

## Towards Preserving Igala Proverbs for Character Molding

BY

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### Abstract

The essence of proverbs in Igala society is to mold and reform man morally, philosophically, psychologically and to position him to respond positively to the demand of the environment wherever he lives. Proverbs are believed to be the prerogatives of the elders, and as such every elder is believed to be a teacher of this core traditional value, and expected to preserve the teachings and hand over same to their children with a view to retaining its content, validity, aptness, applicability, relevance and continued usages among the growing minds, as anything short of these, occasioned by any reason is considered a violation of the Igala belief system. With proverbs as instruments of training young minds for tasks of leadership and other roles in the society, this study examines the roles of proverbs in molding and reforming characters of Igala children and how to bequeath this fundamental aspect of their culture to the younger generations in its original patterns as a way to reduce effect of modern games on the belief system of Igala culture, strengthening their traditional institutions for effective function, correct social wrongs inherent in western culture and raise their children in already established scope of Igala proverbs. For the method, the data used for the research were got through participant observations and interviews. The data collected were analyzed with the instrumentality of descriptive research tool. The work was anchored on 1986 Relevance Theory (RT) propounded by Dan-Sperber and Wilson. The work uses selected proverbs common within the reach of Ogugu, Ibaji and Anka extraction to present the dedicative and reforming significance in Igala proverbs.

**Keywords:** Igala proverbs, preservation, character molding, character reformation, and Traditional Institutions.

## INTRODUCTION

The superiority struggle between the Western culture and the rich cultural values of the Igala people in recent time has been a thing of serious concern to the elders who are custodians of the traditional institutions and the elites who are lovers of what Igala culture offers in the training of the young ones and the sustenance their cultural inheritances. This struggle has for a very long time retarded the scope of practice, the scope of transmission, and the scope of usage of what has held Igala people together. Disheartedly, the existing superiority struggle has become a strong force alienating young ones from what seemed to have held them together as a people and generally collapsing the conventional methods cherished by the older generation. This according to Asare(14) has become great threats to the existing Igala cultural

values as young minds settle quickly with these foreign traditions than the Igala belief systems.

In Igala traditional system, there are established processes that guide certain steps to be taken by parents in the upbringing of young minds. The Igala belief system has designed or positioned her cultural values particularly the use of proverbs to mold or reform an individual character. It considers this process of molding or reforming young minds as an inestimable asset of fundamental importance to the individual and society. The use of proverbs can never be adequately described merely by its scope and dimensions or citing the number of people served or revived, or the number of research conducted on the value of traditional proverbs to Igala as a nation despite the fact that such gamely accessible specifics are

habitually used as agencies of functions, enhancement and development of people's cultural values. Igala proverbs are traditionally essential to the achievement of personal, family, and society's goal and aspirations. Igala proverbs are looked at from various dimensions: children look at their parents to use proverbs to help them realize their aspirations, form opinions about their tomorrow and sustain the knowledge inherent in the proverbs. Parents are expected to use proverbs to provide for intellectual, moral, and social development of their children, and provide a platform for transmission of this knowledge into the younger generation. Igala nation anticipates that continued use of proverbs for correction, molding, and reforming of young minds will constantly provide a continuing supply of increasingly capable and trustworthy Igala children. The functions and dimensions of Igala proverbs in relation to children training is different from what Western education covers. Western education according to Egbunu (19), is a glorified training exercise, and it coordinates only an inconsequential phase of edification in connection to the existing Igala homegrown model of training. To Igala elders, who are dressers of Igala training tools, what establishes best training are symptomatically assessed on the foundation of the development of the cerebral rather than emotional ability as upheld in some quarters.

As a substance of statistic, the Igala belief system according to Egwemi (48), is fountain that flows from generation to another generation. The system believes that every responsible adherent of the society is always a teacher because elders are generally believed to be a source of reasonable information in the society, "ogjjoakolaitoaw'alun, itomugbeukolache" (elders are soothsayers in their respective domains), that is why Idegwu (67), asserts that every unpretentious hoarier is undeniably measured as at rained teacher of cultural acumen, using the culture to tactfully and carefully transmit the unadulterated account of every cultural values through aphorisms to the newer hands or minds.

According to Achor (25), the use of proverbs is common among our traditional people in the Igala society. These artistically hewed speeches embellish or flesh up Igala language and make it more meaningful, didactic, philosophical, cohere, and pleurably instructive. Igala Proverb encourages succinctness and discourages verbosity of speech. In addition to the natural and cultural gaps proverbs fill in the Igala society, Igala elders use them to guide the children to imbibe the positive values in the society as against the negative garbage associated with modern culture and unhealthy ideological postures which are collapsing our belief system and institutions guiding the cultural practices which the Igala people are known for. To sustain this age-long tradition of raising young ones who are without character defects, which is the crux of this research, efforts are to be put in place to preserve our common heritage (proverbs) and use it to squarely address the social wrongs inherent with this globalized era.

## Statement of the Problem

In Igala traditional setting, proverbs clearly serve a correctional and didactic purpose. The molding, reforming, and correctional significance of Igala elders wise sayings (proverbs) has a

comprehensive foundation rooted in their beliefs system. These Igala proverbs awaken, charge, and even enlarge awareness of a man on his responsibility to the world around him which is a given cultural and social group to make attractive, value, and cherish by the present and even future generations of Igala. Such readily facts are the push factors of preserving this aspect of Igala culture. The preservation of proverbs according to Egbunu, (45), in their 'inventive' usage would virtually have undoubtedly been guaranteed in Igala belief system by way of its molding and reforming values. Any predicted shift of focus from the original act of transmitting this process to their children is always considered as a repulsive act punishable in their judicial system, as they serve as a generally acceptable means for instituting a decent and ethical conduct among their children. Edimeh (34), asserts that proverbs and sayings convey often utilized cultural ideals commonly accepted in society. Proverbs in the Igala society form a fundamental part of the systematic transmission of people's culture. The Igala elders use proverbs as a device for providing guidance for their children and set a standard which covers all aspect of people's life (oro agba t'onuokolen- a child cannot be above his parents' correction). This makes proverbs express morality appropriate to the mutual man and middle-of-the-road in recommending the middle way, as it functions as a legal code in the Igala language, and are easily used in passing judgment and enforcing punishments.

It will be a suicidal attempt, looking at the benefits inherent in proverbs in the Igala society to allow it being overshadowed by modern games as it is witnessed in most parts of the Igala kingdom. Any effort speared on the preservation of Igala proverbs in transmitting its values to the younger generation is considered a step in a right direction.

## Need for the Study

The following serves as the need for the study:

1. The younger generation must believe that Igala proverbs are not stories of the adults, but products of careful observations and speculations from accumulated experience that possess training tools to reform and mold their characters in line with the believe system of Igala culture.
2. Expose Igala youths to the socio-cultural realities of Igala tradition.
3. Establishing the code of truth in the mind of the Igala youths as a way to avoid them not claiming to be ignorant operational principles guiding life

## Objectives of the Study

The broad objective of this study is to preserve and sustain Igala cultural values which Proverb is a part as instruments for character molding and reformation.

1. To identify the significance of Igala Proverbs
2. To examine various dimensions of Igala proverbs
3. To present Igala proverbs as instruments for character molding and reformation in the hands of the elders.

## Theoretical Bases

The work is anchored on Sperber and Wilson's Relevance Theory (RT) of (1986). The theory believes that the maxims of conversation can essentially be reduced to one that accounts for the communication process, 'relevance'. According to them, communication relevance is a property of utterances as a particular case of inputs to cognitive processes. Relevance theory is based on two principles: the cognitive principle and communicative principle. The cognitive principles states that human cognition is geared towards the maximization of relevance (that is, to the achievement of as many contextual (cognitive) effects as possible for as little processing effort as possible). This is the general and linguistic communication in particular. This applied to linguistic communication involves the following: for a communicative act to be effective, the speaker needs the addressee's attention; since everyone is geared towards the maximization of relevance, the speaker should try to make his utterance relevant enough to worth addressee's attention. This leads us to the next principle. The communicative principle states that every act of ostensive communication (e.g. an utterance) communicates a presumption of its own optimal relevance. By 'ostensive', relevance theorists make reference to the 'overt' or 'public' nature of the speaker's communicative intensions in acts of communication. Communication will be effective (i.e. understanding will occur) when the addressee recognizes those intentions. This process without a presumption that it will report him/her some benefits; that is, without a presumption that the input is not only relevant but as relevant as it can. Then when someone utters something with a communicative purpose, she does it, according to the relevance theory, with the presumption of optimal relevance, which states that (a) the utterance is relevant enough worth processing; (b) it is the most relevant one compatible with the communicator's abilities and preferences.

This theory is suitable for a work such as this as it explicates the nexus that exists the speaker->memory->hearer, with the aim to explicate in cognitively lifelike terms what prospects of relevance amount to and how they might underwrite to an empirically credible account of comprehensions. Igala proverbs on the other hand are circumstantial-based, instructive, and sociological that perhaps need a speaker-processing memory and the hearer before the whole complex of information in the proverbs is assimilated. The acquisition comprises many layers which is acquired mold, correct, reform growing minds in the society for optimal productivity.

### Igala Proverbs: An Overview

Igala proverbs otherwise known as Ita Igala belong to the poetic genre of the Igala beliefs system. To the Igala nation and her people, it is a concise didactic and philosophical expressions about a moral and accepted fact based on observation or experience. It is part of the valued linguistic, especially, poetic inheritance of the living and users within a particular tradition. According to Abuh (183), Igala proverbs are used to express the veracity of a point being made in a discourse, except where a more relevant proverb is cited by somebody in opposition to counter the one initially offered. He further said that this respect accorded proverbs derives

from the fact that they are truths which experience has proved valid, length of time. To buttress a position, therefore, the speaker who intends to employ a proverb may prefix is with, 'Amo'kwowakakini' meaning, our grandfathers say, or "Abogijowakakini" meaning our elders say or still, "Igala ne ita ka kakini". Thus, by using a proverb, the speaker strongly urges the audience to accept his argument with questions. However, it should be pointed out that the mere use of proverb does not disarm the people. Rather, it compels the competent listener to intelligently weigh what he knows the proverb offered against the tenor so as to see how much, or to what extent the proverb really captures the situation. If it does so to a low extent, the listener is apt to counter the irrelevant proverb with another proverb or to out rightly the application or appropriateness of the proverb to the issue in question. This awareness keeps the proverb users on their toes, ensuring that he does not trifle with it. What marks the good use of a proverb are aptness applicability or relevance?

Igala proverbs lend itself to various discourses and situations: songs, incantations, prayers, tales, speeches, arguments, verdicts, chants, dirges, among others (Abuh, 183). In the Igala belief system, proverb is a compressed form of utterance expressing a metaphor of life. It exudes beauty just as it is functional. As a functional unit of utterance, it enters into discourses where it either serves as an ornament, or to lend credence and elicit the acceptance of a point of view, or both. It is on this note that proverbs are different from other Igala core cultural values. It's molding, reforming, and correctional function is quite instrumental to the training and raising of the young ones.

According to Emah, Joseph, and Akanya (64), some Igala proverbs can produce one connotation whereas a couple of other proverbs have parallel significances, and each of them has a gloominess of connotation peculiar or nonpareil to itself. The parallel significances of proverbs to the raising of young minds is the reason for its preservation.

### Use of Proverbs in Traditional Igala Communities as Molding and Reforming Devices

Igala history and culture are rich with tradition and wisdom that can offer valuable insights for her younger generation. One of the ways that Igala cultures have preserved this knowledge is through proverb, which provide a glimpse into the values and beliefs that have guided Igala communities for centuries. Proverbs according to Moon (97), are traditional aphorismsevidently serve a moralisticdrive, notwithstanding the nonappearance of formal education. Moralistically, the value of proverbs has a wide-ranging foundation. One of the fundamentals of the traditional Igala proverbs, as styled by Emah, Joseph, and Akanya (69), is to arrow the traditions of the deep-rooted Igala proverb down to the present and even to the future generations without watering down its values and contributions in the training and rearing of young minds, as any step against this is considered a sacrilege. Proverbs in the Igala societies are believed to be flat grounds to elders to mold character of their children. Igala has proverbs that are believed to often reflect the wisdom of the elders are used to guide decision-making, encourage critical thinking, and teach life lessons. They further avow that proverbs offer conscientious

advice or reflections on misfortunes that people stumble upon: ichajhchakaonw one a'gwa'n, meaning not all rivers one swims. The metaphorical import of this gives it a wider application to whatever deviant act of potentially disastrous consequences. Such disastrous consequences could range from bringing shame on the perpetrator through incurring fines to such grave ones as physical injuries, death etc. in which the family members share because of the communal organization of their relationship. One may have committed a blunder, proverbs can be used to make one uncomfortable with contemplation over what one had done. Ene kigwojolido' lanwchu'jenw, meaning whoever climbs a forbidden iroko (tree) declares himself a manure for the land). The above proverbs are capable of goading on the supposedly foolish man into necessary action, but in an unpleasant way,

Proverbs form a fundamental part of the prescribed transmission of culture from one generation to another generation. It can also be seen as a major device or instrument for raising culturally minded individuals in the society. According to Abuh, Igala proverb helps absolve parents from deviant behaviour of their children. As far as the Igala people are concerned, a child or even a man without good manners is just a little higher than a wild animal hence he is almost looked down upon as sub-human. In this respect, the Igala people are apt, in a fit of anger at serious misbehavior, to tell an offender to his face that the (the deviant person) is an animal (227).

#### **The Significance of Proverbs in Igala Language**

The proverbs in Igala according to Abuh(183), is neither age-specific nor gender or class specific. While it is true that a child may not use proverbs in addressing his elders, it is also true that he is not forbidden to use it. For instance, a child ought to practice what is prevalent in his culture. Traditional education is apprenticeship in character. The child, therefore, necessarily uses those proverbs he can handle efficiently while appreciating the artistic employment of proverbs by the elders. However, he tries out his knowledge of proverbs on his age mates. Otherwise, the Igala proverbs are communal commodities. The Igala people would say: 'itan'omaofen. Ejekiliitaonwakpa'' meaning, proverbs are not of royal lineage, rather it is the eye that behold it uses it. Proverbs function with the adults as well as the youths. To Emah, Joseph, and Akanya, proverbs play a very substantial role uniting speakers of every languages together. The role language plays in among the Igala people is monumental, as every single face of their culture which proverb is a part is manifested through their language. Igala proverb is an identity of the Igala people, as it reveals their social backgrounds, and serves as symbols of authority with every adult person. When Igala person uses proverbs to define his opinion over a matter of concern, we say he really knows the language. Instead of stretcheddis course, a good speaker sometimes uses proverbs to express the same idea. According to Emah, Joseph, and Akanya (4), Igala proverbs functions as follow: Igala proverbs embellish the speech and make it culturally beautiful; they adorn it and bring out onions of the matter for visible understanding; they make an otherwise long statement short; proverbs make audience pay attention to what is being explained; Igala proverbs shape, correct, position the young for a better tomorrow; they educate and teach morals, and that is why

when a proverb is given, the audience tries to find out what exactly is expressed and what intension is the speaker passing across and what lesson it is meant to communicate.

### **Methodology**

#### **The Area of Study**

The study was conducted in the Eastern senatorial district of Kogi state in North-Central, Nigeria. Kogi state was created by then Military Head of State, Major General Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida on the 27<sup>th</sup> August, 1991. The state' sheadquarter is in Lokaja, a city located on the confluence of the major (Niger and Benue) Rivers in the country and it is bordered by the states of Nassarawa to the Northeast; Benue to the East; Enugu and Anambra, Edo to the South; Ondo, Ekiti, and Kwara to the West; and Niger to the North. Abuja Federal Capital Territory also borders Kogi to the North. Kogi East Senatorial District is the largest senatorial District in the state. Majority of the Igala people live in Kogi state, Nigeria. They inhabit nine Local Governments at the Eastern senatorial Region. The people were by 1963 National Census, the number 9<sup>th</sup> tribe in Nigeria, and in 2006, the head count revealed her as number 13<sup>th</sup>. They speak ''kwa'' group of language, therefore making it fall under the same language groups like Igbo, Nupe, Yoruba, Edo, Its ekiri, and Idoma. Other than the nine Local Governments where the people are found, the language is also spoken in other states of the Federation such as Enugu, Anambra, Delta, Benue, and Edo with all maintaining some kind of historical and cultural affiliations with those in Kogi state.

#### **Sampling Technique**

Three major dialects of Igala language were selected for the study. These dialects are Ogugu, Ibaji, and Ankpa. By origin, the researchers are indigenous people across these selected areas of Kogi East senatorial district; a senatorial district controlled by Igala people. The researchers are very much at home with how proverbs are used in these locales and they have an up-to-date knowledge with some of the proverbs in the Igala culture and they know all the situations applied. They have equally served as secretaries to many traditional and local gatherings which has helped them to broaden their knowledge on the significance of proverbs in molding and reforming the young ones for better productivity.

#### **Method of Data Collection**

The data for this study: towards preserving in Igala proverbs for character molding or reforming were collected from the field using participant observation and interviews.

#### **Method of Data Analysis**

The data collected were analyzed with the instrumentality of descriptive and analytical research tools.

#### **Data Presentation and Analysis**

One fascinating thing about Igala proverbs is that they are essentially imaginative creations of man from his environment to enable him attend to various situations of life. For clarity, a tabular technical design of data arrangement and analysis was used for this study.

**Table 1: Samples of Proverbs steadily Guiding Igala Peoples' Paths and their Core Cultural Values that every Youth must try to Uphold.**

Igala Proverb (IP)	English Version (EV)	State of Use	Moral Lessons
<b>Proverb I</b> Eikpa-oli ma aneam'oli.	A tree is identified by its back.	When a child is about to deviate from the standard of the family or society.	A man's private or public life should be in tandem with the same that system that produces him, as otherwise is considered as transgression.
<b>Proverb II</b> En'i dada ma'maugbo'kiolon, ichem'ugbokikwo.	If a foolish man does not know where he is going to, he knows where he is coming from.	When a child is trying to throw away his family's identity in deviance to the established truths guiding the family or the society in search of life and purpose.	The young ones are to constantly reviewing their behaviours or characters in line with the operational principles of their family or society.
<b>Proverb III</b> Ili ogwu-ogaomo kia bu'ogijonwinadefu abata.	The herbal root for curing the sickness of a child who abuses the elders is found in the rock.	When a child regularly engage the elder with insults.	Don't engage the elders with insults.

<b>Proverb IV</b> Imot ne ke'noko to gwujo le, I madaneke ne egbanu'kpotogwuj olen	A child that has money more than the elder cannot have more rags than an elder	When a child is said to be pompous over any little thing he has.	Don't be proud; be simple, meak, and lonely.
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The above data show that proverb used in Igala traditional gatherings is to shape or mold the character of upcoming youths who will take over the yoke of administration in future. The proverbs above harp on guiding the youths against negative consequences and the generational impacts of losing one's identity to modern games. Socially, proverbs used above offer instructions how youths can avoid pitfalls in life as they journey to adulthood. These proverbs are employed to instruct, reform, advise, warn, and guide the growing minds to within the acceptable norms and beliefs of the Igala people. In Igala, the proverb genre is called "ita". When closely examined, one appreciates the reforming and molding aspect of the proverbs. To Igala elders, Igala proverb is one of measures or instruments bequeathed to them by their forefathers, which they are also willing to leave behind in its original form. The proverbs as used above stand to mold and reform so many things in the lives of the youths which will help them to live above social vices such as inordinate ambition, yahooism, cybercrime, and other unscrupulous acts capable of undermining the integrity of the Igala core cultural values. The proverbs emphasize the benefit of living a reasonable and responsible life even outside the shores of Igala land because, Eikpa-oli ma aneam'oli - A tree is identified by its back. From the above proverbs, the culture of the Igala people is transmitted to the younger generation, as it teaches them to see the need to cease from all practices of evil as they foreshadow far-flung deleterious penalties.

**Table 2: Samples of Proverbs Teaching Truths and Genuineness to Young Igala People**

Igala Proverb (IP)	English Version	State of Use	Moral Lessons
<b>Proverb V</b> Enwu du kuma li ofeogujo, ma nya'liefoimotonugo.	Whatever is seen today on the anus of the elders that, will soon be seen on the anus of the child.	It is used to express factual truth to any child who fragrantly disobeys or intimidates the elders.	Whatever a child sows as a child that he reaps when he grows old.

<p><b>Proverb VI</b> Ichenwuk’olubojimoto muda, ogijo ag’ gwuefunwu</p>	<p>Elders are equally beneficiaries of the fortunes of a child.</p>	<p>This is used to encourage children to show dedication and determination in any legitimate business they get involved so as to make genuine gains and profits which may equally benefit the elders.</p>	<p>Igala culture forbids idleness and cutting corners.</p>
<p><b>Proverb VII</b> Ma-abioma, abiiben</p>	<p>You give birth to a child, you don’t give birth to good manners</p>	<p>It is used to tell a child to always advise himself against social wrongs.</p>	<p>Always think before you act.</p>

From the data presented above, the reforming and molding characteristics of Igala proverbs are manifest. For the Igala people, oracy is a dominant medium of instruction and socialization. The ideas encased in Igala proverbs are “wares that sell themselves” easily because of their aesthetic characteristic and embellishment, their aptness to the situations that call, and their philosophical appeals as embodiments of eternal and proven truths. By using these proverbs, little children get acquainted with the practicable and acceptable norms and principles guiding the society, preserve and transmit same to a much younger generation. The proverbs above are molding and reforming tools traditionally available with the elders, by using them, information about sanctions, essence of the society, rationalization, perseverance, ambition, decorum, security, and communality is transmitted for future use. The samples of data above are instructive and didactic and philosophical. In Igala culture one thing that cannot be compromised is respect for elders, and as such, a reverent acceptance of the superiority of their councils, sanctions, and views of life are unquestionable. Where a younger person tends to forget this, an appropriate proverb can be and is often used to call him to order. Sometimes, a proverb asserts that an elder is always proved right in the end, “Anagboa’kolaitoa’walu, itomugbe, ukolache” meaning when an elder talks, saliva drips; when the saliva dries up

the word is fulfilled. The efforts here tend to be bring the best out of the young ones.

**Table 3: Sample of Proverbs Showing Strong Love for Creatures and Environments**

Igala Proverb (IP)	English Version	State of Use	Moral Lesson
<p><b>Proverb VIII</b> Omachoko</p>	<p>A child is farm</p>	<p>It is used to love among the Igala people.</p>	<p>Let us believe in our common heritage and identity, for no one knows who it may serve or benefit,</p>
<p><b>Proverb IX</b> Egwukie’jia’tegwu oliekanw ki kwotane</p>	<p>A corpse you would berry, if it is climbing a tree, you would tell him to come down.</p>	<p>It is used to encourage children to cherish affection.</p>	<p>Cherish love anywhere you may find yourself.</p>
<p><b>Proverb X</b> Akpa’neonwaneak pai</p>	<p>He who kills the land is killed by the land</p>	<p>It is used to encourage the youth not to destroy their environment</p>	<p>Grow your environment; don’t kill it.</p>

The concern with the data above is the ultimate love. A child is a farm foretell that since you can predict who will ultimately benefit from the produce of the farm until it is harvested, everyone has a stake in it and a responsibility to tend it to maturity. So is a child. The people so much believe in this philosophy that “omachoko”. The community elders are good at using this proverb to preach love among themselves. In other proverbs, the Igala elders use them to mold and reform the youths that by blood relation, a brother stands to share in the consequence of the action of the kinsmen. At the literary level, the cost of burial ceremonies apart, the prospect of losing a family member is enough to prompt him to speak his mind. On the side of the deviant man, reference to death, his own death will avert the impact of compelling him to listen to reason, and give a second thought to what he is being advised against. In Igala society, land is very important, any reference to the means a lot. Children are daily advised against any act capable of disrupting the peace of the land or the environment.

**Table 4: Samples of Igala Proverbs that Preach Veneration for Adults and Igala Traditional Institutions**

Igala Proverb (IP)	English Version	State of Use	Moral Lesson
<b>Proverb XIII</b> Enwu du kuma li efo'goji, manyaalifeim otoonugo	Whatever is seen today on the anus of the elders will surely be seen on the anus of the child.	When a child's behavior is in outright disrespect to the elders.	Adulthood must be respected and venerated.
<b>Proverb XIII</b> Ejua'bu	Presence commands respect	When a child's case is to be decided and an alder's advice is sought	It pays to respect elders
Imo'to kia juchenwogoji, iaju'jenwowi wa	A child who runs errands for the elders eats in a dirty hand	When a child is absolutely obedient to the elders.	Always show admiration for the elders.

Data above show that proverbs as used in the Igala society mold, correct, and reform the young growing minds. When an elderly man/woman tells “enwu du kuma li efo'goji, manyaalifeimootoonugo” meaning “whatever is seen today on the anus of the elders will surely be seen on the anus of the child”, that means that must has shown an act of disrespect. In the Igala kingdom, as in most other parts of African, becoming disrespectful to the elders is a crime that is followed with a severe sanction. When a child hears this proverb he evaluates his action immediately and does the needful by recognizing his errors. Also when when an elder tells his fellow elder that “ejua'bu” meaning “presence commands respect”, that means that elder is strongly advocating for the young man, by telling his friend to attend the meeting where the fate of that child will be decided. His face and presence bears respect and authority and so could affect the decision in favour of the victim child. This can only happen in the Igala culture when the child knows how to respect and honours elders. “imo'to kia juchenwogoji, iaju'jenwowiwa” meaning a child who runs errands for the elders eats in a dirty hand. This proverb cautions the young ones to always, against all odds show respect and honour for the elders as this offers them opportunity to earn elders' blessings. With this, children against the demands of modern games keep their respect for the elders so tight and strong.

### Conclusion

Proverbs in the Igala culture are used to criticize wrongdoings and social wrongs prevalent in the society. They are simple sayings, pearls of wisdom that are part of Igala culture but widely recognized and relatable. They aid communication because a lot of information is passed across without saying too much. Proverbs cut

across a wide range of topics, such as warning, encouragement, correction, friendship, leadership, trust, fashion, marriage, grieving, and religion, amongst many others.

Igala culture has proverbial sayings to support its traditions and morals. This is in consonance with Edimeh (34) who asserts that proverbs and sayings convey often utilized cultural ideals commonly accepted in society. Here are some reasons why proverbs are so crucial in Igala cultures: Proverbs are generally used to offer advice to listeners and to mold their characters. Proverbs such as “ eki do doduwechi'yan “ “Make hay while the sun shines” is seen as a piece of advice to work while there is still strength; “one a'le to jijinwulen” “Wherever a man goes to dwell, his character goes with him.” This means what defines a man is his character. It is inseparable from him and will follow him everywhere he goes. This teaches the importance of a good moral compass. Proverbs impart knowledge and spread awareness on certain issues and topics. ” Ekiguugbokechibun, ku'gbokerewe now” “Do not look where you fell, but where you slipped.” This proverb in the Igala culture warns one not to focus on mistakes but on what caused the mistakes; otherwise, one may repeat the same mistake. These, among many others, are why proverb is used to mold characters of the young minds in the Igala culture, and the sole reason for its preservation.

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