

# AN ANALYSIS OF THEMES AND FUNCTIONS OF ELUGWU EZIKE IGBO FOLKSONGS

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## Abstract

The study analyses Elugwu Ezike Igbo folksongs. The objectives of the study are to categorize Elugwu Ezike Igbo folksongs, identify the functions and thematic features embedded in the selected folksongs. The study is a survey research design with a qualitative paradigm. The study is anchored on Systemic functional linguistic theory. Data for the study was collected through oral interview and participant observation. Journal and dissertations were also consulted as secondary sources of data collection. The data collected were translated from Igbo into English language and analysed descriptively. The findings of the study reveal that Elugwu Ezike Igbo folksongs are categorized into dirges, birth songs, marriage songs, war songs, work songs, cradle songs and lullabies. The findings also reveal that folksongs perform numerous functions like economic, entertainment, socio-cultural, magico-religious and educational functions. The findings further reveal that repetitions, rhythm, personification, metaphor, assonance and consonance constituted the prominent stylistic features embedded in Elugwu Ezike Igbo folksongs.

**Keywords:** Folksongs, Systemic functional linguistic theory, Elugwu Ezike Igbo

## Introduction

Folksong is one aspect of oral literature. Oral literature is an art that is transmitted orally or by the word of mouth from one generation

to another. It is one of the most vibrant aspects of the people's cultural heritage. It is intricately related to the social environment of the people who create and perform it. As a creative expression of a people's culture, it manipulates language to express people's value, tradition, beliefs and entire worldview. All cultures are dynamic; they all develop alongside the progress of history. Oral literature is a powerful tool for facilitating cultural dynamism. Oral literature is both a reservoir and a creative expression of cultural values; hence it is the vehicle of propelling the society along its moral path. It is an art based on the cultural aesthetics of a people, so that besides giving a society a sense of direction, it responds to human need to appreciate beauty, and in this way contributes towards making the world a better place to live in. This world is a complex phenomenon and human beings need to understand it in order to build a comfortable niche for themselves. Oral literature helps people to understand their natural environment and their place within this environment. By social and psychological levels, the art helps human beings to develop a sense of belonging in their day-to-day existence in the otherwise mysterious world. Folksong is the song in the traditional style of a community.

According to Giddon (2014), folksongs belong to oral tradition and passed from generation to generation by the word of mouth. He goes further to elucidate that folksong is based on people's belief system. Folksongs are composed and sung within a particular community which has a common belief or culture. As a result, people's beliefs or issues at hand make artists to compose songs. Folksongs are sung in the language spoken by the community. Folksongs draw their content from the immediate environment. Culture differs from one community to another and it is the chief determiner of behaviour in any society. The beliefs, customs, traditions, technology of society in question, social organization, all contribute to the cultural concepts of a society (Elaine, 2001). In Elugwu Ezike Igbo community many of

these elements of culture are expressed through folksongs and in their performances. The songs of Elugwu Ezike people are strongly influenced by aspects of Elugwu Ezike culture.

The area of this study is Elugwu Ezike. Elugwu Ezike is located in Igbo Eze Local Government Area of Enugu State. It is bordered in the North by Adupi of Benue State, on the South by Iheakpu Awka and Iheaka in Igbo Eze South Local Government Area of Enugu State, on the East by Amalla and Obollo Afor in Udemu Local Government Area of Enugu State and on the West by Itchi and Umadu in Igbo Eze South Local Government Area of Enugu State. Elugwu Ezike people like most other ethnic group in Nigeria, use folksongs to connect to and express their social, cultural values, attitudes, beliefs, worldviews, experiences, philosophies and aspirations. These social and cultural elements form the thematic framework for Elugwu Ezike folksongs. Many Elugwu Ezike folksongs deal with themes which are universal such as human nature and human relationships. These includes relationship in marriage, kingship as well as between individuals of differing social and economic status. There are also songs in which the issues expressed are not necessarily peculiar to Elugwu Ezike people but perhaps receive more attention from Elugwu Ezike singers. A case in point is the idea of making moral commentaries on social issues and problems such as theft, incest, greed, laziness, selfishness and political dictatorship. Some Elugwu Ezike folksongs also focus on validation, upholding, commending and encouraging patterns of behaviours and attitudes which are culturally acceptable in the community such as hard work, honesty, generosity, hospitality, kindness, love and marital fidelity.

There are Elugwu Ezike songs which the makers compose and sing mainly for the purpose of abusing or criticizing individuals, or groups for saying or doing things which are socially and culturally unacceptable in Elugwu Ezike community. Usually, members of the society will endorse the folksinger's song because people often consider

a folksinger to be sensitive, observant, conscientious and courageous individuals who can effectively act as the mouthpiece and the advocate or the attorney for members of his or her society. Usually, it is the behaviours and attitudes which are usually and culturally unacceptable in Elugwu Ezike community that are condemned, criticized, ridiculed or protested through the media of songs of abuse, satirical song and protest songs. Songs are artistic representation of societal concern and primarily evoke the audience's emotion thus allowing the community to reject or accept behaviour. Our major concern in this study is to document, categorize, and identify the functions embedded in the selected Elugwu Ezike folksongs. The study, therefore examines the context, themes and functions of the folksongs in Elugwu Ezike community.

Elugwu Ezike folksongs are sung during special occasions such as birth, during festival, political rallies, funerals, traditional marriage as well as at work places. The artists use the folksongs to pass across messages, communicate the community feelings and concerns. In order to pass the message vividly, artists have to understand the aesthetic strategies which involve the use of stylistic features. From the available literature review of Elugwu Ezike folksongs, we can deduce that not much serious scholarly work have been done on Elugwu Ezike folksongs. The available sketchy works on folksongs are conducted in other African communities. The present study in Elugwu Ezike folksong goes a step further to incorporate folksongs in Elugwu Ezike to widen the narrow studies that exist presently in Igbo folksongs. Moreover, the current times seem to have alienated the younger generation from the traditions of their ancestors. For instance, Elugwu Ezike youths do not seem to take interest in the Igbo folksongs but have opted for modern global songs and devices such as reggae music and hip hop that have distanced them from their traditional roots. In addition, folksongs in Elugwu Ezike have not been given any serious

literary analysis by scholars. It is feared that the younger generation's drifting away from the village to the cities for greener pasture will make the performance of Elugwu Ezike folksongs to go extinct in near future. The study is primarily focused on the context, themes and functions of folksongs to Elugwu Ezike people.

The data for this study were collected from a total number of five groups' performers of folksongs in the villages that make up Elugwu Ezike community. Three groups of women performers and two groups of men performers were used for the study. The choice of these groups of performers was motivated by the level of their popularity and knowledge of Elugwu Ezike folksongs. Oral interview and participant observation constituted the instrument for data collection. The utilised data were elicited from both primary and secondary sources. Primary sources of data collection included oral interview and participant observation while secondary sources of data collection included written sources such as journal articles, dissertation and so on.

After assembling the folksongs, the researchers made effort to critically read and identify the context, themes, stylistics features and functions of the folksongs.

### **Literature Review of Previous Studies**

Quite a good number of studies have been carried out in the field of folksongs in Africa. Notable ones among them include Abong (1987), Akanwi (1986), and Chenenye (2017) to mention but a few. Abong (1987) conducted a study on a literary analysis of Kedjom folksongs in Yaoundé, Akanwi (1986) looked at satire in Bafut folksongs in Yaoundé while Chenenye (2017) examined the stylistic features of kabra folksongs. These scholars' interests range from context, themes and functions of folksongs in various African communities.

Ngwitefem (1997) wrote a dissertation titled “a literary analysis of satirical songs among the Nweh of Cameroon”. The objective of the study was to examine the form and content of Nweh satirical songs as well as their role in Nweh society. The study was qualitative research with survey research design. Data for the study was collected through oral interview and non-participant observation. The study was premised on functionalism theory. Data collected for study reveals that certain themes in the songs aim at instructing, advising, criticizing as well as entertaining.

Onyieji (2004) looked at the Igbo rural women in Africa as creative personalities in musical processing of socio-economic solidarity. The objective of the study was to examine the contribution of Igbo rural women in south-eastern part of Nigeria. Data for the study was collected through oral interview and participant observation. The study was qualitative research employing survey research design. The findings of the study musical entertainment for comprehensive social interaction in conformity to cultural norms and values but also moral, ethical and cultural education to the entire community through the musical arts.

Iwokitok (2009) analysed lullaby songs in traditional African communities. The objectives of the study are to examine the form, content and functions of some Nigerian lullabies thereby revealing their inevitable relevance to the overall realization of an African cultural continuity, language growth and literary experience. Data for the study was collected through oral interview from elderly women and babysitters. The study employed survey research design. The study also used qualitative research approach; the findings of the study revealed that Nigerian folksongs discuss subjects bordering on nature and humanity among other issues. Lullabies are used to communicate social values and condemn vices where they are found in any traditional African community. Lullabies serve as a medium through which the

singers express their feelings. Nigerian lullabic songs provide a vent for the singers and become a widower into the cultures, values, and languages in Nigeria.

Ndimofor (2011) carried out a study on the folksong and cultural elements of Akum people. This study investigated the folksong of the Akum people of the North West Region of Republic of Cameroon. The study also investigated the cultural elements in the folksongs of the Akum people. Data for study was collected through oral interview and non-participant observation. The findings of study reveal that the Akum folksong is a forum for expression of devices, ideas and opinion. It can be used to educate and abuse or amuse people. In nutshell, the knowledge, belief, art, law, morals, customs, and other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of a given society can be learned through the folksongs.

Nnamaru (2014) examined the role of folk music in traditional African society using Igbo experience. The objective of the study was to identify, classify and highlight the functions of Igbo folksongs. Data for the study was collected via oral interview. The study was a survey research design with qualitative paradigm. The finding of the study reveals that various stages of life cycle of an individual and the life cycle of the society are all marked with music. Furthermore, the study found that the Igbo people did not derive entertainment from books rather they developed and derived joy from imagination through oral narratives including traditional (folk) music and dance.

Ihedigbo (2017) analysed the theme and style in Igbo birth songs. The objective of the study was to examine the linguistic and paralinguistic features used in expressing birth song performances in Igbo land. The study adopted functionalist and the contextual theories. The major source of data collection for this study was fieldwork. The findings of the study show that metaphor, euphemism, parallelism, borrowed words, idiophones, imagery and symbolism features

prominently in Igbo birth songs. The study also shows that Igbo birth songs features major themes as prayer, blessings, responsibility, vulgarity and admonition.

Chinenye (2017) looked at the stylistic analysis of kabra folksongs. This study sought to identify the prominent features of style in Kabra folksongs and how they affect the interpretation of Kabra folksongs in the framework of prototype theory and relevance theory. Through oral interview to the respondents and analysis of style kabra folksongs, the researcher found that the prominent features of style in Kabra's folksongs are: neologism, code-switching, symbolism, metaphor, and allegory. The interpretation of Kabras folksongs varies depending on gender and age of the people in the society. The prominent features of style in Kabra folksongs are displacement or substitutional. Euphemism is also employs as the artists struggle to get the best word to replace the taboo word. This study is similar to the present one in the sense that it addresses the functions of kabra's folksongs which also is one of the focuses of the present study. However, it differs from the from the present study in the sense that while Cheneye's study focused on Kabras community, the present study is focused on Elugwu Ezike community in Enugu state of Nigeria and employs different theoretical approach.

The present study is primarily focused on the sociolinguistics analysis of Elugwu Ezike Igbo folksongs in Igbo Eze Local Government Area of Enugu State, Nigeria. The study seeks to identify various contexts in which Elugwu Ezike Igbo folksongs can exist and be performed and themes of folksongs as well as the functions of the folksongs in Elugwu Ezike community.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study was guided by the systematic functional linguistics theory propounded by Halliday (1994) in order to achieve the stated

objective. The Halliday's systematic functional linguistic theory is a theory which proves to be a powerful concept for studying texts. The theory is more interested in the manner by which language is utilized in social settings, so as to attain a specific target. This theory is designed to explain the interrelationship between culture, society and language use. Equally, the theory asserts that every language use plays an active role in shaping the social and cultural context in which it operates. The textual metafunction of SFL is utilised for the analysis of data in this article. The textual metafunction shows how language is used to organise the message into an unfolding language and fit it with the other messages (Thompson, 2013). Thus, textual metafunction uncovers how writers or speakers build their messages in a way that makes them flow naturally into the unfolding language event. This part of SFL aims to determine how authors structure the message they want to convey the reader. Theme and Rheme are two functional clauses of textual metafunction, here the clauses relate to another message while still being considered a message in one context.

Thus, this theoretical framework suits this study because the folksingers use language to communicate to the society the messages contained in their folksongs through formation of various themes. The poet also uses language to ridicule people whose behaviours are at variance with the society's norms and value system. In doing these, the singers use language to shape the social and cultural life of the community through linguistic and paralinguistics features embedded in the folksongs.

### **Data Presentation and Analysis**

The data collected from the fieldwork are presented in this section and are analysed based on the different categories of Igbo folksongs in their various contexts. It also analyses the themes and functions of the selected folksongs with their performances as discussed and exemplified below.

**Dirge songs:** These are songs used in consoling, counselling or encouraging a deceased family. There are songs used for consoling and encouraging a deceased family. The dirges remind the living in this earth that eventually everybody must die. Ugonna (1985:1) stressed that “man is born to die”. We do not need theories of any kind to prove that death is awaiting all of us. Through folksong deeds of death are revealed as we could see in the dirge songs numbers 1 and 2 “*Ọnwụ bụ onye ohi*” and “*dibe dibe*” respectively. The funeral songs of Elugwu Ezike people portray the characteristic of funeral songs, even a stranger dictates them. The funeral where ritual will be performed; the ritual songs will be sung and accompanied with the instruments. The funeral songs progress in various stages. The singer sings the songs of invocation and supplication. In African societies, they believe so much in divinities and folksong is performed for them during funerals and rituals. There is a belief that the soul of the dead person is welcomed or received by the spirit of the ancestors. There folksongs are performed according to the status of the person. African gods-are believed to be ardent music lovers. In Elugwu Ezike community, funeral ceremonies are never done without song suitable for it. Song number 1 is a typical example, “*Ọnwụ bụ abalị di egwu*”, song number 2 “*dibe dibe*” among others.

### Song One

Ọnwụ bụ abalịdị egwu	-	death is a thief
Ọnwụ bụ abalịdị egwu	-	death is a thief
Ọnwụ bụ abalịdịegwu	-	death is a thief
O zuru ọ gbalaga	-	it steals and runs away

### Song Two

Dibe dibe	-	be patience, be patience
Dibe, dibe, ndidi ka mma	-	be patience, be patience, for patience is better.
Onye o mere ya dibe oo	-	to whomever it happens let him be patience,

ndidi ka mma - for patience is better.

**Birth Songs:** When a baby is born, the mother of the baby intones a birth song thereby inviting the women in the community to her house. On arrival, they dance and praise God for the new arrival. They also give such gifts as money and food items to her. The songs No. 3 “*o bughị ma nwa*”, song No 4 “*Anyị bialu ọnu nwa*”, song No 5 “*Ọ nulu akwa nwa*”.

**Song Three:**

*Ọ bughị ma nwa* - if not child  
 Call: *o bughị ma nwa* - if not child  
 Refrain: *onye ga-enye m* - who would give me?  
 Call: *ukwu jịjị* - George wrapper  
 Refrain: *onye ga-enye m* - who would give me?  
 Velvet - velvet

**Song Four:**

*Anyi bialu ọnu nwa* - we have come to rejoice  
 over a child  
*Anyị bialu ọnu nwa* - we have come to rejoice  
 over a child  
*Onweghi ife yili nwa* - nothing is greater than a child  
*Ugo agbala ekene gi oo* - tall eagle I am greeting you  
*Onweghi ife yili nwa* - nothing is greater than a child  
*Rekodo na ekene gi oo* - record is greeting you  
*Onweghi ife yili nwa* - nothing is greater than a child

**Song Five:**

*Ọ nulu akwa nwa* - whoever hears the cry of a child  
*Ọ nulu akwa eee a eee* - we have come to rejoice over a  
 child  
*Ọ nulu akwa bja ngwangwa* - nothing is greater than a child  
*Ọ buru ofu onye nwe nwa* - for no person owns a child

**Marriage Songs:** During the period of marriage, a kind of music played lures all the visitors and relatives into singing and dancing. Marriage ceremony in Elugwu Ezike local Government Area of Enugu state is very big one that attracts different kinds of marriage songs from the folk and different groups from both sides of the bride and bridegroom. During the period of marriage, a kind of music played lures all the visitors and relatives into singing and dancing. The folk of maiden who is to get married will sing folksongs that will express what is happening and what marriage is all about. The tune sung in unison. The folksongs performed during marriage ceremonies in Elugwu Ezike communities have song texts in which comments are made in subjects of general interest. Most of the folksongs serve as pieces of advice to the new couple and aspiring couples that might be there. The marriage songs are mainly rendered by the maiden folk. They sing throughout both congratulation songs and praise songs. They break, eat and drink. When the ceremony is over, farewell songs will be sung to see the couple off and celebration moves to bridegroom's family. Example are songs No. 6 "Ọ naa be di ya", song No 7 "Meghele ya ụzọ", song No 8 "Chinye ya igodo".

**Song Six:**

Ọ naa be di ya	-	she has gone to her husband's house)
Ọ naa	-	she has gone
Ọ naa be di ya	-	she has gone to her husband's house
Ọ naa	-	she has gone
Ọ naa be di ya	-	she has gone to her husband's house
Ngọzi a naa	-	Ngozi has gone
Ọ naa be di ya	-	she has gone to her husband's house
Ọ naa	-	she has gone
Ọ naa be di ya	-	she has gone to her husband's house

**Song Seven:**

Meghele ya ʊzɔ	-	open the door for her
Call: Meghele ya ʊzɔ	-	open the door for her
Refrain: Meghele ya ʊzɔ ɔ natago	-	open the door for her she has
Call: Meghele ya ʊzɔ	-	open the door for her
Refrain: Meghele ya ʊzɔ ɔ natago	-	open the door for her she has returned

**Song Eight:**

Chinye ya Igodo	-	give her the key
Call: Chinye ya Igodo	-	give her the key
Refrain: Chinye ya Igodo na	-	give her the key she has returned
ɔ natago	-	she has returned
Call: Chinye ya Igodo	-	give her the key
Refrain: Chinye ya Igodo na	-	give her the key she has returned
ɔ natago	-	returned

**Cradle Songs:** These are songs used by the baby sitter to lure her baby to sleep or to stop the baby from crying. Cradle songs are used by baby-sitter to lure her baby to sleep or to stop the baby from crying. The baby nurse or the nursing mother keeps on singing lullabies to lure and rock the baby to the rhythm of the songs until the baby stops crying or goes fast asleep. Mothers also use cradle songs to convey matters of personal interest, for reflection and commentary apart from making the baby happy. For instance, women in the polygamous houses always refer to their mates in cradle songs especially where the relationship is not smooth. Such lullabies are framed in such a way that shows triumph

over the envy of a jealous rival, the relation whether good or bad is also incorporated into cradle songs. Example are Song No. 9 “Nwatakiri mechie ɔnu ebezina akwa”, Song No. 10 “onye tili nwa akwa”, Song No. 11 “onye na onye jere be enyi ya ɔma”.

**Song Nine:**

- |                                   |   |   |
|-----------------------------------|---|---|
| Nwatakiri mechie ɔnu ebezina akwa | - | little child close your mouth and stop crying |
| Nwatakiri mechie ɔnu ebezina akwa | - | little child close your mouth and stop crying |
| Na akwa adiɔ mma obube            | - | because crying is not good                    |
| Nwa obele, nwa obele,             | - | little one, little one, smaller, smaller      |

**Song Ten:**

- |                                |   |   |
|--------------------------------|---|---|
| onye tili nwa akwa             | - | who beat the child that is crying           |
| Onye tili nwa na-ebe akwa      | - | who beat the child that is crying?          |
| Egbe tili nwa na-ebe akwa      | - | The eagle beat the child                    |
| Weta uzuzu, weta ose           | - | bring some uziza (spices) bring some pepper |
| Weta amala ngolongo ofe        | - | bring amala ngolongo soup                   |
| ka umu nnu nu lachaa ya        | - | so that the birds will lick it              |
| ka okpo otutu kpogbuo fa       | - | okpo otutu will kill them                   |
| egbe o egbe ɔzɔegbe o egbe ɔzɔ |   |   |

**Song Eleven:**

- |  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| onye na onye jere be enyi ya ɔma       | - | who and who are visiting their good friends |
| Call: onye na onye jere be enyi ya ɔma | - | who and who are visiting their good friends |

Refrain: meleleme	-	meleleme
Call: Adaobi jere be enyi ya ọma	-	Adaobi visiting her good friends
Refrain: meleleme	-	meleleme
Call: Chili isi ji	-	hold head of yam in her hard
Refrain: n'aka n'aka		
Call: Chili isi ede	-	hold head of cocoyam in her hard
Refrain: n'aka n'aka		
Call: Nwa ọkụkọ	-	chicken
Refrain: ologholo	-	ologholo
Call: Mkpulu okwe	-	stalk of plant
Refrain: nza nza	-	thin, thin
Call: nwata ji ya amụ elu	-	child use it to learn how to climb
Refrain: meleleme	-	meleleme
Call: ọlịdata ọlịgolu kpọ ya	-	climb up and climb down
Kpọọ ya meleleme	-	call it meleleme
Refrain: meleleme me eee	-	meleleme me ee
meleleme me eee	-	meleleme me ee

**War Songs:** These are songs people sing while going to war. These songs act as stimulants and energizer. These are songs people sing while going to war. The people of Elugwu Ezike also use war songs when there is land dispute between the villages and boundary towns. These songs act as stimulants and energizer. The songs are blended in a systematic way and in rhythmic pattern that will suit the movement of the warriors. Elugwu Ezike war songs may remind the people of the past havoc the war might have done to them and this will annoy them more

and make them fight like wounded lions and not look back. When they are going, they sing hot was songs to spur them into action. Though the songs they that all the gods in Elugwu Ezike are going with them. When they win the war, they come back with songs that appease all the gods as they sing prayerful songs to them. Example, song No 12 “onye akpakwana agụ aka n’odu”, song No 13 “nzogbu”.

**Song Twelve:**

Onye akpakwana agụ aka n’odu	-	you dare not touch the lion’s tail
onye akpakwana agụ aka n’odu	-	you dare not touch the lion’s tail
ma ọ dị ndu ma ọ nwụlu anwu	-	whether it is alive or dead
onye akpakwana agụ aka n’odu	-	you dare not touch the lion’s tail
ma ọ dị ndu ma ọ nwụlu anwu	-	whether it is alive or dead
onye akpakwana agụ aka n’odu	-	you dare not touch the lion’s tail

**Song Thirteen:**

Nzogbu	-	smash people to death, smash people to death
Nzogbu nzogbu	-	smash people to death, smash people to death
Enyi mba enyi	-	elephant town elephant
Nzogbu	-	smash people to death
Enyi mba enyi	-	elephant town elephant
Nzogbu nzogbu	-	smash people to death, smash people to death

Enyi mba enyi	-	elephant town elephant
Zogbuo nwoke	-	smash man to death
Enyi mba enyi	-	elephant town elephant
Zogbuo nwanyị	-	smash woman to death
Enyi mba enyi	-	elephant town elephant
Nzogbu	-	smash people to death
Enyi mba enyi	-	elephant town elephant

**Moonlight Songs:** Moonlight play songs are songs which are sung at moonlight in the village squares where moonlight plays are normally staged. This takes place after dinner when moonlight is in the sky. Children, youth, men and women normally come out from their respective houses for the moonlight for the moonlight plays at their leisure time before retiring to bed. They usually perform a lot of activities with moonlight songs. The men and women usually amuse themselves through story-telling while sitting around the fire or without fire. Moonlight songs instil a sense of cooperation in the children and also prevent or reduce boredom in the community. In fact, there is no specific time for moonlight play songs. But the first person to come out from his/her house will make a call that will attract or draw people from their houses to come for the moonlight play songs at the village square. The songs are normally accompanied with hand-clapping. Some of the youths will engage themselves in wrestling and so on. Examples, song No. 14 “kpukpumkpu ogele”, song No. 15 “onye elela anya n’azụ”, song No. 16 “Akpankolo Akpankolo” song No. 17 “okereke okereke dududu yaya”, song No. 18 “kụaranụ nwa ngwere aka”.

#### Song fourteen

kpukpumkpu ogele	-	kpukpumkpu ogele
kpukpumkpu ogele	-	kpukpumkpu ogele
ogene, ogene	-	ogene, ogene

kpukpumpku ogele	-	kpukpumpku ogele
ogene, ogene	-	ogene, ogene
onye je-ekpu ogene?	-	Who would crouch/stoop to dance?
ogene, ogene	-	ogene, ogene
Eze je-ekpu ogene	-	Eze it is your turn
ogene, ogene	-	ogene, ogene
Ike je-ekpu ogene	-	Ike it is your turn
ogene, ogene	-	ogene, ogene

**Song Fifteen:**

onye elela anya n'azu	-	don't turn to look bac)
onye enena anya n'azu	-	don't turn to look back
Mmɔnwu anyi n'eje n'ilo	-	because our masquerade is moving outside
onye enena anya n'azu	-	don't turn to look back
Mmɔnwu anyi n'eje n'ilo	-	because our masquerade is moving outside
onye nee anya n'azu	-	A person that looks back
Mmɔnwu anyi je apia ya utali	-	will be flogged by the masquerade.

**Song Sixteen:**

Akpankolo Akpankolo	-	(Akpankolo Akpankolo)
Akpankolo kpankolo	-	Akpankolo kpankolo
Udu mu o ogene	-	my pot -ogene
Etukwuo Ayoo	-	stooping down - ayoo
Onye o malu dugha, yagha	-	a person that fails will go, yagha
yagha dughu yaaaa	-	yagha dughu yaaaa

**Song Seventeen:**

okereke okereke dududu yaya	-	okereke dududu yaya
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okereke okereke dududu yaya -	okereke okereke dududu yaya
okereke okereke dududu yaya -	okereke okereke dududu yaya
kweru ọ ga na-aga, ọ ga na-aga -	let us agree that we shall be
ngwom moving	
ọ ga na-aga ngwom -	we shall be moving ngwom .

### Song Eighteen:

kụaranụ nwa ngwere aka -	let us clap for a lizard
kụaranụ nwa ngwere aka elentee -	let us clap for a lizard,
elentee	
kụaranụ nwa ngwere aka elentee -	let us clap for a lizard,
elentee	
nwa ngwere e jeghi ije ọ gbara -	a lizard that does not
	walk but runs

**Work Songs:** Work songs are like stimulants to labourers. They are songs that accompany work. Work songs are like stimulants to labourers. These songs occupy a special place in the life of Elugwu Ezike workers to whom work is thing of joy and a pleasure. They have a great number of work songs, such as songs for hoeing, for harvesting, for communal labour among others. The contents of the majority of the songs reflect important moments with which the Elugwu Ezike people work and also the enthusiasm with which the Elugwu Ezike people work and their attitude towards work. The groups of harvest songs give us a very complete picture of the manner in which the work of gathering in the harvest is organized. Farmers stay longer at work sometimes because of the songs used is carefully selected to stimulate workers into action. Men clearing roads always make use of work songs while working. In Elugwu Ezike community men, women and youth hardly do their communal work without work songs. Singing while working is mostly observed among the people of Elugwu Ezike community.

Typically, examples are song No. 19 “Anyị na-akọ ede” and song No. 20 “Elo m oo, Elo m oo”.

**Song Nineteen:**

Anyị na-akọ ede	-	we plant cocoyam
Anyị na-akọ ede	-	we plant cocoyam
Ede maka mma ọkụkọ	-	we drive joy in planting it
Anyị na-akọ ede	-	we plant cocoyam
Ede maka mma ọkụkọ	-	we drive joy in planting it
Ndi be anyị na-akọ ede	-	our people plant cocoyam
Ede maka mma ọkụkọ	-	we drive joy in planting it

**Song Twenty:**

Elo m oo, Elo m oo	-	my mushroom, my mushroom
Elo m oo, Elo m oo	-	my mushroom, my mushroom
Elo m kpala aka n’ala fote	-	I got by touching the ground
Elo m togbulu n’ukwu ose	-	the mushroom I kept under the pepper plant
Elo m kpala aka n’ala fote	-	I got by touching the ground
Elo m oo, Elo m oo	-	my mushroom, my mushroom
Elo m kpala aka n’ala fote	-	I got by touching the ground

**Functional dimension of Elugwu Ezike Folksongs**

This section presents the functions of Elugwu Ezike folksongs. Function is the term for what something does, what it accomplishes, and the social purpose it serves. With specific reference to song, it denotes its meaning and the Elugwu Ezike folksong is to consider its function for the performers, the audience and the society as a whole. It is the contribution of Elugwu Ezike folksongs to the social life of the Elugwu Ezike people that is the main focus of this part. Assessment of the entire Elugwu Ezike folksongs reveals that the songs are performed for various reasons. Many of the Elugwu Ezike folksongs tend to be interrelated. The functions are analysed based on the following

categories: sociocultural, educational, magico-religious, political, entertainment, aesthetic and economic.

### **Socio-cultural Functions**

The sense in which song is a socializer is seen in the way listeners derive pleasure from song as art, and from the way they obtain information intended to communicate in them a sense of the social fabric from which the song is created. Many Elugwu Ezike folksongs embody information about Elugwu Ezike people's pattern of behavior, beliefs and sociocultural values. Elugwu Ezike folksong performance is more than just an occasion for singing and dancing. It is in a very real sense, an embodiment of the social life of the performers and their audiences. In songs, individuals or groups express their feelings, experiences and idea about life, ranging from the extremes of exuberance to dejection, resistance and melancholy. Elugwu Ezike songs also serve as convenient means of mirroring, reifying, validating, reinforcing and for exerting social pressure in others whether equals or superior, who attempt to deviate from sociocultural conventions with which they are fully familiar. Individuals or groups who are hurting express and release their feelings of the tension, anger, frustration, abuse and expression in songs of protest about their plight in songs. Folksong also spurs workers who are in physical labour such as cultivating, weeding, hoeing, harvesting or pounding to work harder. Folksong performance offers an ethnographically distinct site for cultural production, constitutive and revelatory of multiple points of suture that informs an individual's sense of self in society. Thus, folksong performances in any form in cultural contexts create a need in performers to assume a responsibility towards their audiences, thus they have to display a level of competency which rests on the knowledge and ability to speak in socially appropriate ways. For performers to gain that competency they have to be submerged in the knowledge and ideology surrounding the lore they perform. Since folklore emerges out of life

and living life in socially specified ways, it is not erroneous to assume that much of what is performed on stage is a depiction of community's belief and value systems.

### **Educational Functions**

Another function of Elugwu Ezike folksong is that which it plays in education. In Elugwu Ezike community, the information embodied in folksong is highly regarded in its own right. Most Elugwu Ezike folksong are based on life stories and events, hence they are regarded as historically true and educational because the songs deal with topical issues, they contain valuable educational tips for listeners. Elugwu Ezike folksongs mirror and validate Elugwu Ezike sociocultural values and beliefs; it contains practical rules for harmonious living for the guidance of listeners. Funeral songs reinforce truths about life and human nature, especially the inevitability of death. Children's rhymes and game songs inform and prepare children for a successful adult life. Political party campaign songs inform and educate voters on party manifestos and programmes. Satirical songs and songs of abuse often deal with ethical and unethical conduct. Religious songs express, enhance and codify beliefs and safeguard and enforce morality.

### **Magico-religious Functions**

Religious beliefs are expressed through musical prayer, myth and legend set to music. Religious songs enhance the performer's control of power, especially supernatural power. The control of power is often achieved through songs of supplication, magic songs for curing, hunting and many other activities which require supernatural assistance. The expression of belief systems and the achievement of control of supernatural power are key functions of religious songs. Funeral songs express Elugwu Ezike religious beliefs such as the inevitability of death, the transience of life, the existence of life after death. When singing songs at funeral occasions, the folksong singers

sing songs that will remind the mourners and other members of their audience of the inevitability of death in human life cycle, the transience of life, the continuity of life after death, and the fact that the living and their deceased loved ones will meet again someday at the feet of God.

### **Political Functions**

Folksong often plays a strong part in politics in Africa, especially in Elugwu Ezike community. Politicians use the occasions of folk music performance to employ musicians for their own purposes to demonstrate their power and control over their subjects and to propagate their political interests and political agendas. For instance, during political campaigns, many Elugwu Ezike politicians organize folk music performances and use the music to campaign for elections. When politician win elections, they organize Elugwu Ezike folk music performances to celebrate their victory, inviting folk musicians to perform music for them and their supporters.

### **Entertainment Functions**

Another function of Elugwu Ezike folksong is simply that of entertainment. Enjoyments are always at the forefront of folksong performance. For instance, the music of worship is not cultivated merely out of a dread of God or the gods and ancestors but because it is emotionally satisfying. Aesthetic pleasure is looked for even in the dirge. Songs are meant not only for emotional expressions but also for reinforcing conformity to societal norms, validation of social institutions and religious rituals and symbolic representation. For many Elugwu Ezike folksong fans, what interests them most during folksong performance is the aspect of entertainment. As an entertainment art, folksong performances provide cathartic release and serve as a defence against dehumanization through the expressive sharing of experience.

### **Aesthetic Functions**

The aesthetic aspect of Elugwu Ezike folksongs need not be categorized in the reductive terms. It enhances for instances, the delight of the audience in the beauty of the diction, the delineation of characters, humorous ridicule of people's follies and the evocation of people's virtues and achievements. Even the didactic, simple and communicative nature of the songs, their sense of humour and the use of beautiful imagery taken from Elugwu Ezike environment contribute in making Elugwu Ezike folksong performances pleasurable, satisfying, entertaining and affective. The beauty of the song lies in the language and melody. The aspect of play on sounds comes out in the uses of onomatopoeia and in alliteration, assonances, rhyme and rhythm. As well, there are songs in which the words are not expressly meant for semantic communication but more as artistic expressions. The powerful aesthetics are derived especially in the imagery. Powerful imagery is considered to be the source of a good song because it provides better communication than prosaic language.

### **Economic Functions**

Elugwu Ezike folksongs are economically significant. Elugwu Ezike folksong singers who are invited to perform music at social occasions such as weddings, festivals, and political conventions are often rewarded for their performances. However, it is important to note that the economic function of folksongs especially in Elugwu Ezike is not restricted to direct monetary values. The most visible economic benefit is the material gains which the musicians receive for their performances. They combine the job of performing folksongs with farming because the money and the materials they get from performing music is usually not enough to support them and their families.

### **Summary of Findings and Conclusion**

The findings of the study reveal that Elugwu Ezike folksongs are categorized into dirge, birth songs, cradle songs, work songs, moonlight songs, war songs, and marriage songs among others. Each context of the situation provides the type of folksong sung by the folksingers. The study further reveals that Elugwu Ezike folksongs perform socio-cultural, educational, magico-religion, political, entertainment, aesthetic and economic functions to the society. Folksong is an indispensable component of African culture. There are songs for every activity, from funeral songs to songs for childbirth. There are also songs for work and play. Some songs are meant for adults while some others are for children. Elugwu Ezike is in rich folksong performance and if well harnessed and plasticized will help in no small measure to mould the children of Elugwu Ezike into reputable men and women. The folksong is a forum for the expression of diverse ideas and opinions. It can be used to educate and to abuse or amuse people. The knowledge, belief, art, lair, morals, customs and other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of a given society, can be learned through the folksong. Besides, the centre of interest in the folksong is on rhythm and the message conveyed. Rhythm in the folksong is usually kept alive by drum beatings, hand clapping, the striking of the metallic gong and wind instruments. The Elugwu Ezike folksong goes with performance which is usually dancing. It is impossible to think of folksong without the element of dance or performance. The transmission of the folksong is largely by word of mouth in all societies lacking a writing system. This implies that the technicalities of compositions and structures are equally transmitted and taught in a similar manner.

### **Recommendations**

We recommend that the Elugwu Ezike people should make more efforts in revamping their folksongs which are almost

disappearing without trace. It is important for them to do so with immediate effect because these songs are disappearing with some important aspects of their culture in them. The older generation should teach the younger generation the songs they inherited from their father's generation and those they created during their epoch. We equally recommend folklorist, literary artists and researchers in humanities studies to embark on new methods of oral tradition at the dawn of globalization. Much remains to be done on the Elugwu Ezike folksong in particular and her oral literature in general. Future researchers should make further studies by examining other genres of the oral literature of the Elugwu Ezike people like myths, proverbs, riddles, etc. It is important for future researchers too to carry out a literary analysis of the Elugwu Ezike folksongs so that it can be taught as oral poetry in secondary school.

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