Global Journal of Arts Humanity and Social Sciences
ISSN: 2583-2034

GSAR PUBLISHERS
GLOBAL SCIENTIFIC AND ACADEMIC RESEARCH

OPEN ACCESS

Global Journal of Arts Humanity and Social Sciences
ISSN: 2583-2034
Abbreviated key title: Glob.J.Arts.Humanit.Soc.Sci
Frequency: Monthly
Published By GSAR Publishers
Journal Homepage Link: https://gsarpublishers.com/journal-gjahss-home/

Volume - 6 | Issue - 10 | October 2026 | Total pages 1103-1111 | DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.23643601

CONTEXTUAL- FUNCTIONS ANALYSIS OF SELECTED EKETE LULLABIES

By

PRISCILLA EBERE UGWUOKE Ph.D[1], ZITA UKAMAKA UGWUOKE[2]

[1]DEPARTMENT OF LINGUISTICS, IGBO AND OTHER NIGERIAN LANGUAGES, UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA NSUKKA.

[2]DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH AND LITERARY STUDIES, UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA NSUKKA

Article History
Received: 15- 10- 2026
Accepted: 24- 10- 2026
Published: 26- 10- 2026

Corresponding author
PRISCILLA EBERE UGWUOKE Ph.D

Abstract

In Ekete speech community, they have different types of lullabies. Theses lullabies are used in different contexts and they serve different purposes. It is on this observation that the researchers, examines the various contexts and the functions they fulfill in these contexts. In recent times, modernity seems to have disrupted African ways of lives and has relegated most African culture and values to the background. This paper, therefore, aims at documenting and preserving selected Ekete lullabies so that the future generation of Igbos and Ekete specifically will know what it entails to be Ekete sons and daughters. The paper is premised on two theories contextualism and functionalism. The study used interview and participant observation methods to elicit information from informants. The data were collected using electronic devices and were later transcribed and translated from Igbo to English language. Contexts of their performances were captured carefully and analysis were based on the contexts and the functions they fulfill in various contexts. The study reveals that Ekete people have various lullabies and they performed at different occasions aside from luring babies into sleep. The study equally reveals that Ekete people use lullabies for teaching and learning- that is a form of school of thought for young one's initiation, pacification a validation of culture. Finally, it was discovered that lullabies serve as promoters and oppressive instruments through which all the political, social, economic, moral, spiritual affairs of Ekete are perpetuated.

Keywords: *Ekete, Lullabies, culture, oral poetry and society.*

INTRODUCTION

Lullabies are forms of oral poetry in Ekete that are composed, kept alive and passed on orally from generation to generation. Kamera (2001) in explaining the nature of oral literature maintains that Lullabies in Igbo society is as old as man itself. Nakata and Trehub (2004) are of the view that Lullabies helps to create a smoothing correlation between an infant's physiology, it's state of mind and outside world. Sone (2016) says that oral literature help individuals to adhere to or deviate from the community's norms and values. Going by these assertions above, Ekete society in their culture has it that Lullabies are performed in some setting or context in their society. In their wisdom, they sow these Lullabies as a silent, powerful vehicle for inculcation of certain values and attitudes that influence the children's lives later positively at home or away from their comfort zones. Ekete Lullabies as part of their culture help in investigating the history of the people and it serves as traditional school for younger ones.

Looking at all these benefits of oral poetry especially Lullabies in Ekete, it was discovered that younger generational mothers called Genz mothers no longer know what it entails to be Ekete mother or do not have these ideas of powerful and rich culture of Ekete. With these developments, children's poetry is fast disappearing. And as an oral artist, and these problem before Ekete society, knowing fully that no society can exist without a proper reorganization of its components. Equally that the children remain a very part of the society. The researchers viewed it necessary that this indispensable part of Ekete culture cannot be allowed to go into extinction and this contextual- function analysis of Ekete Lullabies become necessary.

Copyright © 2026 The Author(s): This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY-NC 4.0).

The general aim is to collect and document Ekete Lullabies from Ekete various contexts or occasions. The specific objective is to discuss the contextual functions of those Ekete Lullabies that are used in the contexts mentioned in the study.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This section discussed the following subheadings: conceptual framework, empirical studies and the theoretical framework.

The Conceptual Reviews

Conceptual review here is essentially significant because the review helped used to unpack our thoughts about this study.

ORAL POETRY

Oral poetry in Igbo society is as old as the society that owns it. Oral poetry in Igbo society circulates orally and not in writing. They are songs, poems and prosodic texts composed orally. According to Miruka (1996), oral poetry is the verbal expression of feelings, ideas and through using verified language. By implication, the society that owns it, uses it to exhibits some elements of feelings, emotions and ideas about the society. Nwahunanya (2001) sees oral poetry as one of the vehicles through which artists in many societies voice out the societal responsibilities' dos and don' especially for regulating their social behaviour. By the implication of Nwahunanya (2001) view, many societies use oral poetry as mechanisms for social control and transmission of societal active, values from generation to generation. Lullabies as one of the oral poetries in Igbo society are mechanisms through which this can be achieved.

Gunness and Gunnes (2012) are of the view that Lullabies are rhymed and harmonious words in the form of poetry and prose with a certain melody generally sung by mothers and caregivers in order to soothe the crying babies or make them sleep. By implication of this ascertain, Lullabies are used to control social behaviour. Thy sacred box drinks them. Trehub, Unyk and Trainor has the same opinion with Gunnes and Gunnes (2012) because they saw Lullabies as what parents especially mother's sing while caring for their infants which helps to create soothing correlation among the infant's physiology, it's state of mind and the outside world. By implication, Lullabies is one of the cultural heritages in Igbo society for maintaining the social behaviour of the younger ones. It is a way of life for Igbo society. It is a culture aspect of on its own.

Culture is commonly created by man for man. Culture is crucial in any given society for effective management and adaptation of society and their members. Going with these ascertain, Odetola, Oloruntimehin and Aweda (1983) define culture as A man's entire social heritage all the knowledge, beliefs, customs and skill acquired as a member of a society. These people become distinctively human by the acquisition of culture. Culture presumes the existence of a human society and provides the skills for making society work culture is, therefore a large part of what is transmitted in the process of socialization.

In as such as culture is a process of socialization in a any society, each society has a specific context which they display every of their cultural heritage. By implication, every culture has the context at which they are performed.

In this study refers to the occasions or situations in which Lullabies are performed. Mbah & Mbah (2007) see context as the setting of performance, which helps to explain what is being done. Mbah & Mbah (2007) is in line with crowley and Finnegan (1969) has context as that, which has detailed context and form of a piece of art that are being performed by a given society at a given time or setting. Ekete society has many areas of life such as social, political, moral and economics which they perform these Lullabies.

Empirical Studies

This section reviewed work on functional literature, contextual functions of literature, Lullabies, culture and oral literature. Ugwuoke, Ikeokwu & Agbedo (2019) carried out research on drama and theatre as veritable instruments for societal development in Nigeria. The objective of the study is identified how drama and theatre can be used by playwrights and dramatists to bring development into Nigerian societies. The study is premised on theatre for development theory (TFD). The study employed qualitative research design which was context analytical. From the analysis, the study reveals that drama and theatre develop people with ethical consciousness which is crucial for the struggle against the forces of poverty and social ills. Also, the study reveals that drama and theatre empower the common man's social culture development. The study has a similarity with this present of study in the area of literature and contextualism but differs in the objectives and methodology.

Amali (2014) carried out study on functions of folktales as a process of educating children in the 21st century in Idoma. The study was context analytical by using various folktales types in Idoma land. The study reveals that folktales are an integral part of traditional African society that researchers can use the various form derived from it and apply in modern educational process. The study has similarity with the present study in the area of oral poetry. In their difference both studies have different topics.

Akintunde (2006) carried out research on African oral tradition then and now. A culture in transition. The objective of the study takes a descriptive method to find out the importance of performance in African verbal arts. The finding of the study reveals that oral tradition is a complex corpus of verbal arts created as a means of recalling the past. The finding further reveals that oral tradition is governed by certain characteristics features, the situation or the context of production, the audience, the language and form. The research is similar to this study because they both belong to oral literature while their dissimilarity is in their methodology.

Onu and Ugwuoke (2019) carried out research on a study on the form, structure and functions of Igbo work songs. The study examines Igbo work songs to identify their forms, efficiency and roles in the Igbo society. The paper is premised on functionalism theory. Data for this study were collected from Afikpo in Ebonyi

Copyright © 2026 The Author(s): This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY-NC 4.0).

State, Nsukka in Enugu state, Onitsha in Anambra and Imo state. Interview and participant observation method was employed to elicit information. Data were further evaluated and findings reveal that joint singing of work songs coordinates actors of work and leads that workers to feel easy and works as co-operating group not as a separate individual. It was equally revealed that some of the Igbo work songs comment on life in general, on local events and express ideas of love and friendship and thus lighten labour. This study is similar to this study because both belong to oral poetry while their similarity is in their area of study and objectives.

Onyejekwe and Ikeokwu (2013) carried out research on Agbachaa-Ekurunwa female song of Mbaiseigbo community using functionalistic approach. This study aimed at investigating the social commitment of the female songs as the medium for moral function or social criticism. The finding reveals that Agbacha-Ekurunwa poetic heritage is a means of entertaining, evoking and instructing adequate emotions in the audience. Onyejekwe and Ikeokwu (2013) study are similar to this present in the area of oral literature but in dissimilarity, their objective and area of studies are different.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In this study we used contextual functionalism theory. These two theories were used to pin down the analysis of this work.

Contextual theory is one of the theories used in the analysis of literary texts. According to Annis (1978), the idea of contextualism was first suggested by Dodze- Arthur in 1975. According to Annis (1978) contextualism is a collection of views in philosophy which lays much emphasis on the context in which an action, expression or utterance took place. Malinowski and Frazer (2016) maintain that the main goal of a work of art is to emphasizes the study of the proper social settings which its meaning and effectiveness are dependable on. Therefore, in this study, the researchers look at a close examination of text of Ekete Lullabies to know the cultural and historical circumstances in which they are produced. Therefore, in this aspect of contextualism, the researchers are going to be judges based on knowledge ascription within the conversational context which means "context sensitive".

Equally functionalism as a school thought according to Jarvie and Goldschmidt (1967) is employed. The functionalism according to Malinowski and Frazer (2016) which maintain that in order to explain a social phenomenon one must first discover the cause that produced it and then and then the function that it fulfils. Therefore, this study made use of this major principle of functionalism which mantis that literature ought to be relevant to the society that has given birth to it – which means "social commitment". Therefore, this study employed context sensitivity and social commitment to pin down the analysis. The two theories were used in the analysis.

METHODOLOGY

This section is dealt with the methods that were used in the collection of data. Specifically – The research design, participants and instruments for data collections and equally methods used to present, analyze and discuss data from fieldwork,

Research Design

This study is qualitative research. In the words of Jupp (2006), qualitative research is research that investigates aspect of social life which are not amendable to qualitative measurement. Therefore, this meant to present a detailed contexts of lullabies as seen in Ekete Igbo. This is why the researchers chose to use descriptive design as it helps to present the contents of the lullabies of each context in details. Descriptive is also used because this work involved the use of varied instruments in gathering data which are interviews and audio -tape recording.

Sampling Techniques

David, M. and Sutton C. D. (2004) sees sampling as selection of materials and selected groups to be a representative of the population the researcher is interested in. It was based on this motion thar the researchers selected (10) informants from the population of Ekete speech community to be a representative of Ekete population because this type of study cannot take all the Ekete Child caregivers. Considering the nature of this study, the researchers employed random sampling techniques to select research participants. The random sampling selection was based on the population size and the experience of the informants, about the research in question and the community also. These are six Child caregivers, mostly mothers from Ekete and four community leaders from Ekete who are learned and experts in the research and who can read and write.

Research Participants

The history of Ekete, mainly exists in Oral traditional. According to our oral interview, Ekete has a number of persons of retold story that seems to justify, the name and the historical origin. According to one of these oral traditions, which have passed from generation to generation, Ekete we know today is a coined word from their business activities from Igalla people at Orie orba market in the process of their business activities with the Igalla people in 1940's.

Ekete is the short form of the town we are describing. The full name and meaning of clipped name from their business activities according one of our informants is "*Ekete- Ekeru" meaning* "*Continuous sharing*".

Ekete speech community, according to Ugwuoke (2012), is made up to four towns in Igbo-Eze South Local Government of Enugu state, Nigeria; includes- Ovoko-Akpuruokwe with thirty-nine (39) hamlets, Iheaka which is made up of twenty-two hamlets (22), Uhunowerre which is made up of seventeen (17) hamlets and Iheakpu-Awka with fourteen (14) hamlets. Altogether we have Nineth-Three (93) hamlets. See the map below showcasing a stretch map of Igbo- Eze South with Ekete towns.



Copyright © 2026 The Author(s): This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY-NC 4.0).

Considering the population size, the researcher randomly picked participants from the learned people, two from Ovoko Child caregivers and one community leader making the participants three from Ovoko. Iheaka with the second in population size, two Child caregivers and one community leader were equally selected. Iheakpu-Awka and Uhunowerre with less population in their communities were represented with one (1) child caregivers and one (1) community leader respectively make these last group of two informants, each from them. Total informants for the study are now 10 participants. Six child caregivers with age range from 50 years and above and community leader from 60 years and above with reading and writing skills.

Instrument for Data Collection

In this study, the researchers resorted to the use of interviews and audio-recording. In interviews the researchers used unstructured type of interviews. This because this type of interviews under this study allowed the researchers to dig for more information and clarity where the need arises. Through the use of unstructured interviews, the researchers interacted with Ekete people especially the child caregivers and some selected Ekete leaders with different experiences in the contexts of Ekete lullabies. Also, with the use of tape recording, the researchers were able to collect the content of the Ekete lullabies which were use in their descriptive analysis. The contents from the audio-recordings allowed the researchers to triscribe, translate, evaluate attitudes, values and belief systems of Ekete during their analysis. Also, through audio- recordings the contents of lullabies used in this study were used under each context of their performances with regard to contextual-punctualism theories.

Ethics, privacy and confidentiality of the participants were reached by the researcher and the participants. This was through oral agreement as the participants participated willingly. The researcher gave them assurance that their information was purely for academic purposes. The lead researcher is Ekete indigene.

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

In this section, we discussed the contextual –functions of lullabies in Ekete Society. Context in the words of Ebewo (1997) is defined as the surroundings; circumstances, environment, background or settings that determine, specify or clarify the meaning of an event. In this study, context could be seen as the particular historical circumstance, background or settings which give rise to lullabies. Contexts here in this study is used to refer to many occasions in which Ekete lullabies are used. In oral literature, it is also important to note that any function of oral text is context- sensitive. Forgoing with this assertion, it will not out of place discussing functions of Ekete lullabies here, in relation to the contexts. In other words, that this section looked at the proper settings in Ekete which helped in the understanding of Ekete lullabies functions. These includes various contexts below-teaching and learning, context of Initiation, pacification contexts and validation of culture.

Teaching and Learning Context

Teaching in the words of Dialoke (2013) is an attempt to help people acquire some skills, attitudes, ideas and knowledge. Dialoke (2013) views agree with Herman (2021) that teaching involves the setting up of activities to improve a person's knowledge, skills, attitudes and values. In other words, teaching is a process and means by which an experienced person or a teacher helps the students or less experienced individuals to acquire knowledge, skills, attitudes and values in order to achieve a positive character or behaviour. Learning can also be deduced to mean acquisition of new knowledge, ideas, skills, values and attitudes through teaching.

Therefore, teaching and learning in Ekete go together. For teaching to come to life, it requires the principles of learning.

In the context of teaching and learning in Ekete, lullabies are used by adults, most especially mothers and caregivers generally known as *(Ohenwa)* to provide opportunities of new knowledge, ideas, skills and values to the babies of Ekete. In Ekete, if an adult wants to teach babies their values regarding good deeds such as hard work, contention and selflessness, this lullaby is mostly used. See lullaby below-

In the context of teaching and learning, this lullaby below is normally used – *Ọ kwə əkwa achigụ ọchi* lullaby

Solo–Ọ kwə əkwaáchígụ ọchí	**A life of tears and no laughter**
Chorus – Á bụghụ ézígbò òmùmè	Is not a good behaviour
Solo– Ọ ŕinrį́ árụgụ ọ́rụ	Eating without work
Chorus– Á bụghụ ézígbò òmùmè	Is not a good behaviour
Solo - Ọ kụ́ ụ́rá árụgụ ọ́rụ	Sleeping without working
Chorus- Á bụghụ ézígbò òmùmè	Is not a good behaviour
Solo – Ó rí nrį́ èhọ̀ èjụgụ éjù	Always eating without satisfaction
Chorus – Á bụghụ ézígbò òmùmè	Is not a good behaviour
Solo- Ìhé ànyì nà- áchọ́ bụ ékwùmé ánụ̀mà	What we want is a good behaviour
Chorus – Ézígbó òmụ̀mè bụ ékwùmé anụma	A good behaviour is listening to good counsel
Ézígbó òmụ̀mè bụ ékwùmé émémé	A good behaviour is doing the good work

In Ekete, this type of lullaby is usually for teaching and learning good behaviours and societal values. Ekete people believe that good behaviours are essential ingredients for the full realization of the human capacity. It is on this note that they use this type of lullaby to inculcate in their young ones vigorously the value of good behavior. This is shown in choruses of lines 1,2,3,4, and 5 of the lullabies.

Copyright © 2026 The Author(s): This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY-NC 4.0).

In stanza 1- the society reminds their baby that crying without laughing is not a good behaviour. (*Ọ kwá ə́kwa áchígụ́ ọ́ch íábùghù ézígbò òmùmè)*

In stanza 2 – the baby is reminded that eating without working is not a good behaviour. *(O ŕi nrį́ árụ̀gụ̀ ọ́rụ̀*) In stanza 3- equally the baby through the lullaby is reminded that sleeping without working is not a good behaviour. (*Ọ́ kụ́ ụ́rá árụ̀gụ̀ ọ́rụ̀)* etc

All these orientations in this lullaby are the basic education or Ekete curriculum prepared that all who were brought up through this lullaby will be able to have the skills and capabilities of self-employment and self-confidence. These multi-dimensional approaches are what Ekete society use in tackling the issue of poverty from the grassroots. Based on this orientation, any Ekete child will not lack appropriate value of their culture and customs. This lullaby in addition to the already functions mentioned above is geared towards creativity, service, innovation and enterprise.

Context of Initiation

Initiation is the process of being introduced into a society or an association. It is also the form of ceremony by which a person is introduced into any society by the other members of that society. An Initiate on the other hand is a new member of an organization, one who has been through a ceremony of initiation and has become a member of an organization or a society. It is also a member who has been initiated through ceremonies or rituals.

In Ekete cultural zone, rite of initiation constitutes an important element of Ekete Education as a phase and a process of cultural acquisition. One of such rites that goes with ceremony and rituals in Ekete zone is rites of initiation in early childhood in Ekete, commonly known as "*ighụ nwá əha*" (naming ceremony). As we mentioned earlier, Ekete cultural zone has four towns and all the towns have the same belief system which make them see one another as brothers and sisters.

(2) Lullaby: Ọ́ bụ́rụ̀ gúgh (If you are a child of Ekete)

Solo - Ọ́ bụ́rụ̀ gúgh, Ọ́ bụ́rụ̀ gúgh-	If you were the child of Ekete
Chorus - Ọ́ bụ́rụ̀ Ínyìgù gbọ́mgbọ́m	If you were the child of Ekete, wouldn't you feel great?
Solo - Ọ́ bụ́rụ̀ gúgh bụnwà Ékèté –	If you were the child of Ekete
Chorus - Ọ́ bụ́rụ̀ rugh Ínyìgù gbọ́mgbọ́m	If you were the child of Ekete, wouldn't you feel great*?*
Solo - Ọ́ bụ́rụ̀ gúgh–	If you were the child of Ekete
Chorus - Ọ́ bụ́rụ̀ ghIny ìgù gbọ́mgbọ́m	If you were an Ekete, wouldn't you feel great*?*

During this ceremony, Ekete society presents their children to their gods. For example, Ovoko-Akpụrụ*okwe*initiates their children to the earth goddess called *Akpụrụokwe* and that is why any child from Ovoko is called *Akpụrụokwe*. These rites of initiation involve some rituals such as bathing the baby with palmwine using *Ejuru osisi* leaves as local sponge. This washing is done by the groups of elderly women around. After bathing the baby, a small hole is dug containing all the excreta of that baby collected by the mother for eight days and the mother will be called upon to kneel down before the hole. The kneeling of the mother according our informants signifies thanksgiving and obedience to the earth goddess. After this stage, the mother of the baby will be asked by her fellow women to push all those excreta of the baby collected for eight days together with the umbilical cord into the hole in front of the baby's father's house. This societal ritual is referred to as commitment of the new baby to earth goddess Ala. This ceremony is not peculiar to Ovoko alone but to all Ekete towns. This ritual of initiation in Ekete is what they refer to as*"naming ceremony".* These processes make the babies or infants of Ekete the bonafide members of Ekete society.

In an oral interview one of the informants in Iheaka explained that after eight days of birth, a baby is connected to the cult of ancestors by performing naming ceremony initiation rites. Also, it was discovered that during initiation rites of any baby in Iheaka the baby is united into one worshipping community, which is Iheaka. The same motive of this initiation is not far from all the towns in Ekete.

Ekete people believe in "*Ala"* (Earth). They call on *Ala* (Earth) in everything they do. Hence, they love and fear *Ala* so much. For Ekete Igbo, the second in hierarchy after God is *"Ala".* In Ekete, both naming ceremony and child circumcision take place eight days after birth

Also, in context of circumcision, Ekete society makes use of the lullaby above called

Ọ́ bụ́rụ́gụ́gh Ínyìgù gbọ́mgbọ́m This type of lullaby in Ekete is psychologically, socially, culturally and religiously impulsive. This lullaby encourages Ekete children to be ready to accept what it takes to be an Ekete Child. This type of lullaby in this context also ensures the continuity of Ekete's specific characteristics of circumcision. This is depicted in the choruses.

Ínyìgù gbọ́mgbọ́m	In Ekete is someone in his full capacity.
Ọ́ bụ́rụ́ ghụ̀ Ínyìgù gbọ́mgbọ́m	If you were the one wouldn't you feel great

This lullaby gives insight into the culture of Ekete people. Also, the concept of societal values which Ekete teaches through lullabies makes children hear the things that will make them to be proud of Ekete and as a result, help them to imbibe all the customs, values, norms and institutions of Ekete.

Most importantly, Ekete lullabies in the initiation context makes other children feel reborn and perceived as priceless gifts to the Ekete society because they are the main guests in the initiation ceremony.

Pacification Context

Pacification according to Ugwuoke, Okebalama, and Ikeokwu (2018) is a means of restoring peace, unity and love in conflict

Copyright © 2026 The Author(s): This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY-NC 4.0).

situations. For them, pacification advocates for positive and negative means of restoring peace. They further aver that pacification could lead to peace or quarrel but at the end, the situation will be the restoration of public tranquility. In the context of this study where entertainment and pacification are synonymous, we looked at pacification as an attempt to create or restore peace in the life of a baby.

Ekete people are peace loving people who appreciate the security of lives and properties. They also love to raise their children in peace and harmony. Pacification of a crying baby in Ekete could be through music, dancing and games. All these are done to entertain a baby in a bid to pacify him or her when troubled or unsettled. An example of pacification/entertainment lullaby in Ekete is *Túbó ólóló* lullaby12

Lullaby 3 *Tubo ololo* lullaby

Solo –nwá mámá túbó ólóló!!! -	Mother's child–*Tubo ololo –*
Chorus– túbó ólóló!!! Túbó ólóló!!!	*Tubo ololo!!! Tubo ololo!!!*
Solo –nwá pàpà Túbó ólóló -	Father's child – *Tubo ololo –*
Chorus– Túbó ólóló!!! Túbó ólóló!!!	*Tubo ololo!!! Tubo ololo!!!*
Solo - Ọ́kwá ə́kwá túbó ólóló!!! –	Crying baby *Tubo ololo –*
Chorus– Túbó ólóló!!! Túbó ólóló!!!	*Tubo ololo!!! Tubo ololo!!!*
Solo–Ónyé íwé– Tubo ólóló!!!	The aggrieved–*Tubo ololo!!!*
Chorus– Túbó ólóló!!! Túbó ólóló	*Tubo ololo!!! Tubo ololo!!!*
Solo - Chìmálàká ọ̀chị̀ -	Laugh please–*Tubo ololo!!!*
Chorus– Túbó ólóló!!! Túbó ólóló!!!	*Tubo ololo!!! Tubo ololo!!!*

In this lullaby, Ekete people use *"Túbó ólóló"* lullaby to entertain or pacify a crying baby. The words '*Ọ́kwá ə́kwá Túbó ólóló, ònyé íwé*- describes the baby as one who is troubled.

Also, the words – "*Chìmálàká ọ̀chị̀*" shows that the baby caregiver wants the baby to be happy. Here, the baby caregiver is begging the troubled baby to cheer up instead of crying. In Ekete, this kind of lullaby is used to make peace, pacify and calm a baby in a troubled situation. This is the evidence that Ekete people are peace loving people. Through this lullaby, they teach their young ones to be peace loving and also to avoid trouble by reminding the baby in these words:

Chìmálàká ọ̀chị̀, Ọ́kwá ə́kwá – laugh, you crying baby.

For babies who listen to this type of lullaby, they learn to be at peace with their fellow babies while adults who sing this type of lullaby to their babies pacify them. Also, the lullaby encourages everyone to avoid threats in raising a child instead they should be tender and correct with love. In this way the caregiver teaches the child to always sort out his or her problems through peace and not violence. The society through this, teaches children to imitate peace instead of violence. All these are the morals or ethical principles which Ekete views as good and important. The values in their lullabies have great influence in their children's future. Equally, these principles showcased in these lullabies influence their priorities and relationships as well as their moral guidance. The function of this lullaby in Ekete teaches the children about dialogue and peaceful negotiation. It also helps in improving the quality of life of the babies and the society at large. For example;

In line 2 – *Nwá pàpà Túbó ólóló Túbó ólóló Túbó ólóló*.

In line3- *Ọ́kwá ókwá Túbó ólóló Túbó ólóló Túbó ólóló*.

Lines 4 and 5 aimed at providing help to the baby and the society as a whole by resolving conflict or disruptions in social existence.

Finally, the function of this lullaby is to enhance the social functions of the troubled baby. In doing this, the baby caregiver harnesses and helps the baby and the society to realize the potential in the lullaby which makes the troubled baby calm. The function of the lullaby here is realized as a problem-solving process that strives at improving the living condition of babies, families and Ekete communities at large.

These are in line with the tenet of functionalism which stresses the analysis and examination of the social significance of a phenomenon and their function in a particular society.

Validation of Culture

Lullaby in Ekete serves as a vehicle for validation of culture. From the history of Ekete, it was observed that Ekete is a name coined from the business activities of communities or towns that make up Ekete. It was also discovered that Ekete is a clipped form of Ekete-Ekeru, which means collective ownership and distribution among each other. From the translation of Ekete-Ekeru, the major occupation in Ekete is "trading*"*. In trying to validate this culture of trading in Ekete children, lullabies which are associated with their means of livelihood were formed.

For example-

Lulky 4: *Nnenwáoo! Nnenwáoo!!*

Solo – ***Nné nwáóó! Nné nwáóó!!***	**Mother of a child oo! Mother of a child oo!!**
Chorus – ***óríé bụ̀ ntá!***	Today is *Orie*!
Solo – ***Nné nwáóó! Nné nwáóó!***	Mother of a child oo! Mother of a child oo!
Chorus - ***Áhọ́ bụ̀ ntá!***	Today is *Afọ!*
Solo – ***Nné nwáóó! Nné nwáóó!***	Mother of a child oo! Mother of a child oo!

Copyright © 2026 The Author(s): This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY-NC 4.0).

Chorus - ***Ǹkwọ́ bụ ntá*!**	Today is *Nkwọ!*
Solo–***Nné nwáóó! Nné nwáóó!***	Mother of a child oo! Mother of a child oo!
Chorus – ***Èké bụ ntá!***	Today is *Eke*!
Solo – ***ébérè éménú ndį́ òkwùmèrù ibe!***	I pity those who put their trust in people
Chorus – ***óríé bụ ntá***	Today is *Orie!*
Solo –***ébérè éménú ndį́ òkwùmèrù jí***	I pity those who trust in their husband
Chorus - ***Áhọ́ bụ ntá!***	Today is *Afọ!*
Solo –***ébérè éménú m ndịòkwùmèrù* nne**	I pity those who trust in their mother
Chorus - ***Ǹkwọ́ bụ ntá***	Today is *Nkwọ!*
Solo – ***ébérè éménú m ndụ́ órí ògwá na jí***	I pity those who always eat beans and yam
Chorus – ***Èké bụ ntá***	Today is *Eke!*

In Ekete, validation of their culture knows no restriction. They have no written records on it. Their validation of culture depends much on observation, imitation, personal and practical involvement on the part of their young ones. Hence the Ekete says; *Nne ewuna-ata egbala nwá ya na-ele ya anya na ọnụ*. Literally, it means that as the she goat eats mucuna grass, the kid learns to eat by watching the mother. Thus, Ekete children learn their culture of livelihood which is the business of trading by watching their older ones. The above lullaby is used in the context of trading. In Ekete, this lullaby is used to teach their young ones that it is not good to be idle. It is mainly used as a guide to the culture of trading which Ekete people found interesting and a means of livelihood. Translated in Ekete, this type of lullaby is seen as guiding lullaby- which means *egwu Igba ziriụmụaka"*. For example, in all the stanzas, the caregiver used the Igbo market to remind the society the need to go to market and fend for the family. Also, in solo 5, 6, 7, and 8, the caregiver pitied those who do not want to go to the market but rely on other people to provide for them. For instance, in the chorus in stanzas 6,7 and 8, the repetitions of *ebereememunu m*– showing pity; is of indication that Ekete are hardworking people. People in lines 5, 6, and7 are described as those who like to eat beans and yam which means those that like to eat without working. Ekete people believe that an Ekete child today is the basic recipient of culture which in turn he/she will transmit to another child in the future. They believe that what is being taught to a child today is being taught to the father of man tomorrow. Indeed, the immediate impact this lullaby makes on Ekete children towards his/her business orientation is far more than that he/she acquires in institutionalized school. For no matter whatever an Ekete son and daughter is in future, these lullabies must have greatly have influenced him or her.

Another example of lullaby in Ekete that showcases validation of culture is (*Onyenwe bee anọghụ ọ kwụwenu)* Lullbes 5

Solo–Ónyé nwé béé ánòghụ̀	The owner of the house is not around
Chorus - ọ̀ kwụ̀ wénù?	where is he?
Solo– Ónyé nwé béé ánòghụ̀,	The owner of the house is not around
Chorus - ọ̀ kwụ̀ wénù óó?	where is she oo?
Solo – Ónyé nwé béé ánòghụ̀,	The owner of the house is not around
Chorus ọ́ jereáshụa	he went to market.
Solo– Ónyé nwé béé ánòghụ̀	The owner of the house is not around,
ọ́ jérú áshụ́á óó!	he went to market oo!!

This validation of Ekete culture has myths and mythologies that provide the philosophical explanations as to why Ekete people are known mainly for their business activities in the olden days. These myths are usually expressed in their lullabies such as in the lullaby used in mother/child market outing. In Ekete, after the birth of a child, there is a custom of first market outing of the mother and child called "*izụ ashua mbụ*".

In "*izụ ashua mbụ*" first market outing, the elements of culture of trading are transmitted through the lullaby used by mothers in the market.

Another example of such lullaby is;

Lullaby 6: Mama alata.

Màmá álátá -óyóyó	Mother is back – *oyoyooo*!!!
Pàpá álátá -óyóyó	Father is back – *oyoyooo*!!!
Ọ́ látá́ ò gòté - Ọ̀kápé	When my father or mother comes back- my father or mother buys groundnut

These lullabies are used to entertain a baby coming back from market. It could be used in occasion to commemorate the culture of trading which is of vital importance to the people of Ekete. This type of outing in Ekete occurs three - six months after birth. Trading outing for the mothers in Ekete are joyous occasions celebrated with specific aims in view and as such they have Ekete beliefs attached to it. The *izụ ashụa* lullaby in Ekete is a good

Copyright © 2026 The Author(s): This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY-NC 4.0).

measure of the intensity of occupation of Ekete because such lullaby represents the Ekete society's cultural life in real context.

In Ekete, this occasion gives most mothers the opportunity to establish extended relationships with their fellow women in the market called "*ndị ofu ashua"* in Ekete.

THE SUMMARY OF FINDING AND CONCLUSION

The context and functions of performance of Ekete lullabies have been in existence prior to the advent of modernity. This study identifies the contexts that abound in Ekete lullabies. These contexts include teaching and learning contexts, context of initiation, context of pacification and context of validation of culture. The functions of each context are discussed. Under teaching and learning context, it is discovered that teaching and learning go together. It is discovered that teaching and learning lullabies are used by mostly mothers and female caregivers generally known as *ohenwa* to provide opportunities of new knowledge, ideas, skills and values to the Ekete babies. It is equally discovered that lullabies are curriculum of basic education through which a child is trained with skills and capabilities of self-employment. The study reveals that Ekete teaching and learning lullabies are geared towards creativity, service, innovation and enterprise. The study further reveals that context of initiation constitutes an important Ekete education phase and a process of cultural acquisition. It was discovered that Ekete initiation rites involve some rituals such as bathing the babies with palm wine, collecting the new baby excreta for eight days which are buried along with the umbilical cord in front of the father's stead or house. These processes of initiation are revealed to mean committing the new baby to the hands of Earth goddess -*Ala*.

Context of pacification is discovered as a situation where positive and negative means of restoring peace is implored. In pacification context, it was discovered that when a baby is troubled, the caregiver being a part and parcel of Ekete people restored peace in the mind of the baby. In this study, context of pacification is believed to be a tool for teaching a baby how to restore peace in a conflict situation in future. It reveals also that Ekete people are peace loving people. It is also a way of teaching children about dialogue and peaceful negotiations. Validation of culture context equally reveals that this context has myths and mythologies that provide the philosophical explanations as to why Ekete people are known mainly for their business activities in the olden days and also the reason the people of Ekete society are known by the name. Validation of culture contexts reveal that these contexts are institutionalized schools.

Conclusion

Finally, it is worthy to note that lullabies in Ekete are more of gender roles. It mainly belongs to women. The women mainly use them to pass down oral tradition from generation to generation Through, mothers', lullabies are used by Ekete speech Community to pass their political, moral, spiritual affairs to the younger generation of Ekete. Because of these processes Ekete lullaby has failed to face extinction.

Interviewee

1. Akintunde, A. (2006). *African Oral Tradition Then and now: A Culture in Transition* (Vol. 14). University of Florida Gainesville Publishing.
2. Amali, S. (2014). Folktales as a process of educating children in 21st century: A case study of Idoma Folktales. *International Journal of Research in Arts*, *2*(2), 25–38.
3. Annis, D. B. (1978). A theory of epistemic justification. *A Theory of Epistemic Justification*, *15*(3), 213–219. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4020-9567-2
4. Crowley, D. J., & Finnegan, R. (1969). Limba Stories and Storytelling. In *The Journal of American Folklore* (Vol. 82). Clarendon Press. https://doi.org/10.2307/538722
5. David, M. and Sulton, C.D (2004) *Social Research: The Basics. New Delhi;* Sage Publications.
6. Dnloke, C. E. (2013). Information Communication Technology and Integrated Science Education Implication for Teaching and Learning in Nigeria School. *Nigeria Research in Education Xi*, *21*–25.
7. Ebewo, P. (1997). *A hand book on literary critical terms in Africa studies*. Null Publishing House.
8. Gunnes, H., & Gunness, N. (2012). The Effects of Lullabies on Children. *International Journal of Business and Social Science*, *3*(7), 316–330.
9. Herman, V. (2021). Gender and Language: Dramatic Discourse. *4*(2), 253–314. http://doi.org/10.4324/9780203981108-13
10. Jarvie, I. C., & Goldschmidt, W. (1967). *Comparative Functionalism: An Essay in Anthropological Theory.* In *Man* (Vol. 2). University of California Press. https://doi.org/10.2307/2798682
11. Jupp, V (2006). *The Sage Dictionary of Social Research methods. London:* Sage Publications.
12. Malinowski, B., & Frazer, J. (2016). Myth in primitive psychology. In *Myths and Mythologies: A Reader*. Norton. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315475776-18
13. Mbah, B. M., & Mbah, E. E. (2007). *Azuonye: Lecturers on Igbo literature and stylistics*. University of Nigeria Press Limited.
14. Miruka, O. (1996). Encounter with Oral Literature. In *Choice Reviews Online* (Vol. 33). East African Educational Publishers Limited. https://doi.org/10.5860/choice.33-2573
15. Nakata, T., & Trehub, S. E. (2004). Infants' responsiveness to maternal speech and singing. *Infant Behavior and Development*, *27*(4), 455–464. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.infbeh.2004.03.002
16. Nwahunanya, C. (1998). *Theory, History and Criticism*. Corporate Impression.

Copyright © 2026 The Author(s): This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY-NC 4.0).

17. Odetola, T. O., Oloruntimehin, B. O., & Aweda, D. A. (1983). *Man and Society in Africa: An Introduction to Sociology*. Longman.
18. Onu, J. O, & Ugwuoke, P. E. (2022). Analysis of Language and Linguistic Features in Igbo Traditional Marriage Songs: a Functionalist Approach. *Sprin Journal of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences*, *215*–225. https://doi.org/10.55559/sjahss.v1i04.20
19. Onyejekwe, M. C., & Ikeokwu, E. S. (2013). Social Commitment in Female Song: a Functionalist Study of Agbachaa-Ekuru-Nwa Oral Performance of Mbaise Igbo. *Research in Humanities and Social Science*, *3*(10), 66–76.
20. Sone, E. (2016). Problems of Oral literature research in Swaziland. *Uniswa Research Journal*, *23*(80), 80–92.
21. Ugwuoke, P. E., Ikeokwu, E. S., & Agbedo, C. U. (2019). Drama and theatre and veritable instruments for societal development. *Nsukka Working Papers in Language, Linguistics and Literature*, *7*, 21–35.
22. Ugwuoke, P.E. (2012) *Death and Funeral Rites in Ovoko- Akpuruokwe in Igbo- Eze South Local Government Area of Enugu State*. M.A Thesis Department of Linguistics, Igbo and Other Nigerian Languages, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

Copyright © 2026 The Author(s): This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY-NC 4.0).