

THE ELEMENTS OF DRAMA IN IGBA NKWU: A TRADITIONAL WEDDING CEREMONY AMONG THE IGBO OF SOUTHEAST NIGERIA.

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Abstract

This study explores the elements of drama in Igbankwu wedding ceremony among the Igbo of southeast Nigeria. The objectives of the study are to showcase the dramatic and literary elements of Igbankwu traditional wedding ceremony among the Igbo people of southeast Nigeria and how important they are in responding to social issues in the community. The study adopted a survey research design. The study is qualitative research with a descriptive paradigm. The study is premised on performance theory propounded by Schechner (2009). The data for the study was collected through observation, interviews and active participation. Data collected were analyzed descriptively. The findings of the study affirm the existence of drama in Igbankwu, a traditional wedding ceremony among the Igbo people. Also, the following elements of drama were identified in igbankwu traditional wedding ceremony among Igbo people: plot, song and dance, costume, makeup, music, language, setting, performers, theme, character and characterization. It was also observed that education and religion are aspects of modernization that has affected the traditional wedding ceremony among the Igbo people both positively and negatively.

Key words: Drama, element of drama, Igbankwu, ritual performance and traditional ceremony.

Introduction

Traditional drama is a performance which includes ritual performance, masquerade performances, traditional music and dance, folklore sessions especially at moonlight nights, festivals and wrestling contests (Mitchell, 2006). All these are aspects of dramatic culture. However, European and highly Europeanized Africans do not accept them as drama because they believe Africa had no traditional drama before the arrival of the Europeans in Africa. Igbankwu, a traditional wedding ceremony among the Igbo people is an example of a traditional performance. Therefore, this study seeks to explore the dramatic elements and literariness in igbankwu despite the fact that some scholars such as Finnegan (1970), Echeruo (1981), Eneke (1981) and Soyinka (1976) argued that it is neither dramatic nor literature.

Igbankwu is an Igbo traditional wedding performed to transform an individual from being single to married (husband and wife). It is a highly regarded ceremony that is practiced by Igbo speakers as it is believed to be an avenue through which the family lineage is perpetuated. As a result, it is expected that after the union, the husband and wife will procreate and thus keep the family name alive. It is a form of ritual drama as it is based on the culture of the people. It occurs among the Igbo people as they share their beliefs, values, interests and a common history.

Igbankwu is a form of ritual drama. Van Gennep (1909) defines ritual drama as rites which accompany every change of place, state, social pattern or age. Igbankwu wedding ceremony qualifies as a ritual drama because it changes the status of an individual from a state of being single to a state of being husband or wife. The importance of ritual is to restore, reinforce or direct identity. It strengthens the place of the individual in the society. Ritual is relevant to this study as in the performance of this marriage; it not only defines the people but also brings people together in celebration.

Indigenous oral performance in Africa faces the challenge of being looked down upon due to the growing contemporary performances. Right from the period of colonialism, the Igbo people have become increasingly attached to the education and values of European culture and thus alienating themselves from traditional African performances and customs. As a result of this scenario, there is a decline in the emphasis put on oral performances which used to be regarded as a channel for moral value acquisition, instruction, stability and cultural development of the people in Africa. In addition, in the contemporary world, there is a lot of focus on theatrical performance whereby a play is

performed on modern stage in front of an audience. This has really over shadowed the traditional performance which gave rise to the modern performance. Scholars like Finnegan (1970) claim that there is nothing dramatic in the traditional performance. This has led to a contemporary African overlooking their performances and rendering them of no importance. This is what motivated the researchers to explore the dramatic element of Igbankwu, a traditional wedding ceremony among the Igbo people. The aim is to document it, by so doing; it will lead to the appreciation and preservation of the Igbo culture.

This study is important because Igbankwu is a ceremony which defines the Igbo people. This implies that it will be performed even by the next generation. In the traditional settings, the material was passed from one generation to the next by the word of mouth, but because of modernization, people can still read the documented version, this study being one of them. It will also contribute to intercultural interaction as people from other cultures can read and appreciate Igbo culture as it is now written down in a language that can be understood internationally. Furthermore, this study contributes to the moral fiber of the Igbo culture; this is because acceptable behaviors in the society are communicated through Igbo traditional wedding ceremony. This study also contributes to the appreciation of arts as a field which can be ventured into as it also plays important roles in the society. Igbo traditional wedding ceremony not only educates but also criticizes ill behaviors in the society at large.

2 Literature Review

The related literature is reviewed under the following sub-headings: conceptual framework, empirical studies, theoretical framework and summary of the reviewed literature.

2.1 Conceptual Framework

The following concepts are reviewed under conceptual framework: drama, elements of drama, ritual performance and traditional ceremony.

2.1.1 Drama

Drama in the context of this study is the elegant imitation of action which is of importance to a group of people by a way of physical representation with elements such as music, character, dance, dialogue, plot, theme and mime.

2.1.2 Ritual Performances

These are repetitive activities particular to a certain community which bring people together. Igbankwu, a traditional wedding ceremony among the Igbo people, is a ritual performance as it brings the Igbo people together in celebration through dance, song and music.

2.1.3 Dramatic Elements

Dramatic elements here refer to the aesthetics of Igbankwu performance that are dramatic in nature which includes: songs and music, plot, character, setting, imagery, audience, response, costumes, makeup and suspense.

2.1.4 Traditional Ceremony

In the context of this study traditional ceremony refers to a repetitive classic practice of a people that is mostly communal. It is a form of art established on the African soil over time characterized by unique features whose techniques are different from the contemporary forms.

African drama is a presentation of action to an audience in which there is an aspect of suspense and ritual performance as an action is carried out to appease and obtain assistance from the supernatural forces (Keir, 1980). Traditional drama was performed before colonialism and is still being performed throughout Africa. It is not written down; it is in the local language and basically based upon the social organization of the village. It was and is the drama that is a celebration of song and dance. Traditional marriage was there before colonialism and is still in place up till today because it is part and parcel of the Igbo people. It is one of those activities which define the community.

Aristotle (384-322BC) a Greek critical thinker whose writings still have impact on us today, engineered the talk on the essentials of drama more than 2000 years ago. He came up with six elements of drama. The first one is plot, which refers to the action or the sequence of events in a play. Theme is another feature which refers to the message of the play. It is the main idea or lesson to be learned from the play. In some cases, the theme of a play is obvious, other times it is quite subtle. Another aspect is characters, these are people (sometimes animals) portrayed by the actors in the play. It is the characters who move the action or plot of the play forward.

Dialogue according to Aristotle is another important element which refers to the words written by the playwright and spoken by the characters in the play. This helps to move the action of the play along. Music/rhythm is also very important in drama. Music as described by Aristotle refers to the variation of the actors' voices as they talk. Finally, is the spectacle which refers to the elements that the audience can visualize as they watch the play. In Igbankwu traditional ceremony among the Igbo people all these aspects by Aristotle come into play. For instance, Igbo marriage ceremony involves a process since the day when a groom spots a girl he has loved up to the point where they settle as husband and wife. This is plot of Igbo marriage ceremony. On the other hand, there are specific costumes worn by the bride, groom and maidens who accompany the bride during the Igbankwu ceremony. Concerning the existence of indigenous drama in Africa, some scholars have come out strongly to deny the existence of indigenous drama in Africa. These scholars include Echeruo (1981) who asserts that a story has been forced of ritual. Kalu Uka (1973) further claims that traditional drama is not yet drama; rather it is vestigial element which drama may draw its ideas from. He goes ahead to assert that what some people call traditional drama should be merely referred to as elements of drama. This study is here to counter their assertion because Igbankwu wedding ceremony is an indigenous drama which has proved itself dramatic because it has plot, characters, settings, costumes, make-up, conflict, dialogue, music/song, dance, audience, performer and spectacle. Characters in Igbankwu performance include clansmen and women, maternal uncles, grandparents, neighbors and friends from the community, active performers and spectators that are members of the Igbo community. This inclusivity in choice of characters is lingered on the fact that the performance is communal and the space is fluid.

Theoretical Framework

This study is guided by performance theory propounded by Schechner (2009). According to Schechner (2009), performance theory is rooted in practice and is fundamentally interdisciplinary and intercultural. Schechner's perspective on performance was greatly influenced by Turner (1988). Turner asserts that performance entails daily repetitive practices which are artistic in nature. According to performance theory, performances simply depend on everyday conflicts, tensions and pressures of life, different rites and ceremonies that have been initialized in the society. The performance in this case acts as a tool for societal commentary where people comments on the general happenings in their daily lives during the performance.

Bauman (1986) adds that the performance can be seen as special mode of communication and the performance itself provides the frame within which messages being communicated are to be understood and interpreted. In any performance, the performer assumes the responsibility for a display of communicative competence. On the other hand, the audience also assumes the right to regard the performance and performer with special intensity. The performance itself becomes constitutive of the domain of verbal art. Performance is always controlled by the rules of a given community about speaking in general. As an example, it takes up the question of the relationship of aesthetic and ethical values. Performance theory is relevant to this study because it plays a significant role in exploring drama in Igbo traditional wedding performance. Performance theory is about the ritual performances which are of important to a particular community. Igbankwu a traditional wedding ceremony among the Igbo people brings the Igbo people together in celebration through dance, song and music.

Empirical Review

Rayya (2002) attempted an analysis of the language of Mombasa Swahili women's wedding songs. The study specifically focused on phonology, lexis, syntax, semantics and paralinguistic levels of language of Swahili women's wedding songs of Mombasa. To handle the stylistic analysis of Swahili wedding songs, the study used the eclectic approach that comprised of Leech's approach (1969),

theory of stylistic criticism by Emmanuel Ngara (1985) and the paralinguistic approach by Isidore Okpewho (1992). Data for the study was collected through library work that consists of journals, dissertations and library research as well as field work in which oral interview and participants observation were used. Data collected through recording were transcribed from the original language (Swahili) into English. The collected data was analysed using Leech (1969) literary analysis techniques supplemented by Okpewho's (1992) paralinguistic approach and Ngara's (1985) theory of stylistic criticism: The primary data is analysed, interpreted and described by focusing on the stylistic aspects of syllabic measure, rhyme, vocabulary choice, metaphor, similes, personification and symbolism. The findings of the study reveal that repetition and Lexical prominence were especially favoured by the Swahili wedding songs. At semantic level stylistic features such as similes, metaphor, symbolism, personification, proverbs, irony and vocabulary tied to certain register were found in Swahili wedding songs. The study also reveals that the paralinguistic features are necessary to help in building overall meaning in Swahili wedding songs. Improvisation has a big role to play in the songs. This study is related to the present study in the sense that it focuses on the stylistic features of wedding songs but differs from the present study in the area of theoretical framework as the present study uses performance theory in analysis of data collected.

Elijah (1993) looks at Kabras customary marriage. The objective of the study is to examine and assess the customs, beliefs, and practices of what constitutes a traditional Kabras marriage system. The study also looked at some types of marriages in Kabras community such as elopement, marriage by capture and pregnancy marriage. The study was premised on functionalism and evolutionary theories. Interviews, observations, and the use of questionnaire were all used in collecting data. Journals, articles and other relevant documents were perused. The data collected was analysed qualitatively because the research was mainly a descriptive one. The research findings showed that some of the aspects of the Kabras traditional beliefs and practices have been changed by the effects of modernization. The finding of the study further reveals that these forms of marriage are more pronounced in the present society than was the case in the traditional days. Bride wealth was discovered to have been dramatically transformed and traditional weddings were also discovered to have been completely ceased to exist.

Mugandani and Vermeulen (2016) investigated Jangwa wedding songs among the Manyika people of Zimbabwe. The aim of the study is to discuss the cultural meanings and functions conveyed through song lyrics amongst the Manyika people of Zimbabwe. 150 elderly Manyika people acted as key informants. Data collection strategies included participant observation, in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. The findings of the study reveal that most Jangwa wedding songs have a positive outlook and encouragement for the newly-weds, while other songs are more critical and warn of the possible pitfalls in marriage. The findings of the study further reveal that majority of Jangwa wedding songs focused on the role of the bride and married women as a whole, signifying the pivotal role they play within the Manyika society. The study recommends that since active participation in indigenous African musical arts is diminishing, there is need for concerted effort to ensure that Jangwa wedding songs is revived and documented for future generations.

Summary of the Reviewed Literature

From the available literature reviewed so far, it could be understood that some scholars such as Finnegan, Echeruo and Kalu Uka are of the view that Africa has no traditional drama but rather a quasi dramatic performances. The reviewed literature has also showed that no scholarly work has been conducted to establish that Igbankwu, a traditional wedding ceremony of the Igbo of Southeast Nigeria qualifies as a traditional drama in Africa. The present study seeks to establish and explore the dramatic elements embedded in Igbo traditional wedding ceremony. This is the gap the present study intends to fill.

3. Research Methodology

The study made use of the qualitative research method. Data for the study were collected through observation, participation and interview. The data collected were analyzed descriptively. The study area were five communities one each from the five core Igbo states which include Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo state. In order to discover the dramatic elements of Igbankwu among the Igbo

people, the researcher attended different Igbo traditional wedding ceremonies and got involved directly in the performance through singing and dancing.

4. Data Presentation and Analysis

This section presents and analyses the data collected from the fieldwork under the following sub-heading: Dramatic and literary elements of Igbokwe, a traditional wedding ceremony among the Igbo people and the influence of education and religion on the performance of igbankwu.

4.1. Dramatic and Literary Elements in Igba Nkwu

The following dramatic elements found in Igbankwu ceremony among the Igbo people will be discussed: plot, spectacle, characters (actor), setting, song and dance, rhythm, idiophones and imagery.

PLOT

A plot comprises the events that make up a story, particularly as these events relate to one another in a pattern, or in a sequence, as they relate to each other through cause and effect. The plot of drama contributes enormously to the thematic development of the story and the emphasis mostly falls on cause and effect. Traditional marriage among the Igbo people involves a series of events that begins when a man shows interest to the parents on his intention to look for a lady to marry. The man is the only one expected to go searching for the lady. It all starts with the man visiting areas where traditional dances and songs are performed with the intention of looking for one to marry. When he spots one, he can decide to approach her at the moment or wait for an appropriate time to let her know. He will let his father know about his pursuance. If the clan's totem and whereabouts of the girl's parents are known and there is no problem there, the father gives his son a go ahead. If the whereabouts of the girl are unknown, then background checks are made before the father gives a feedback. When it is confirmed that all is well as far as marriage between the two is concerned, the yet to be bridegroom makes impromptu visits to the girls home. The groom and his people make several trips to the bride's home taking palm wine. The last visit by the grooms clansmen act as a climax as there will be dances and songs. Enough palm wine and kola nuts as well as food will be provided for the guests at the bride's house. This is the actual Igbankwu ceremony.

Spectacle

Spectacle in drama entails aspects of costuming and enhancement in production. Spectacle is one of the aspects that have elevated arts, especially drama as the playwright creates the mood of the play in order to captivate the audience. Crow (1983) calls it the 'larger than life' element in every dramatic production. In the context of this study spectacle is seen as something exhibited to view as unusual, notable, or entertaining. The focus is on Igbo traditional marriage ceremony and those eye-catching aspects worn by the actors which make them stand out from the rest. Costumes and make-up play very functional roles in traditional African drama. Costumes are visual reenactment of a people's history and a reminder of their traditions. Apart from appealing to the eye, they also send a message to the audience. For Instance, the beads worn by the actors reminds the Igbo people of available resources to invent something new. Moreover, the bride is decorated with outfits and beauty products such as beads, anklet and makeover. These outfits and products are significant aspects of drama. Costumes are utilized as a type of emblematic articulation of oneself just as an open device that deciphers its sociological impacts at some random time. Ensemble has the feature of catching the audience mental focus, increasing their disposition and passing on the message, through non-verbal methods. Costume does not only serve the purpose of clothing but most importantly plays the role of cultural identification. The bride is decorated with beads of different colors which hang and so produce pleasant sounds when she moves. This identifies her as the bride because she is the only one who puts on such. Thus, costumes set the day as they are worn only on such occasion and not on any other day. Furthermore, apart from the actors' decorations, calabash for carrying palm wine during the marriage ceremony is decorated to symbolize the occupation of the community. Some communities in Igbo land are known for palm wine tapping and as such no traditional marriage in Igbo land is conducted without palm to entertain the audience. These costumes worn during the performance make it aesthetic and artistic. These costumes reflect the culture of people of this particular group of people.

Characters (Actors)

Finnegan (1970) in regard to drama states, “most important is the idea of enactment, of representation through actors who imitate people and events” (P.501). In the African traditional drama, the choice and signification of character is vital and fundamental to the expression and conveyance of meaning. The characters symbolize values, beliefs and philosophy of the community, this brings people together.

During the Igbo traditional marriage ceremony, the bride who is the main character in the occasion is surrounded by other characters (the maidens) who sing praises and chants as they merrily dance. The elders, clans' people, the bride's parents and relatives including the groom and his family members are also part of the characters at the venue of the traditional marriage ceremony.

Igbo traditional marriage ceremony just like most traditional African festivals, the audience is a participating one, and it is part of the community of the active performers. The audiences who are also part of the characters come and go at will depending on force of spontaneity brought by the tempo, rhythm, and inspiration experienced by the audience. The performance is fluid. The performance is for all present at the bride's home. Without audience participation, the beauty of marriage ceremony is lost. It is as a result of the audience that marriage ceremony becomes profoundly interactive. The audience joins in the dance and also sings the chorus. Some members of the audience also perform actively with the parents of the bride and with the bride as well. This participation of the audience forces the active performers (maidens or ashebi) heightens their level of performance. The only way to differentiate the audience and the performer is through costumes and properties that are used. The ashebi (maiden) performers wear special clothes chosen by the maiden while the bride decorated with powder, concealer, mascara, among other cosmetic holds a fly whistle in her hand while the other maidens will not have the same setting.

Setting

This is the physical space where the events in Igbo traditional marriage ceremony take place. The performance takes place in the house of the bride's parents. The seats are arranged in the bride parent's compound in such a way that the bride family members', friends and well-wishers and the groom's family face each other.

Songs.

Songs are an important genre of oral literature. Igbo traditional marriage ceremony would be incomplete without songs. Basically they are poems and chants composed to be sung during the performance. Igbo traditional marriage. Songs are a sub-genre of oral literature and hence a literary form normally composed and sung on this particular occasion. The song is just one way of conveying a message to the bride, groom, the bride's and groom's parents and to the audience. These songs are highly repetitive with the purpose of stressing the message to the intended person. Repetition is a literary feature which renders this Igbo traditional marriage performance a literary piece.

This Repetition of words, phrases or even whole verses not only contribute to the rhythm of the song but also emphasize important points in this song. This repetition also enhances the theme of the song.

Rhythm

Rhythm is defined as the pace of dramatization and further more alludes to the beats of the presentation. In drama rhythm must be altered, regardless of the drama's length, and it corresponds to the emotional state of the performers. In drama rhythm is realized in exchanges of dialogue between the performance during singing and dance. This is evident in Igbo traditional marriage ceremony as the performance of songs converse at a regular interval during the performance. Most Igbo traditional marriage songs are in call response mode this involved a soloist singing a line then the others respond. This creates rhythm as it happens regularly. The dialogue can also be between the singer and the bride or the groom. This includes asking her or him questions at a regular interval. This makes the performance interesting and lively.

Rhythm is also seen in the movement of a performer. This is evident in his/her dance steps, which has synchronized. This is the case in Igbo traditional marriage ceremony as the performers during the

performance portray unity in their body movements. For instance, they all move their legs forward and backward as they hit the ground and the same is repeated in the successive performance.

Rhythm is also evident in the non-vocal sounds made by Igbo traditional marriage performers. This involves shaking their anklets as they hit the ground hard using their feet. Women performers on the other hand harmoniously shake their necklaces following the beats of the song sang at the moment. The movements express joy and thanksgiving. The Performers in traditional marriage ceremony take on stride movements aside with diagonal and uniformly consistent,

Some songs may not have an ending because the lines can be repeatedly continuously as other words are substituted with others. In this case the soloist is the one to determine how long the song will be. The repetition of lines makes this song rhythmical and thus enhancing its beauty and the beauty of the whole occasion. Other than creating rhythm and beauty, the song stresses the message that the elders are happy and their daughter was patient and respectful enough to have adhered to the message to the norms and traditions of her people when it comes to marriage. And that is the reason she is referred to as a blessing, happiness, respect and friendship. Igbo traditional marriage also makes us of idiophones to create rhythm, idiophones are important components of Igbo songs as they contribute to the rhythmic beat and help regulate body movement.

In Igbo traditional marriage song, idiophones are important as they create rhythm in the song as it is when the idiophones is rendered that the change in body movements among the performers is realized through idiophones which are rhythmical and use to regulate the men and women body movement. Upon it's mention the performers skips a beat as they nod their head as a sign of acceptance. It is a sign of giving blessings to the bride as she goes to her new home.

Dance

According to Udaike (1994 pg 24) every chant, drumbeat, song chorus and dance replicate nuances that serve as part of a ritual, dance expresses the convictions, attitude, norms and value of a specific culture. It is what is installed the way of life that can be reflected in the dance of a particular social group. Dance during traditional marriage ceremony like the maidens and the bride, mindset, thought, recount to a story, or serve strict, political, monitoring or social needs. This is of Igbo traditional marriage as the dance is not merely a way of passing time but it expresses the mood of the day with brings joy and bliss as it is a celebration of one of the pleasant lifetime event in the community. Therefore, the characters who are involved, dance with vigor, and an expression of happiness written all over their faces. Dance in Igbo traditional marriage ceremony involves pattern and rhythmic moments accompanying the wedding songs. In Igbo community, traditional marriage dance may accompany the wedding songs, trailing to which wedding is rendered unproductive. The performers' body movements go well with the rhythm of the song and this brings in harmony in the performance. Most songs are sung at a fast pace to reflect the joyous mood of the day and so the dance as to be fast as well. In Igbo traditional marriage dance, the performer moves his/her body in various ways, for instance, the performer can twist it round, bend, stretch, jump and turn. By varying these actions and using different motions, human beings can decide countless number of movements. Within this limitless reserve, each culture emphasizes certain aspects in its dance styles.

According to Helen (1994), traditional drama is invariably music oriented with the attendant features of dance and song. Clark (1981) asserts that if drama is elegant initiation of action with elements of ritual, language, song, mime, music and dance, then there is evidence of drama in Africa. This is quite evident in Igbo traditional marriage ceremony because the performance will not be complete without dance. During the dance, the characters sing songs of praise to the bride as they dance Igbo traditional marriage dance is significant as it brings people together, for instance, when group of dancers (ashebi group) are performing, there are audience who gather to watch and participate in the performance. In line with the above view, Enekwe (1991) states that dance play an important role in the society in realizing societal harmonious living and togetherness. This leads to deep sense of communion with each other. This brings an end to individuality in the society and in broader perspective help in preserving the people's culture of its people. The dance helps to preserve the people's culture in the sense that the language of the people which in Igbo is used in their dance, during the performances. This showcases the beliefs, attitudes, norms and values of the Igbo people. This dance also goes a

long way into improving the physical wellness of an individual. This is because in dancing, every aspect of the human body is exercised Imagery.

Imagery in drama refers to the use of descriptive language that appeal to the human mind. It leads to formation of a mental picture. Imagery adds layers of deeper symbolic meaning to the performance. Aspects of imagery include symbolism, simile, metaphor and personification. Use of imagery in performance is very crucial as it contributes to the effective conveyance of the intended message. For instance, the use of kola nut and palm wine is significant in Igbo traditional marriage. Kola nut is a symbol of unity. As the bride and the groom partake in the breaking and sharing of the kola nut, they are united together. In the same vein when the two families drink the palm wine, it symbolizes a bond which will have been formed. It is also a symbol of unity among the Igbo people.

Application of the performance theory

Performance theory by Schechimer is relevant to this study because it deals with ritual performance which Igbo traditional marriage ceremony is one of them. Schechimer states that the theory depends on everyday conflicts, tensions and pleasure of life, different rites and ceremonies that have been ritualized in the society. The performance in this case acts as a tool for societal commentary where people comment in the general happenings in their life during the performers and audience to complement the performance. Performance therefore is not only about the performers and the audience it encompasses art forms, which include dance/music song, dialogue, poetry which are fused with other dramatic elements. Therefore, this study concurs with the fact that Igbo traditional marriage ceremony suits Schechimer model on performance in relation to drama. Performance theory is about the ritual performances which are of importance to a particular community as it brings them together. Igbo traditional marriage ceremony as a ritual performance brings the Igbo people together in celebration through dance, song and music. Object in performance acquire a different meaning from that of outside performance. Palm wine acquires a special meaning during the marriage ceremony. This is because in normal days the drink is taken out, it is simply for enjoyment. In this day it is taken by the members of the bride's side to symbolize the sealing if friendship between the two families or communities. Igbo traditional marriage ceremony as an example of ritual performance has rules which have to be followed lest it attracts curses. Among the Igbo people for marriage to be effected it has to be insured that the two are not related by blood. When background checks are made and it is noticed that the two are related by blood then any further progress is terminated. During the performance of Igbo marriage ceremony, songs are sung accompanied with the dance. The characters put on special costumes and make up and this makes performance theory suitable for this study because it deals with performance.

Findings of the study The findings of this study reveal that the following dramatic elements are found in Igbankwu traditional wedding ceremony in Igbo land: plot, spectacle, audience, costume, dialogue aa well as actors. The study further reveals that the traditional wedding songs have the following stylistic features: rhythm, idiophones, and paralinguistic features.

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