

**A SEMANTIC ANALYSIS OF SONGS IN ILAJE CULTURAL CEREMONIES**

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**A PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF LINGUISTICS  
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## **APPROVAL PAGE**

I, **OMOMOWO BUKOLA DEMILADE**, a student of the Department of Linguistics Studies, University of Benin with matriculation number **ART2000583**. I have completed the requirements for course work and research for the Bachelor of Arts degree of the University of Benin. The research work contained in this project is a product of my personal effort and does not contain any previously written or published material that has been submitted in any other degree or diploma program from any university or higher institution of learning.

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## **PLAGIARISM CERTIFICATION**

I, **OMOMOWO BUKOLA DEMILADE** with the matriculation number **ART2000583** declare that this work "**A SEMANTIC ANALYSIS OF SONGS IN ILAJE CULTURAL CEREMONIES**" has successfully passed the anti-plagiarism test and does not violate any copyright regulations.

Signed:\_\_\_\_\_

**OMOMOWO BUKOLA DEMILADE**

## **DEDICATION**

To the Almighty God, I dedicate this project, acknowledging His divine guidance and inspiration that has seen me through its completion.

And also to my wonderful Mother, whose unwavering encouragement, support, and prayers have been a constant source of strength and motivation.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I acknowledge the Almighty God for His divine inspiration and guidance throughout this journey.

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## ABSTRACT

*This study aims to carry out a semantic analysis of songs in Ilaje cultural ceremonies by identifying the songs sung in Ilaje cultural ceremonies., analyzing the meaning of these songs, and lastly, exploring the cultural significance of these songs within Ilaje ceremonies. For this research, primary data collection was used, this involved conducting oral interviews with 3 native speakers of Ilaje who are fluent with the language to have a concise view about the songs in Ilaje cultural ceremonies and its worldview. A total of 10 songs were gotten from these informants with both The data was collected from the Ilaje region in Ondo State, Nigeria. An audio recorder was used as a tool for recording the data for clarity and authenticity of the research. The theoretical framework employed is the Ethnography of Communication (SPEAKING model) by Hymes (1964). The findings revealed that Ilaje songs include cultural songs celebrating Ilaje identity, naming ceremony songs celebrating childbirth, and wedding songs offering advice for marital life. The cultural songs emphasizes unity, cultural pride, and the importance of preserving Ilaje customs and language. Naming ceremony songs celebrate birth, wish prosperity, and reject misfortune such as childlessness, while wedding ceremony songs offers advice on marital virtues like submission, patience, and tolerance to ensure a successful marriage. These songs serve to preserve Ilaje culture, promote unity, and guide individuals through life's milestones. They emphasize the importance of heritage, social cohesion, and moral lessons for a harmonious community and family life. The study showed that songs in Ilaje cultural ceremonies help preserve their identity and culture. These songs promote unity, celebrate important life events, and teach values like patience, respect, and family harmony. The researcher recommends further studies in this particular area and any aspect not touched in this study be treated by linguist, scholars or any other researchers who have interest in the semantic analysis of songs in Ilaje cultural ceremonies or any other dialect of Yoruba language*

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY**

#### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Songs have been an integral part of human culture for centuries, serving as a means of expression, storytelling, and communication. From early rituals and communal gatherings to modern entertainment, songs have reflected the lives and experiences of people throughout history. Historically, songs were often tied to rituals and events, with folk songs preserving the struggles and stories of communities through oral traditions (Akingbe, 2013; Inya, 2015; Oyewale, 2024). They acted as a vehicle for sharing history and cultural identity. As society evolved, so did the exploration of song lyrics, which are often studied as poetry.

The intersection between songs and language is a rich field that reveals much about communication, culture, and identity. Songs utilize language not just as a means of conveying messages but also as a powerful tool for expression and emotional resonance. The linguistic features of songs, such as rhyme, alliteration, and metaphor, enhance their aesthetic appeal and memorability, making them impactful tools for storytelling. Through this lens, songs can be seen as a unique medium that blends linguistic creativity with musicality. They often reflect the cultural and social contexts in which they are created. The language used in songs can highlight regional dialects, slang, and cultural references,

providing insight into the identity of the community or group they represent. This linguistic richness allows listeners to connect on a deeper level, fostering a sense of belonging and shared experience.

This study is a semantic analysis of songs in Ilaje cultural ceremonies, a dialect of Yoruba intelligible to the Ilaje people of Ondo State, Nigeria.

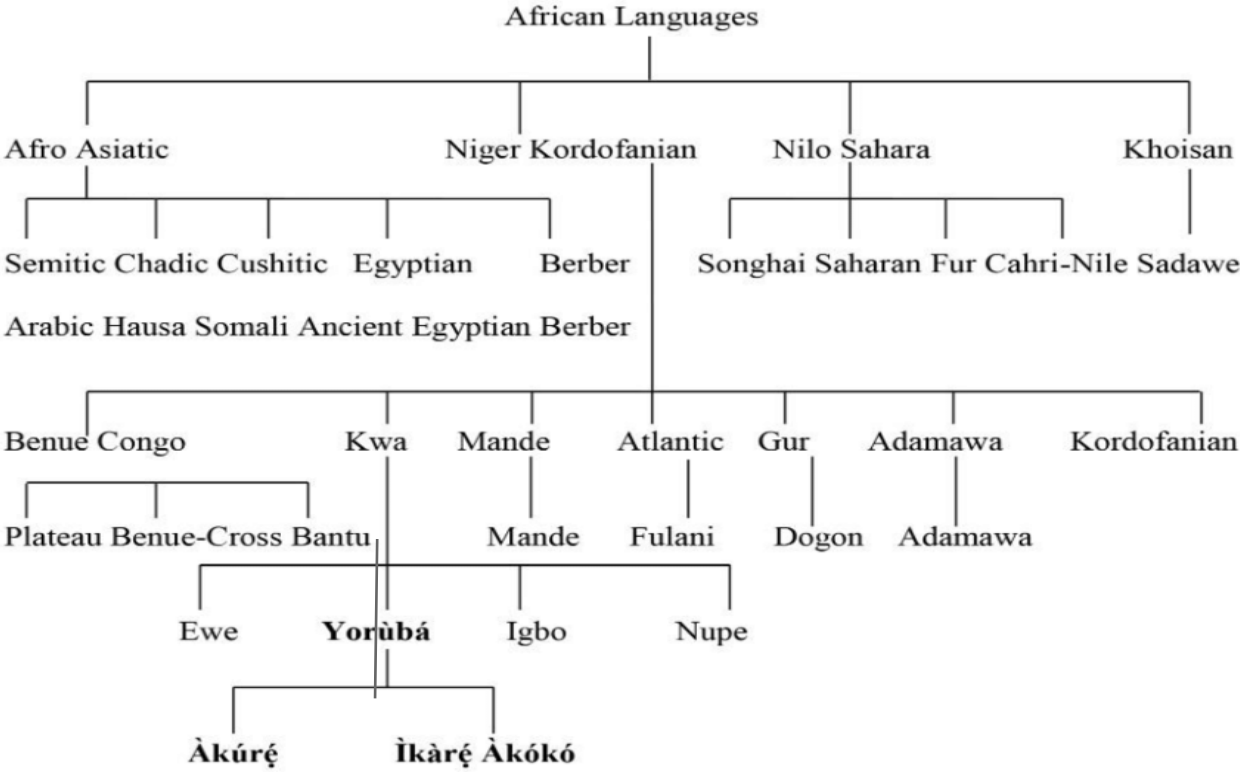
### **1.1 ILAJE DIALECT AND ITS SPEAKERS**

The Ilaje language is a dialect of Yoruba, originating from the Niger-Congo proto family. It is spoken by the Ilaje people in Ondo State, Nigeria, and shares close ties with other Yoruba dialects such as Ondo, Ikale, and Ijebu. Songs play a crucial role in their culture, serving as a means to convey their history, beliefs, and values. According to the UNESCO publication "Mapping of Endangered Languages in Africa" from 2010, the Ilaje population is estimated to be around 250,000, based on data from the 2006 Nigerian census. However, this figure is an estimate, and the actual number may vary.

Additionally, there are Ilaje individuals living outside Nigeria, potentially increasing the overall population beyond this estimate.

The figure below is a genetic classification of African languages tracing Ilaje dialect to its Proto language (Niger Kordofanian).

**1.1.1 Genetic Classification of African Languages**



**Ilajè**

**Source: (Yusuf 2007: 124)**

The table above shows how Ilaje dialect can be traced to its parent language (Yoruba) which is a KWA language under the Niger Kordofanian proto language family.

## **1.2 METHODOLOGY**

In this study, the method for the data collection was primary, while the data is qualitative. For the research on "Semantic analysis of songs in Ilaje cultural ceremonies", primary data collection was used, this involved conducting oral interviews with 3 native speakers, not just any native speakers but fluent speakers of Ilaje to have a concise view about the songs in Ilaje cultural ceremonies and its worldview. Of a total of 3 informant met, 2 are educated while 1 is uneducated. The 3 informants names were Mrs. Ogbaro who is of age 68 and a trader, Mrs. Ayenomuro who is 31 years of age and a business woman, and lastly, Mrs. Baroju who is 34 years of age and a business woman. A total of 10 songs were gotten from these informants with both Mrs. Ogbaro and Mrs. Ayenomuro providing 3 songs each, while Mrs. Baroju provided 4 songs in Ilaje. The data was collected from the Ilaje region in Ondo State, Nigeria.

An audio recorder was used as a tool for recording the data for clarity and authenticity of the research.

## **1.3 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

The purpose of this study is to carry out a semantic analysis of songs in Ilaje cultural ceremonies which would involve recording and transcribing traditional songs, as well as analyzing the information gotten about the cultural and historical context of this tradition. The purpose of this study is not only to analyze the songs sung in Ilaje cultural

ceremonies but also to give an insight into how these songs reflect the identity of the people of Ilaje, how the people perceive these songs, places where these songs are sung, meanings derived from these songs. All these will be answered in this research as this research will point out the benefits of this study to the people of Ilaje by exploring the various songs sung in its cultural ceremonies and exploring the various importance of these songs and how it is of utmost value to linguistic research.

### **1.3.1 Statement of the Problem**

The traditional oral traditions of the Ilaje people are at risk of being lost due to the effects of modernization and globalization. As younger generations become increasingly influenced by the modern world, they are less likely to learn and pass on traditional songs to the unborn ones. This could lead to a loss of cultural heritage and a lack of understanding of the history and traditions of the Ilaje people. Also, the lack of documentation of this oral tradition makes it vulnerable to being distorted or forgotten.

Additionally, the lack of documentation of this oral tradition could lead to misunderstandings and inaccuracies about the history and culture of the Ilaje people. Without a record of the songs, future generations may not have access to the rich cultural heritage of the Ilaje people.

Lastly, there will be need for more research on the linguistic and cultural significance of these traditions as researchers can gain a deeper understanding of the Ilaje people and their culture through their songs.

### **1.3.2 Aim and Objectives**

The aim of this study is to carry out a semantic analysis of songs in Ilaje cultural ceremonies. Its objectives are to:

1. Identify the songs sung in Ilaje cultural ceremonies.
2. Analyze the meaning of these songs.
3. Explore the cultural significance of these songs within Ilaje ceremonies.

### **1.3.3 Research Questions**

The research questions are:

1. What songs are performed in Ilaje cultural ceremonies?
2. What meanings are conveyed in the lyrics of these songs?
3. How do these songs reflect Ilaje cultural identity?

#### **1.3.4 Scope of the Study**

The study is delimited to the Ilaje-speaking community. The study will focus on specific parts where Ilaje is being spoken, and the different types of songs used in its cultural ceremonies.

#### **1.3.5 Significance of the Study**

The significance of this study lies in the fact that it will contribute to the understanding of Ilaje songs sung in cultural ceremonies. The study will be beneficial to the Ilaje community by preserving its cultural heritage and identity. It will also be beneficial to linguists as it will provide insights into semantic structures in the Ilaje language.

Additionally, cultural anthropologists will also benefit from this research as it will inform the understanding of cultural practices and meanings. It will also provide educators resources for teaching about Ilaje culture and language. The study will also make policy makers be informed about decisions regarding cultural preservation initiatives. Researchers will also have a foundation for further studies in linguistics and cultural analysis.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.0 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter is organized into three main sections, as follows: conceptual review also known as theoretical review, previous studies, which gave rise to the motivation for this current study, and the concern of the present study.

#### **2.1 CONCEPTUAL REVIEW**

##### **2.1.1 Songs**

Songs are musical works that intertwine melody, harmony, and lyrics to create a cohesive artistic expression. Typically structured in sections like verses and choruses, songs are designed to evoke emotions, tell stories, or communicate specific messages to listeners. These compositions can be accompanied by instruments or performed a cappella, depending on the style and intent of the performance. Songs play a crucial role in both individual and collective cultural expression, often reflecting the values, experiences, and traditions of a particular society or community. Each song can be viewed as a journey, marked by various stages or transformations, which often correspond to changes in mood, themes, or musical complexity (Ang et al., 2019).

Historically, songs have existed in a wide array of forms and genres, ranging from sea shanties and folk songs to art songs and lute pieces, reflecting the diversity of human experience and creativity across different cultures and time periods (Gray et al., 2023). Musical behavior, including the creation and performance of songs, is thought to be deeply embedded in our evolutionary past. Schruth et al. (2019) argue that the origins of musicality may date back as far as 60 million years within the primate lineage, suggesting that early forms of vocalizations and rhythmic behaviors gradually evolved into the complex musical expressions we recognize today. The evolution of singing and music is believed to have been shaped by various evolutionary pressures, such as social bonding, communication, and mating rituals, contributing to the diverse musical traditions we see across the world today.

Despite the widespread presence of music in human culture, attempts to fully define musical behavior in a universal, cross-cultural way have encountered significant challenges. This is partly due to the vast differences in musical practices, structures, and meanings across cultures, as well as the complex nature of music's role in human societies. As a result, the study of music and its evolutionary roots continues to be a rich and multifaceted area of research.

### **2.1.2 Cultural Ceremonies**

Cultural ceremonies play a significant role in shaping societal values, reinforcing community identity, and perpetuating traditions across generations (Banda et al., 2024). These rituals, which can range from birth and coming-of-age ceremonies to weddings, religious observances, and funeral rites, reflect the beliefs, norms, and worldviews of a community (Ohaja & Anyim, 2021). They not only mark critical transitions in the life cycle but also serve as a medium for social cohesion and the transmission of cultural knowledge. Through ceremonial acts, communities preserve and affirm their cultural heritage while simultaneously navigating the challenges of modernity.

One of the key elements of cultural ceremonies is their symbolic nature. Alexander and Norbeck (2024) explains how rituals, especially during rites of passage, foster a sense of equality and unity among participants, as they are temporarily removed from the hierarchies of everyday life. These ceremonies allow individuals to undergo transformative experiences that are both personal and collective, as they reaffirm their belonging within a group. For instance, in many African cultures, initiation ceremonies such as those practiced among the Kikuyu of Kenya or the Xhosa of South Africa, not only mark the transition from adolescence to adulthood but also reinforce the values and responsibilities expected of adults in the community (Ezenweke, 2016).

In religious contexts, ceremonies serve to strengthen the spiritual bonds of a community and provide a sense of divine connection. The Christian sacrament of the Eucharist, for example, is a communal ceremony where believers partake in the symbolic consumption of bread and wine, representing the body and blood of Christ. This ritual is central to the Christian faith, as it commemorates the Last Supper and reinforces the theological concepts of sacrifice, salvation, and the communal nature of the Church (Caccamo, 2004). Similarly, in Hinduism, the wedding ceremony (vivah) is laden with rituals that emphasize the sacredness of marriage, aligning it with divine principles and reinforcing the social fabric (Pallathadka et al., 2022). Rituals are also instrumental in the transmission of cultural knowledge and practices. They are typically oral in nature, relying on storytelling, songs, and symbols to convey important teachings about ethics, survival, and cultural history.

The social function of ceremonies extends to marking life events such as death, which are universally observed across cultures through funerary rites. In Western societies, funeral practices often involve a somber ceremony where the deceased is laid to rest, reflecting mourning and loss. However, in other parts of the world, such as in the Toraja region of Indonesia, funerals can last for weeks and involve elaborate rituals that emphasize the continuity of life after death (Mackowiak, 2024). These ceremonies illustrate how cultural perceptions of death influence the practices associated with it, creating a space

for the living to express their grief and their respect for the deceased, while reaffirming the cultural beliefs surrounding the afterlife.

Moreover, cultural ceremonies have adapted over time, often blending traditional practices with modern influences. For instance, many contemporary weddings in the West incorporate both secular and religious elements, reflecting a shift towards more individualized expressions of ceremony.

## **2.2 PREVIOUS STUDIES**

This section highlights and discusses previous works and articles which are related to this current study.

Akanji (2012) study investigated the social contexts and their influences on the developments of Yoruba traditional musical forms. Historical research design was adopted for the systematic and intensive enquiry into social events and development of musical experiences of the Yoruba people. Fieldwork was conducted in Oyo Alaafin, Ijio, Ketu Republic of Benin, Tube, Abeokuta, Ibadan, Ijebu-Igbo, Kupalo Village in Ibadan and Ipaja Village. Data were collected through observations of musical performances, unstructured oral interviews and key informants. Four major Yoruba kings including chiefs, elders and traditional deity worshippers were interviewed. Relevant information was collected from the field with the recordings of musical performances, objects, films and photographs of festivals, libraries and the internet. Data were analyzed with both

external and internal validity evidences used to ascertain the accuracy and originality of contents. Descriptive textual and structural analysis of data revealed the aims, significance and objectives of the study. Findings from the analysis revealed that the Yoruba traditional musical forms were usually determined by such factors like religion, cultural beliefs, functions of the music, the zeitgeist, resources of performance, and external influences like education, and adoption of foreign life style. Similarly, the structural analysis revealed the authentic musicological principles behind the Yoruba traditional musical forms. In addition, the classification of Yoruba music was determined by the social and historical facts of the Yoruba people. The implication of the findings for policy and practice were also discussed. It was suggested that the classification of the Yoruba musical trends should be adopted with modification to serve as periodization of Nigerian music. The researcher highlighted that the school music curriculum should be re-designed to reflect the social contexts currently available in the study of Yoruba traditional musical forms. Lastly, the result of the contextual and structural analysis should also be adopted and form one of the theoretical basis in Nigerian art musical compositions and theoretical analysis.

Akingbe (2013) asserted in his work that oraliture is a terminology that is often employed in the description of the various genres of oral literature such as proverbs, legends, short stories, traditional songs and rhymes, song-poems, historical narratives traditional symbols, images, oral performance, myths and other traditional stylistic devices. Oral

narrative performance according to him, is invariably situated within the domain of social communication, which brings together the racon-teur/performer and the audience towards the realisation of communal entertainment. While the narrator/performer, plays the leading role in an oral performance, the audience's involvement and participation is realised through song, verbal/choral responses, gestures and, or instrumental/musical accompaniment. This oral practice usually take place at one time or the other in various African communities during the festival, ritual/religious procession 324 which ranges from story-telling, recitation of poems, song text and dancing. The paper was essentially concerned with the illustration of the use of song-text, as oral performance among the Ilaje, a burgeoning coastal sub-ethnic group, of the Yoruba race in the South Western Nigeria. The paper further examined how patriotism, history, death and antisocial behaviours are evaluated through the use of songs among the Ilaje.

Emoruwa (2020) paper focused on the factors that have conditioned the forms, styles, patterns and performance conventions of the worship dances as used in the Ilaje Cherubim and Seraphim Zion Church. This was in a view to ascertain possibilities or otherwise of choreographic ('choreotic') merits in the said worship dances. To realize the objective, the paper adopted the descriptive and analytical methods of research. The data was gathered from both the primary and secondary sources which were the employed participant-observers, interviews as well as library and internet searches.

Akinrinlola (2021) study examined the discourse stylistic import of the sociocultural values in Seun Ògúnfidítímí's songs with the view to describing how contextual issues are negotiated in her songs. Recorded songs of Ògúnfidítímí constitute the data for the study. The audio compact discs of her songs were collected and played repeatedly. The songs were transcribed and translated into the English language. The translation process took the form of one-to-one translation in order to avoid distortion of meaning. The artiste resorts to the use of discourse analytical tools in creating her lyrics. The songs reflected political, social, cultural and religious ideals of the Yorùbá traditional African society. The contextual issues expressed in the songs included the importance attached to the child as success indicator, the significance of marriage, love, conspiracy and the place of detractors, corruption and embezzlement, 184 Temidayo Akinrinlola supremacy of God, social degeneration, gender inequality and the cyclical nature of life.

Omoniyi (2022) study examined the meaning and symbolic representation of culture in Yorùbá indigenous wedding music among Ekiti people. The researcher asserted that indigenous weddings are significant traditional realities in context. The data for the study was collected through participant observation (10 different wedding venues) 2 each from the selected villages and local government. Focus Group Discussion, structured and unstructured oral interview with housewives (Obirinile) both elderly, middle age and newly wedded brides (Obitun) methods. Participant observation method was chosen because of its ability to give the researcher first-hand information about the subject

matter. At the same time, it helped the researcher to source for useful information about some subjective experiences. The unstructured oral interview was chosen because of its ability to provide original and insightful responses from the interviewee, which were instructive to the study. Secondary data were gathered from journals, articles, books, newspapers, clippings and reliable internet sources. Data analyses were done using content analysis. The research adopted two different theoretical frameworks that were based on the theory of semiotic. These theories served as the theoretical bases for the data analyses. They were Peirce's Semiotics framework (2020) and Leeuvan's Social Semiotics (2004). The study documented culturally relevant Ekiti indigenous songs for wedding for preservation and archival purposes that other researchers can find useful for further research in such field as ethnomusicology and cultural anthropology.

### **2.3 CONCERN OF THE PRESENT STUDY**

The previous studies and the present study share a common focus on the analysis of traditional music and cultural practices, particularly in the context of Yoruba-speaking people. Akanji's research (2012) on the social contexts influencing Yoruba musical forms aligns with the present study's exploration of Ilaje songs, both examining how culture shapes music. Akingbe's work (2013) on Ilaje oral literature and Emoruwa's study (2020) of Ilaje worship dances also relate to the current study's interest in Ilaje cultural ceremonies, with a shared emphasis on oral traditions and community participation. However, while these studies focus on specific musical forms or religious practices

within particular Yoruba subgroups, the present study specifically analyzes songs in the Ilaje cultural ceremonies, highlighting the semantic aspects and their role in community identity. Differences arise in the specific focus of the studies: for instance, Akinrinlola (2021) examined the sociocultural values in Seun Ògúnfidítímí's songs, and Omoniyi (2022) studied wedding music in Ekiti, showing a broader cultural scope outside the Ilaje context. The present study, therefore, narrows its scope to semantic analysis within the context of Ilaje rituals and ceremonies.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

#### **3.0 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter focuses on the theoretical framework for the research on Semantic analysis of songs in Ilaje cultural ceremonies. The theoretical framework to be employed is the Ethnography of Communication (SPEAKING model) by Hymes (1964).

#### **3.1 ETHNOGRAPHY OF COMMUNICATION**

The Ethnography of Communication, developed by sociolinguist Hymes in 1964, is a framework that explores how language is used in specific social contexts. It focuses on understanding the relationship between language and culture, examining how people use communication to shape and maintain their social world. Hymes introduced the SPEAKING model as a way to systematically analyze communicative events. The term "SPEAKING" is an acronym for different components that are key to understanding communication in its social context. The "S" stands for Setting and Scene, which refers to

the time and place of the interaction. "P" stands for Participants, focusing on who is involved and their roles in the communication. "E" is for Ends, meaning the goals or purposes of the communication. "A" represents Act Sequence, or the order of events in the interaction. "K" stands for Key, which refers to the tone or manner in which the communication occurs. "I" is for Instrumentalities, which relates to the forms of speech used, such as language, dialect, or register. "N" represents Norms, which are the social rules governing the communication, and "G" stands for Genre, referring to the type or category of communication.

Hymes' work was influenced by the earlier contributions of scholars like Goffman and his studies of face-to-face interaction, as well as the anthropological work of Malinowski. These scholars helped shape Hymes' thinking about how communication operates in social settings. Hymes expanded the understanding of language use beyond its grammatical structure, emphasizing that communication should be studied within its social context.

The primary working principles of Hymes' framework are that language is not just a tool for conveying information, but a social activity embedded in culture. It highlights that the meaning of communication is influenced by the participants' roles, their relationship, and the social and cultural norms they adhere to. The model encourages a holistic approach to studying communication, considering not just the words spoken but also the situation, the people involved, and the broader cultural context. This approach allows for a deeper

understanding of how communication functions in real-world settings, making it essential for fields like anthropology, linguistics, and communication studies.

### **3.2 APPLICATION OF THE THEORY**

Applying the Ethnography of Communication (SPEAKING model) to the research on "Semantic analysis of songs in Ilaje cultural ceremonies" offers a detailed framework for understanding how language functions in these cultural practices. The setting and scene in this case would involve the specific locations and times when the ceremonies take place, such as during festivals or rituals within Ilaje communities. The participants include the performers (such as traditional musicians or singers), the audience, and possibly spiritual figures or elders who influence the cultural context of the songs. The ends, or goals, of the communication would focus on the ceremonial purposes of the songs, such as marking an important occasion, conveying cultural values, or invoking spiritual meanings. The act sequence would explore how the songs are performed in a specific order during the ceremony, reflecting the structure and flow of the event. The key would examine the tone and manner of performance, which could range from serious and formal to lively and celebratory, depending on the ceremony's nature. Instrumentalities in this context would refer to the forms of language and music used in the songs, whether it is the Ilaje dialect, specific chants, or traditional musical instruments. Norms are critical as they govern how the songs are performed, who can perform them, and the cultural rules surrounding the lyrics' content and delivery. Finally, the genre

would classify the types of songs, such as praise songs, storytelling songs, or ritualistic chants, reflecting their function in the ceremony.

### **3.3 RELEVANCE/JUSTIFICATION OF THE THEORY**

The Ethnography of Communication (SPEAKING model) is particularly relevant to the study of songs in Ilaje cultural ceremonies because it provides a comprehensive framework for understanding communication in its cultural context. The model emphasizes how language and communication are influenced by social settings, roles, and cultural practices, which is crucial for analyzing songs in the Ilaje community. By using this model, we can better understand how language functions in these cultural performances, unlike other theories which may not provide the same depth of social and cultural analysis. The framework allows for a clearer understanding of the purpose and function of these songs, ensuring that the study remains rooted in the community's practices and cultural expressions.

Below is a sample data showing how the theory works.

#### **ILAJE MI WA OMURO**

1)

*Ìlájé mí wa o òmùrò*

*Agbé nokò hengwà*

## **Translation**

This simply means Ilaje the highly knowledgeable people is coming, the most beautiful creator inside the canoe.

**1. Setting and Scene:** The song is performed during Ilaje cultural ceremonies, to honour the Ilaje people.

**2. Participants:** The participants are the Ilaje community and the audience.

**3. Ends (Purpose):** The purpose is to praise the Ilaje people for their knowledge and cultural significance.

**4. Act Sequence:** The song marks the arrival of the Ilaje people, emphasizing their importance.

**5. Key (Tone):** The tone is respectful and celebratory.

**6. Instrumentalities:** Traditional instruments may accompany the song to enhance the ceremony.

**7. Norms:** The song follows cultural norms of respecting elders and honoring the community's wisdom.

**8. Genre:** It is a ceremonial praise song.

The song honors the Ilaje as knowledgeable and spiritually significant, using imagery like "the most beautiful creator inside the canoe" to symbolize their deep connection to nature and culture.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS**

#### **4.0 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter presents and analyzes the data for this research work. The chapter is organized into three headings; data presentation, data analysis, and discussion of findings. The Ethnography of Communication (SPEAKING model) theory framework will guide the analysis of this research, and the analysis will reflect the objectives of the research.

#### **4.1 DATA PRESENTATION**

This section presents the data for this research. A total of 9 songs are presented as gotten from the data collection. They comprises cultural songs, naming ceremony songs and wedding ceremony songs.

### 4.1.1 Ilaje Cultural Songs

Cultural songs are musical expressions that reflect the traditions, values, beliefs, and practices of a particular community or society.

2)

*Àwá wá*

*Èdè ré olóye o*

*Àwá má wá*

*Ọmà ilàje*

*Àwà ré ó éé*

#### **Translation**

We have come, we have come, Ilaje the dialect that is understandable we have come, the people of Ilaje we are here.

3)

*úlé ma nú sé ó ilàje*

*Óyá jála tòjú úlé*

*Úlé ma nú sé ó ilàje*

*Jà má gbòde bawa ré rón né*

### **Translation**

This means that there is traditional norms and customs in Ilaje that needs to be duly observed. Therefore, the song *Úlé ma nú se Ilaje* means that, there is norm and customs that binds the Ilaje people together, that we should not forget them or else the intruders will take our fathers house from us no matter how long you may live in diaspora we should not forget to come and invest at home because east, south, north or west home is the best.

**4)**

*Àwà ré ọmá ìlàje é*

*Àwà ré mí gwa búlé bulé*

*J'ógbori máá máá o*

*J'ógbori máá máá ba*

*Àwá mi wà o*

*Àwà ré o*

### **Translation**

This simply means we the indigenes of Ilaje, we that is sailing tranquilly so that the novice would not know that we are coming, we are here.

#### **4.1.2 Naming Ceremony Songs**

Naming ceremony songs are traditional songs sung to celebrate and honor the naming of a newborn, symbolizing cultural rites and blessings.

5)

*Ọmà mó ríjọ ó*

*Ọmà mó ríyọ o*

*Ọmà mo ríyò n'ilé okò mi*

*Jó gbìgbà má gbà o*

*Jò gbìgbà má gbàa má a mowó o*

*J'óta mí máyò o*

#### **Translation**

It is because of child I dance

It is because of child I celebrate

May the snatcher not take it from me for my enemy to gloat over me.

Ìlàje.

6)

*Má b'ólóma jó o*

*Má b'ólóma yò*

*Má b'ólóma yò*

*To rí to jó tẹ̀mi oo*

### **Translation**

I shall dance with the nursing mother

I shall rejoice with the nursing mother

I shall rejoice with the nursing mother

Because of my own time.

7)

*Kí mọ̀ gbéjọ̀ àwé?*

*Ọ̀mà mọ̀ gbéjọ̀ o*

*E sì ìrhèrhè*

*Mé ghá sìn rán wá*

*Mé ghá pèn ran wá*

### **Translation**

What am I dancing for?

It is a child not a beed/toy/object

I reject being childless

I reject being barren.

### **4.1.3 Wedding Ceremony Songs**

Wedding ceremony songs are specially selected pieces of music played during a wedding to enhance the atmosphere and celebrate the union of the couple.

**8)**

*Kawa ò*

*Ìyàwó Kawa ò*

*Ìyàwò rébété oma àkúléjo*

*Wò mà kawa ò*

**Translation**

Oh, come!

Oh! Bride come

Smart and elegant wife

Oh come!

Oh, come the bride.

**9)**

*B'òmà bá fa ra balè*

*Ọmà á gb'ùre ò*

*Lénu bàà bá re*

*Á gb'ùre*

*B'òmà bá fa ra ba lè*

*Ọmà á gb'ùre ò*

*Lé nu màa má re*

## **Translation**

When a child humbles his/herself such receives blessing

When a child humbles his/herself such receives blessing from father

Such also receives blessing from mother.

My child, (daughter) do not focus on the challenges of marriage as you are going

If your father-in-law beats you, do not respond

If your mother-in-law beats you, do not respond

If you are submissive

You will receive the blessings of the marriage

Unable to submit cause you suffering.

**10)**

*Bí ìbá ọkọ lùrẹ o*

*mà fẹ*

*Bí wó rẹ súútù*

*Wa sèrè ilé ókó*

*Àiné sùrù*

*Wa sèrè ilé ókó*

*Àiné sùrù*

*Wa tẹ̀pà alágo*

### **Translation**

Pay no attention to the challenges in your husband's abode as you are going, my daughter

Pay no attention to the challenges in your husband's abode as you are going, my daughter.

If your father-in-law scolds/beats you

Do not raise eyebrow against him.

If your mother-in-law scolds/beats you, raise no eyebrow against her.

If you are submissive and tolerant you would enjoy your marriage

But your in-submissive and intolerance might cause you more trouble.

### **4.2 DATA ANALYSIS**

This section analyzes the presented data. The Ethnography of Communication (SPEAKING model) theory framework will be used for the analysis of the data.

### 4.2.1 Analysis of Song 1

**S (Setting):** The setting appears to be a public or communal event where the Ilaje people are expressing their presence and identity.

**P (Participants):** The participants are the Ilaje people themselves, who are vocalizing their presence and culture.

**E (Ends):** The goal is to assert the cultural and linguistic identity of the Ilaje people and to make a collective statement of their presence.

**A (Act Sequence):** The act sequence is the repetition of "Àwá wá" (We have come) which signifies arrival and assertion.

**K (Key):** The tone is celebratory and declarative, expressing pride in their dialect and community.

**I (Instrumentalities):** The primary tool is the Yoruba language (Ilaje dialect), which conveys their message clearly to the audience familiar with it.

**N (Norms):** The norms reflect a cultural practice of proclaiming identity, using a form of language that is understood and respected within the community.

**G (Genre):** This is a chant or anthem-style song meant to celebrate and assert the presence of the Ilaje people.

The song reflects the Ilaje people's assertion of their culture, language, and collective identity in a celebratory and inclusive manner.

#### **4.2.2 Analysis of Song 2**

**S - Setting and Scene:** The song is performed within the context of Ilaje cultural ceremonies, primarily during community gatherings or rituals that celebrate traditional values and norms.

**P - Participants:** The participants include the community members, especially those of Ilaje descent, and possibly the song's performer(s) who convey these important cultural messages.

**E - Ends:** The goal of the song is to emphasize the importance of preserving Ilaje cultural norms and traditions, as well as encouraging those who have migrated (diasporic members) to return and invest in their homeland.

**A - Act Sequence:** The song's structure involves the repetition of lines, underlining the message of cultural preservation. The repetition in the lines "Úlé ma nú sé ó ìlàje" reinforces the imperative to remember and uphold cultural practices.

**K - Key:** The tone of the song is serious, urging respect for tradition. It blends a sense of caution with pride in Ilaje identity.

**I - Instrumentalities:** The song is delivered through oral performance, likely accompanied by traditional music, which is typical of Ilaje cultural ceremonies.

**N - Norms:** The norms referenced in the song involve respect for one's roots and the obligation to invest in one's community. There is an expectation that individuals who have left for better opportunities should not forget their heritage.

**G - Genre:** The genre of this song is likely a folk song or ceremonial chant, used to convey cultural values in a communal setting.

The song conveys a deep message about the importance of maintaining Ilaje customs and values, urging members of the community to uphold their traditional norms regardless of where they are geographically. It emphasizes the communal responsibility to preserve the heritage and contribute to the welfare of the home community.

#### **4.2.3 Analysis of Song 3**

**S (Setting and Scene):** The song is performed in a cultural ceremony, specifically a celebration or a ritual within the Ilaje community. The setting is one where the community gathers to honor their heritage and traditions.

**P (Participants):** The song involves the Ilaje indigenes, the singers, and the audience. The singers may be elders or community members, and the audience likely comprises the community or visitors.

**E (Ends):** The purpose of the song is to communicate the presence and cultural identity of the Ilaje people, emphasizing their unique way of life, their peaceful navigation, and cultural strength.

**A (Act Sequence):** The song is structured in a repetitive call-and-response format, which is typical of many African ceremonial songs. The singers lead with a phrase, followed by a response from the community, symbolizing unity and shared identity.

**K (Key):** The tone of the song is serious and celebratory, indicating respect for tradition and the community's values. It is not playful, but rather a statement of cultural pride and resilience.

**I (Instrumentalities):** The song is likely performed with vocal harmonies and minimal instrumental accompaniment, typical of Ilaje songs during cultural ceremonies.

**N (Norms):** The norms involved include showing respect for the community's cultural practices and the appropriate behavior of the participants, both in singing and responding.

**G (Genre):** This is a traditional ceremonial song, possibly used in rites of passage or festive occasions, emphasizing the Ilaje people's journey and presence.

The song reflects a peaceful yet assertive cultural identity, highlighting both the pride and unity of the Ilaje people through its communal and symbolic performance.

#### **4.2.4 Analysis of Song 4**

**S (Setting and Scene):** The song is sung during a naming ceremony, a cultural event in Ilaje society, where the community gathers to celebrate the birth of a child.

**P (Participants):** The participants are the celebrants, likely family and community members, who are involved in the naming and cultural practices. The child being named is a central figure.

**E (Ends):** The purpose of the song is to express joy, celebrate the child's birth, and invoke blessings for the child's safety and well-being, while also protecting the child from harm.

**A (Act Sequence):** The sequence involves singing, dancing, and invoking prayers or well-wishes for the child. The lyrics express the celebratory mood but also address the spiritual request for protection.

**K (Key):** The tone of the song is both celebratory and earnest, mixing joy with a request for divine protection and safety for the newborn.

**I (Instrumentalities):** The medium is oral, sung in the Ilaje dialect, with the use of rhythm and melody common in traditional songs.

**N (Norms):** The song follows the norms of Ilaje cultural ceremonies, where music, dance, and prayers are integral to rituals.

**G (Genres):** The song falls within the genre of celebratory songs and prayers common in naming ceremonies among the Ilaje people.

The song's semantic significance is that it reflects the joy of the community at the child's birth, while also emphasizing the importance of protection against malicious forces, which is a key element in Ilaje cultural ceremonies.

#### **4.2.5 Analysis of Song 5**

**S - Setting:** The song is performed during a naming ceremony in an Ilaje community, likely in a communal or family setting where cultural traditions are being observed.

**P - Participants:** The participants include the singer(s), the nursing mother (the one being celebrated), and possibly the wider community, as the song seems to address both personal and collective joy.

**E - Ends:** The purpose of the song is to celebrate the nursing mother and the newborn, reinforcing the community's joy and support. It signifies a communal expression of happiness, hope, and well-wishing.

**A - Act Sequence:** The song is repetitive in nature, with phrases that emphasize joy, dancing, and unity. The structure of the song suggests a celebratory mood, and it aligns with cultural expressions of collective participation in important life events.

**K - Key:** The song is performed in a joyful, celebratory tone. It is likely sung with enthusiasm and may be accompanied by dance or clapping to heighten the atmosphere of festivity.

**I - Instrumentalities:** The primary instrument here is vocal, though there may be drums or other percussion in the background, typical of Ilaje ceremonies. The music serves to enhance the emotional depth of the event.

**N - Norms:** The song follows cultural norms of respect and joy in the Ilaje community. It reflects the expected communal engagement with life milestones, highlighting social values like unity, support for the mother, and the cycle of life.

**G - Genre:** The song is a traditional ceremonial song, likely passed down through generations as part of the oral tradition, meant to mark significant cultural occasions like naming ceremonies.

This song reflects the community's shared cultural values, emotions, and communal bonds, emphasizing the interconnection between individual and collective experiences in the Ilaje naming ceremony.

#### **4.2.6 Analysis of Song 6**

**S (Setting and Scene):** The song is performed during a naming ceremony, a significant cultural event in the Ilaje community, which marks the birth of a child.

**P (Participants):** The participants include the person singing the song (likely a community member or relative) and the audience (family, friends, and community members present at the ceremony).

**E (Ends):** The purpose is to celebrate the birth of a child and reject the social stigma of barrenness. The singer emphasizes fertility and the blessing of having children.

**A (Act Sequence):** The song begins with a question asking what the dance (or celebration) is for, followed by an affirmation that the celebration is for a child. The singer then rejects childlessness and barrenness, which is a powerful cultural message.

**K (Key):** The tone of the song is serious, celebratory, and emotional. It combines joy with a clear rejection of infertility, underlining the social importance of procreation in the community.

**I (Instrumentalities):** The song is vocal, and it may be accompanied by drumming or dancing, which is common in Ilaje ceremonies to engage the audience and elevate the emotional expression.

**N (Norms):** The cultural expectation is that families will celebrate the birth of children. The song reinforces societal norms surrounding fertility and motherhood.

**G (Genre):** The song is a traditional ceremonial song, specifically for a naming ceremony, combining praise, celebration, and societal values.

This analysis shows that the song conveys powerful messages of fertility, rejection of childlessness, and the importance of children in the Ilaje community, aligning with the cultural and social expectations of the naming ceremony.

#### **4.2.7 Analysis of Song 7**

**Setting and Scene:** The song is performed during an Ilaje wedding ceremony, likely in a public or semi-public space where participants gather to witness the union of the bride and groom.

**Participants:** The primary participants are the bride (Ìyàwó) and the audience (likely family and guests), with the bride being the focal point of the song.

**Ends:** The purpose of the song is to praise and celebrate the bride, signaling her arrival and the celebration of her new role as wife.

**Act Sequence:** The song calls for the bride to "come," and describes her as "smart and elegant," emphasizing the beauty and dignity of the bride as she enters the ceremony.

**Key:** The song is celebratory and joyful, marked by an inviting and appreciative tone.

**Instrumentalities:** The song is likely sung with traditional instruments or acapella by the community, creating a rhythm that matches the celebratory atmosphere of the event.

**Norms:** The norms are tied to cultural expectations in the Ilaje community, where such songs are part of formal wedding rituals and serve to honor the bride's role in the community.

**Genre:** The song belongs to the genre of ceremonial music, specifically wedding songs in Ilaje culture, characterized by repetitive, inviting lyrics meant to enhance the communal celebration.

This analysis shows that the song's function is both ceremonial and communicative, emphasizing the bride's importance within the social structure and marking the wedding as a significant cultural event.

#### **4.2.8 Analysis of Song 8**

**S – Setting and Scene:** The setting is a traditional Ilaje wedding ceremony, where cultural values around marriage, submission, and blessings are communicated through song. The scene involves the bride being prepared for her new marital life, with the song conveying advice and expectations.

**P – Participants:** The primary participants in this song are the bride (who is the focus of the advice), the parents (father and mother), and the extended family or community

members singing the song. The bride is being counseled, and the parents' roles are highlighted in the blessings given.

**E – Ends:** The song's purpose is to provide guidance on marriage, emphasizing humility, submission, and the importance of receiving blessings. The end goal is for the bride to learn how to navigate marriage harmoniously.

**A – Act Sequence:** The act sequence involves the narration of marital advice through the song. The singer (or the community) recounts scenarios where the bride should show humility (e.g., enduring beatings from in-laws) to receive blessings, rather than responding in anger.

**K – Key:** The tone of the song is instructive and cautionary. The key is one of advice and moral instruction, stressing values of patience, submission, and respect in marriage.

**I – Instrumentalities:** The instrumentalities here are the song lyrics, sung in a traditional Ilaje language. The song uses direct communication (verbal form) in a performative manner.

**N – Norms:** The norms in this context are those of Ilaje culture, where marital submission and receiving blessings through humility are valued. The song reflects cultural expectations regarding behavior in marriage.

**G – Genre:** The genre is a wedding song that combines elements of proverbs, advice, and blessing. It serves both as a ritualistic performance and a didactic tool.

The song functions as both an instruction and a blessing within the cultural ceremony.

#### **4.2.9 Analysis of Song 9**

**S (Setting):** The song is performed during a wedding ceremony, likely at a traditional Ilaje marriage, where advice and teachings are conveyed to the bride.

**P (Participants):** The primary participants are the bride, the singer (likely an elder or relative), and the community members who are present to witness the ceremony.

**E (Ends):** The goal of the song is to impart important marital advice to the bride, particularly emphasizing the importance of patience, tolerance, and submission in marriage.

**A (Act sequence):** The act involves the elder singing and the bride (and possibly the audience) listening and absorbing the message. The content centers on how the bride should behave in her new home, especially when facing challenges with in-laws.

**K (Key):** The tone of the song is didactic and admonitory, advising the bride to accept and endure the challenges that may arise in her marriage, especially in relation to her husband's family.

**I (Instrumentalities):** The song is delivered orally, likely accompanied by music or chanting, which is common in Ilaje weddings.

**N (Norms):** The cultural norm in this context is to encourage harmony and respect within the marital relationship, especially towards in-laws, and to accept hardships without conflict.

**G (Genres):** The genre is a traditional wedding song with moral undertones, often found in African ceremonies where elders provide guidance to younger generations.

The song emphasizes cultural norms of submission, patience, and respect, which are seen as vital for a successful marriage in Ilaje society.

#### **4.3 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

The analysis of the songs within Ilaje cultural ceremonies reveals how language and music are deeply intertwined with the community's values, social norms, and collective identity. Using the Ethnography of Communication framework, each song reflects specific aspects of Ilaje life and traditions, showcasing communal identity, respect for heritage, and the role of music in marking significant life events. For instance, Song 1 emphasizes the assertion of cultural identity and collective pride through repetition, expressing the community's arrival and presence. Similarly, Song 2 explores the importance of cultural preservation and calls on diaspora members to return and support their homeland, highlighting the community's responsibility toward its cultural continuity.

Songs 3 and 4, focused on naming ceremonies, reflect both the joy of welcoming new life and the spiritual aspect of protecting the child from harm. They show the significance of collective celebrations in reinforcing social and cultural norms, such as fertility and motherhood, which are central to Ilaje society. In wedding-related songs (Songs 7, 8, and 9), the themes of respect, patience, and submission are conveyed as key values for marital success. These songs not only celebrate the couple but also provide moral guidance, especially for the bride, on how to navigate the challenges of marriage. Through these songs, the Ilaje people use music as a tool for cultural transmission, offering both joy and instruction while reinforcing the community's core values.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY, FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION**

#### **5.0 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter attempts to summarize the previous chapters of the study on semantic analysis of songs in Ilaje cultural ceremonies, as well present the findings draw some conclusions and recommendations.

#### **5.1 SUMMARY OF THE STUDY**

This research study was designed to look into the semantic analysis of songs in Ilaje cultural ceremonies. The first chapter of the study focused on the background of the study. It introduced the topic, language of discuss, as well as stating the aim and objectives of the study, research questions, the statement of the research problem, scope of the study, methodology, and the significance of the study. The second chapter reviewed some

relevant literature. The chapter was divided into three main sections, they were: conceptual review, previous studies, and lastly, the concern of the present study. The third chapter looked into the theoretical framework employed for the research which was the "Ethnography of Communication (SPEAKING model)" Theory framework developed by Hymes (1964). The chapter discussed what the theory framework was all about including its working principles, application of the theory, relevance/justification of the theory to the research, and lastly, how the theory can be applied to the analysis of the present study by providing a sample data. The fourth chapter has as its main concern the data presentation and analysis. The chapter concerned itself with the presentation of the data, analysis of the data, and lastly, the discussion of findings.

## **5.2 FINDINGS**

The findings revealed that the songs identified include cultural songs celebrating Ilaje identity, naming ceremony songs celebrating childbirth, and wedding songs offering advice for marital life. Also, cultural songs emphasizes unity, cultural pride, and the importance of preserving Ilaje customs and language. Naming ceremony songs celebrate birth, wish prosperity, and reject misfortune such as childlessness. Wedding ceremony songs offers advice on marital virtues like submission, patience, and tolerance to ensure a successful marriage. Lastly, these songs serve to preserve Ilaje culture, promote unity, and guide individuals through life's milestones. They emphasize the importance of heritage, social cohesion, and moral lessons for a harmonious community and family life.

### **5.3 CONCLUSION**

The study shows that songs in Ilaje cultural ceremonies help preserve their identity and culture. These songs promote unity, celebrate important life events, and teach values like patience, respect, and family harmony. They play an important role in passing down traditions and guiding the community through life's milestones.

### **5.4 RECOMMENDATION**

The researcher recommends further studies in this particular area and any aspect not touched in this study be treated by linguist, scholars or any other researchers who have interest in the semantic analysis of songs in Ilaje cultural ceremonies or any other dialect of Yoruba language.

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