist plays his flute while they do this.

Dirge 5 and 16, the women while playing their instruments dances around. Those with 'ichaka' when dancing raises it upwards while playing it, those who are not playing any instrument swings their arm to and fro rhythmically while dancing around in circle.

Dirge 8, the dirge singers goes around the corps three times while performing this dirge. They each give the bereaved a hug and pat in the back. They also wipe out the bereaved tears if the bereaved happens to be crying. The pat in the bereaved back portrays the act of consoling.

Dirge 9, the dirge singers and the deceased children participate in this dirge. The women surrounds the deceased children in a circle form, they clap their hands and rhythmically moves their body to the sound of the music. While one of the children of the deceased holds their mother's picture while they nod their heads and move their shoulders to and fro, while walking towards the table decorated for their deceased mother. The dirge singers plays the instruments ichaka, ubom, gong, and igba when performing the dirge.

Dirge 15, the singers and anyone around, when performing this dirge fold their arms on their shoulders, raising their shoulder up and down within seconds interval or crossing their arms at the back of their fingers and exclaims "Tufiakwa, onwu i joo ya" (Tufiakwa death you are terrible).

## **4.2 THE EFFECT OF DEATH ON AWKUZU PEOPLE**

"An effect is a change that is caused in a person or thing by another person or thing" (Collins Cobuild Dictionary, 1992:451). An effect is used to denote a consequence, an outcome, a result, or an influence.

The Awkuzu community believes in reincarnation after death, they believe this happens when someones life is cut short by sudden death and if a person lead a good life while s/he was alive. They believe that when a child or teenager dies they reincarnate to complete their work which they did not get to accomplish in their previous life, also they see the death of an elderly person who lead a good life as a way of the deceased transcending into the spirit realm and watching over them as an

ancestor, they offer prayers to them in order to thank them and also remind them to keep on watching over the living. They see the death of someone who did not lead a good life as an abomination which in the ancient days their corpses are thrown into the evil forest with no befitting funeral ceremony and no one is allowed to shed tears, in these recent days they have the same view but this type of deceased person is no longer thrown into the evil forest rather they do not throw any funeral ceremony for them and they are buried immediately in order to avoid their spirit “evil spirit” from causing havoc to the living.

Death leaves a deep hole in the heart of the bereaved, especially the death of a loved one who is still young or a loved one who is of great importance because of the good deeds he does. The death of a loved one causes great grief, and stings the bereaved heart leaving a painful scar in their heart which they express through dirges. They cry, mostly women and children to relieve their pain. They see death as the end of a man’s journey, they believe that a man has only two days in life which is the day he is born and the day he dies, and they must prepare for the day he dies as they had prepared for his birth (this applies for all human not only men). It is not a thing of merriment to throw a gay funeral ceremony for someone who did not live a long life. After the death of a child or a teenager they are given a quiet burial to help them reincarnate immediately after their demise because they are still tender and have not experienced life. Death humbles the people of Awkuzu, in the sense that they assemble in the deceased home to reminisce about the deceased life and to pay their last respect and tribute to the deceased no matter the status of the deceased while s/he was alive and to console the bereaved. Also, the titled men remove their cap (okpu nze na ozo) and put down their staff (ofof) to accord respect to the deceased and illustrate that in the face of death all men are equal.

### **4.3. GENDER DISPARITY PORTRAYED IN ORAL FUNERAL POETRY OF THE AWKUZU PEOPLE.**

Gender disparity is differences in women’s and men’s access to resources, status and well being, which usually favours men and are often institutionalized through law, justice and social norms (Eige 2016).

The first gender disparity notably seen in the dirges presented is the structure of the dirges, the length of the dirges varies, some are long while some are short, mostly the short ones are chanted by the men in the funeral ceremony of both deceased titled and untitled men, this is so because it is believed in Awkuzu that men are not talkatives, that a wise man speaks only few words, excessive talk is characterized as purely woman. The long dirges are performed by women, it is mostly caused by repetition though this does not mean that they are limited to long dirges, they also perform short dirges. Secondly, some dirges which are performed in the funeral ceremony of titled men cannot be performed in the funeral ceremony of a woman. Also, it is a taboo for a titled man to perform these chants or any other dirges in a female's funeral. The men are regarded as 'Agu' (Lion), 'ndi ike na ndi odogwu' (the strong and the great ones) and their performances brings chill to the body. Awkuzu community believes that women are feeble to handle such chills and weight that comes with the dirges. As seen in dirge 1,2,3 and 4 which is performed by the men and only in the funeral of a deceased man, it is a taboo if a woman joins them in performing the dirges or even be present when the men are performing, it is an abomination if any man should perform these dirges in the funeral of a deceased woman. The women stays far from the scene where the men are performing and bow their heads as a sign of respect, they believe women are supposed to be subordinate to men because man is the head of a family which provides for the family, and that men have more manpower than women, also they believe that cannot handle the chills and weight of the dirge probably because they believe men has more manpower than women, they segregate the women believing that the women are feeble and cannot handle the dirges. But the reverse is not the case for the men because they can be present in when the women are performing and can also join them if they want and no one sees it as a taboo. Women performs in a men funeral as seen in some of the dirges performed by the women but men do not dare to sing their dirge in women funeral.

## CHAPTER 5

### SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The research is done to depict the stylistic analysis of Awkuzu oral traditional funeral poetry (stylistic features of the dirge) and interpretation of each dirge. The meaning the dirge singers wishes to express in the dirges are achieved by breaking down the language features and identifying the meaning those features reveal. In this research, language features plays a role in revealing the meaning of the dirges by using three stylistic language level; the lexical, phonological and syntactic level and also reveals the paralinguistic feature that impact great meaning to the dirges. In lexical level, the dirges consist of figures of speech such as imagery, metaphor, personification and also symbol. Through the unusual language figures of speech, the meaning of the dirges are conveyed. The dirges are embedded in figurative expressions. The dirge singers express their grief using figurative expressions in other to relieve their pains by not mentioning the obvious, which a lay man may not understand the deep meaning embedded in the dirges. In phonological level, the segmental features are analyzed, sounds such as alliteration, assonance, and consonance are analyzed. Sound features are employed in other to create aesthetic effects that attracts the reader's attention and form certain meaning that the poet wants to communicate (Elisabeth Ayu 2020:85). It is also found out that the dialect violates the rule of vowel harmony in some of their words which is found in the dirges such as "omerago" (it has happened), "kebiliva" (let's live) among others. In syntactic level, the tenses used in the dirges are analyzed. Tenses such as present tense, present progressive tense, past tense and past perfect tense. The tenses depicts the dirge singers grief and grievance over death which they use the tenses to expose their view of death and the damages it caused them. Also, in this research textual repetitions serves a core purpose of emphasizing the messages embedded in the dirges. It is also found out that call and response form is not entirely the basic structural feature in Awkuzu oral traditional funeral poetry, although few dirges encompass call and response, it is not strictly fixed framework in Awkuzu funeral poetry.

In this study it is seen that death causes an effect in the life of Awkuzu people, it made them believe that there is life after death, reincarnations, good spirits which are the ancestors and evil spirits. The study shows how they perceive death as the end of one's journey as seen in their adage "òbìalù ije nwe ụna" (a

visitor has a time to leave), and how the demise of a loved one leaves a scar in their hearts. Also, it is seen that the community are humbled by death that they accord respect to every decease because they believe that all man is equal in the eyes of death.

Also, it is found out in this study that there is gender disparity which is strictly adhered, that there are dirges performed by men only in the funeral of men and there are dirges performed by women in men,women funeral ceremony and also in a teenager or a child death.

## **CONCLUSION**

Using a stylistic approach for this research, the language features of the dirges reveals the dirge singers intentions of using these language features, the research proves that adapting stylistic analysis in a literary work can be used to obtain broad meaning of the literary work. Also, using the ethnopoetic style develop by Alembi (2002) helped to bring the researcher close to the community being studied and helped the researcher view and analyze the dirges from the community's perspective.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

For the enrichment and preservation of Igbo oral traditional funeral poetry, the researcher urges other scholars interested, to collect data and give a thorough analysis in Igbo oral traditional funeral poetry in order to avoid Igbo oral traditional funeral poetry to suffer from possible extinction. Also, since this research is done using only three language features, it is predilect for other researchers who wishes to carry out stylistic research on oral poetry to employ more language features in their analysis, in other to achieve more comprehensive result of the meaning of the literary work.

## REFERENCE

Ajuwon, B. (1980). The preservation of Yorùbá tradition through hunters' funeral dirges. *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute*, 50.1, 66-72.

Ajuwon, B. (1981). Lament for the dead as a universal folk tradition. *FABULA: Journal of Folktale Studies*, 22.3, 272-28.

Akporobaro, F. B. O. (2004). *Introduction to African Oral Literature*. Lagos: Princeton.

Apronti, E.O. (2007). Structural unity of Akan dirges. Michigan: African e-Journals.  
20.4 32-40.

Alembi, E. (1995). Narrative performance in a changing world: The case of the story tellers in Kenya. A research paper presented at the 11th Congress of the International Society for Folk Narrative Research in Mysore.

Alembi, E. (2002). The Construction of Abanyole perceptions of death through oral funeral poetry. Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, University of Helsinki, Finland.

Ayu, E. (2020). Stylistic analysis in Emily Dickson's 'I felt a funeral in my brain' and 'If I should die'. An undergraduate thesis; university of Sanata Dharma Yogyakarta.

Babalola, S.A. (1966). *The content and form of Yoruba Ijala*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Barry, P. (2009). *Beginning Theory: An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory* (3rd ed.). Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Bauman, R. (1975). Verbal art as performance. In: *American Anthropologist*, 77, 70-28.

Boadi, L.A. (2013). Remarks on J.H Nketia's funeral dirges of the Akan people. *Legon journals of the Humanities*. 24, 3, 117-125.

Collins Dictionary, (1979). *English dictionary* (first ed): Collinsdictionary article.

Crystal, D., & Davy, D. (2013). *Investigating English Style*. New York: Routledge.

Cuddon, J. A. (2013). *A Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theories* (Fifth ed.). West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell.

Darah, G.G (2004). *Urhobo Performance Arts* in Foss, perkins (ed) where God's and Mortals Meet: continuity and Renewal in Urhobo. Art Ghent: snoeck publisher.

David, B. (1995). *Content and language: A functional linguistic theory of register*.  
London: New York Printer.

Egwuagu, N.I. (1995). The content of funeral dirge in Igbo oral tradition: A case study of Ezinifite in Aguata Local Government Area of Anambra state.  
Unpublished B.A. Long Essay, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

Eige, (2016). Consolidated Annual Activity Report of EIGE. European institute for Gender Equality: Europe.

Elliot, G.S. (1919). *The Evolution of the Dragon*: Manchester, the University press;  
London, New York.

Easwaramoorthy, M. (2006). Interviewing for research. Canada: Canada volunteerism initiative.

Foss, (2004). *Where God's and Mortals Meet: Continuity and Renewal in Urhobo*. Perkins (ed), Art.Ghent: snoeck publishers.

Felicia, O. (2013). A reflection on Urhobo funeral poetry as socio-cultural history. Nigeria: Nigerian Journal of Oral Literature. No. 1, 65-80.

Finnegan, R. (1970). Oral literature in Africa. London: Oxford University Press.

Finnegan, R. (1977). *Oral poetry in its nature, significance and social context*.

London: Cambridge University Press.

Gill, R. (1995). *Mastering English Literature* (Second ed.). New York: PALGRAVE.

Gerald, N. and Greenbaum, S. (2015). *An Introduction to English Grammar*: ebook

published (4th ed): London.

Hymes, D. (1982). Narrative form as a grammar of experience: Native American and a glimpse of English. *Journal of Education* 164(2), 121-125.

Ilogu, E. (1974). *Christianity and Igbo culture*. Nok publishers: New York.

Jacobson, R. (1980). A postscript to the discussion of grammar of poetry. *Diacritics*

10(1), 21-25.

Lawal, B. (1977). The living dead: Art and immortality among the Yorùbá of Nigeria.

*Africa: Journal of the International African Institute*, 47,50-61.

Leech, G. (1980). *A Linguistic Guide to English Poetry*. New York: Longman.

Manieson, A.A and Gyimah M. (2012). The changing audience of the oral

performance in Africa: The Ghanaian experience: *Journal of*

*Communication and Culture*, vol 3, 3, 34-40.

- Merriam-webster, (1928). American unabridged dictionary. Encyclopedia Britannica (first ed), 3, 34-59.
- Miruka, O. (1997). *Encounter with oral literature*. Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers limited.
- Nasaji, H. (2015). Qualitative and descriptive research. Data type versus data analysis: Sage Journal (first ed),19,2, 1618-1622.
- Ndukwe, F.C. (1986). Burial rites given to ozo title holders in Ogwu, Idemili Local Government Area of Anambra state. Unpublished B.A. Long Essay. Department of Religion, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.
- Nketia, J.H.H. (1955). *Funeral dirges of the Akan people*. University of Gold coast: Achimota.
- Norgaard, N., Montoro, R., & Busse, B. (2010). *Key Terms in Stylistics*. London: Continuum International Publishing Group.
- Nwosu, O. B. (2009). *Form and Functions of the Oral Poetry of Awuchinumo Community*, Imo State Nigeria, M. A. Thesis,University of Abuja.
- Ogede, O.S. (1995). *Context, form and poetic expressions of Igede funeral dirges*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Ohaeri, S.N. (1989). The Concept of re-incarnation in African Philosophy. *Journal of African Philosophy and Culture* 3(2), 1-6.

Okpewho, I. (1992). *African Oral Literature: Backgrounds, Character, and Continuity*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Onu J.O (2012). Elugwu Ezike perception of death through oral funeral poetry, P.H.D Thesis, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

Opata, D.U. (1998). *Essays on Igbo worldview*. Nsukka: A.P. Express Publishers.

Oxford Dictionary, (1989). *English Dictionary*: Oxford university press (second ed), United Kingdom.

Quinn, E. (2006). *A Dictionary of Literary and Thematic Terms* (Second ed.). New York: Facts On File, Inc. An imprint of Infobase Publishing.

Short, M. (1996). *Exploring the Language of Poems, Plays, and Prose*. London: Longman.

Simpson, P. (2004). *Stylistics*. New York: Routledge.

Sinclair, J. (1992). Collins Cobuild English Language Dictionary ( third ed). Cobuild.

Tedlock, D. (1983). *The spoken word and the work of interpretation*. Philadelphia:

University of Pennsylvania Press.

Tolbert, E. (1990). Women cry with words: *Symbolization of affect in the Karelian lament*. Yearbook for Traditional Music, 22, 80-105.

Uzochukwu, S. (1985). *Mbem akwamuozu*. Onitsha: University Press Limited.

Uzochukwu, S. (2001). *Traditional funeral poetry of the Igbo*. Lagos: University of Lagos Press.

Verdonk, P. (2002). *Stylistics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Vocabulary.com. (2008). *English encyclopedia: vocabulary.com article*.

Wales, K. (2001). *A Dictionary of Stylistics*. London: Longman.

Wales, J. and Sanga, L. (2001). Wikipedia, internet based encyclopedia: wikimedia foundation.

William, C. (1979). Collins Dictionary: collinsdictionary.com publishers (first ed), 1, 65-70.

Yule, G. (1998). *Explaining English Grammar*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

