

THE ALTERATION OF EBGABUKU AS PART OF CULTURAL IDENTITY WITHIN IGBO SOCIETY SEEN IN ACHEBE'S MARRIAGE IS A PRIVATE AFFAIR

Inayah1
English Education

inayah01@gmail.com

Abstract

Cultural study is chosen as the research approach to classify the alteration of Ebgaugu as a part of cultural identity. To support the analysis, the researcher also involves the information related to the roles and rules of Ebgaugu as part of cultural identity in Igbo society which help to do the analysis by applying cultural identity theory. Essentialist and non-essentialist view also become supportive materials for the analysis since they give contribution in identifying the alteration of Ebgaugu as part of cultural identity in Igbo society. The researcher divides the analysis into two analysis; Ebgaugu as part of cultural Identity and the alteration of Ebgaugu in Igbo society in Achebe's Marriage Is a Private Affair. The researcher finds that Ebgaugu as part of cultural identity can be proven by seeing that Ebgaugu has big roles and rules in Igbo societies life. It can be seen by the way people attempting to preserve Ebgaugu in their life, and give the punishment as the consequence toward the disobedient toward the traditions. The essentialist tries to preserve their belief, meanwhile the non-essentialist has another opinion in his belief toward ebgaugu. Hence, at the end Ebgaugu is categorized as part of cultural identity. The alteration of ebgaugu in Igbo society can be seen by the way the non-essentialist showing his reaction toward ebgaugu and then it is followed by the society who, at the end, becomes more permissive. Eventually, this condition makes the alteration happen.

Key words: Cultural Identity, Essentialist, non-essentialist.

INTRODUCTION

The continuity of life in a society is started with marriage, because marriage brings new birth of the new generation in life, who will continue the whole way of life in family. Family is the first place where the whole member of the family knows about culture ((Oktaviani et al., 2020), (Qodriani & Kardiansyah, 2018)). As said by Browne, culture refers to the language ((Rido, 2011), (Sari, 2018), (Rido, 2020), (Pustika, n.d.), (Gulö, 2014)), beliefs ((Muliyah & Aminatun, 2020), (Mandasari, 2016), (Berlinda, 2015), (Mandasari, n.d.)), values and norms, customs, dress, diet, role ((Mandasari, n.d.), (Muhammad Yuseano Kardiansyah & Qodriani, 2018), (Mandasari, 2017)), knowledge and skills ((Agustin & Ayu, 2021), (Aminatun et al., 2019), (Erya & Pustika, 2021), (Sari, 2016), (Oktaviani, 2017), and all the other things that people learn that make up the „way of life“ of any society. Culture is passed on from one generation to the next through the process of socialization. Marriage as a culture is continued by people from one

generation to another generation. As reflected on the reality, children will do the same thing ((Pustika, n.d.), (Febriantini et al., 2021)), like what has been done by the parents, and doing marriage when the time comes. Hence, it means marriage is categorized as culture. Term of marriage has many correlations with many other words such as parents, Bridge, groom, engagement, dowry, wedding dress, decoration, ceremony, church, mosque, etc. Those words are the elements of marriage. When there are two persons having same feeling about love and they decide to continue their live together, then marriage happens. Every marriage culture has marriage systems and is commonly similar one to another, but what makes them differ from others because of the cultural identity ((M Yuseano Kardiansyah & Salam, 2020), (Ayu, 2020), (Oktaviani & Mandasari, 2020)). Based on Hall, cultural Identity is a matter of becoming as well as of being. It belongs to the future as much as to the past. It is not something which already exists, transcending place, time, history and culture (Lennon, 2008). During his life, one will through three phases of life, they are past, present and future. All of them will be passed by human being. However every individual will have different experience on it. Especially in discussing about cultural identity, every three parts of time will connect each other. Past time will always have connection with the present time and present time will always have connection with future, because based on Hall cultural identity does not merely exist, it is brought by the ancestor from the past time.

Dealing with the arrangement of marriage and also the issue of cultural alteration, there is one literary work of Chinua Achebe, a researcher from one short story entitled *Marriage Is A Private Affair*. The story tells about the arrangement of marriage traditions, as stated by Nwoye, marriages involve not just a couple of man and woman but rather two kinds of role and mutual rights and obligations. The goal is to make sure the partners are responsible in order to avoid future marital problems with potentially negative consequences for a large number of people. Igbo culture has made the arrangement of marriage as the way of their life. Two kinds of role here mean both side of parents and family which have high percentage to make decision toward their children marriage. Parents believe, know, and understand well about marriage then children. Hence, Igbo society belief the arrangement of marriage is one of the processes to support the way of their life running well.

In accordance, *Marriage Is a Private Affair* which states about Ebgaoku related to the alteration of Ebgaoku as part of cultural identity in Igbo society. *Marriage Is a Private Affair* tells that the character named Nnaemeka chooses not to follow what have been brought by his ancestors from the past time. The character of this short story, Nnaemeka, understands about his tribe cultural identity, Ebgaoku or known well as the arrangement of marriage, but he chooses not to follow his ancestor belief. This story tells Nnaemeka chooses his own wife even it is not allowed and not proper decision based on Igbo culture. At the end of the story, the marriage arrangement which is always implemented and followed by the community within is altered.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Cultural Identity

Every day of life, people will always do many activities and some activities done there must be in cultural context ((Ayu, 2019), (Apriyanti & Ayu, 2020), (Sari, n.d.), (Mandasari & Aminatun, 2019)). Every people have their own culture, but not all of them have cultural identity. Discussing about cultural identity, it means discussing about identity and culture. Schwartz stated that Culture and identity are two elements which cannot be separated. In other words, our view is that identity is a synresearch of personal, social, and cultural self-conceptions. In running life every people need concept, because too many things have to be passed well. The conception consists of personal or self, social and culture, which are part of identity. What makes people at the end have their cultural identity is because they realize about in which part they are standing in society and what makes them believe it. From the quotations above, we have to be realizes toward something, just like the reason why people recognize by the others. Like cultural identity, before people directly stated about what is their cultural identity must be steps to pass first. People recognize the others self or cultural identity then they can state themselves.

Essentialist View on Cultural Identity

In every discussion there must be two options which appear, they are agree or disagree. In every new policy made by the governor there must be two results of the actions, they are pro actions and contra actions. In discussing the significant view of culture, the social science literature is divided between essentialist and non-essentialist views ((Rido, 2015),

(Rido, 2019), (Ruyani & Matthews, 2017)). Holliday stated that, the essentialist view may be characterized as positivist and the non-essential as interpretive.

Non Essentialist View on Cultural Identity

The opposite of essentialist view is non-essentialist view, based on Baumann as cited in Holliday, culture is a movable concept used by different people at different times to suit purposes of identity (Mertania & Amelia, 2020), politics and science (KUSWOYO et al., 2013). Non-essentialist view of culture is more flexible than essentialist view, because culture will not stick on the past time whether for identity issues or even political issues. Usually one is categorized as open minded person when they can adapt and try to think logically, toward something new. That is the illustration of non-essentialist view.

An Overview on Igbo Culture (Igbo society)

In western countries or many other countries believe that relationship is supposed to be started with love feeling. Whenever man is ready to start the relationship, there must be love as the beginning. But in Igbo society, there is difference different thought about love. Based on Basden as cited in Obi, The word 'Love' according to the European interpretation is not found in the Igbo vocabulary. The data is got from Basden observation, toward Igbo society. People in Igbo land have their own interpretation about it, in their life.

METHOD

Research is scientific activity to find the correct information, knowledge, and insight about the main issue of this research. The knowledge id acquired from research that will be analyzed could be fact, concept, generalization, and phenomena to solve the problem. In this research, the researcher used library research as the research design. Library research means a research that is done in a research room or library, so that the researcher affords the data and information about the object of research through book or audiovisual equipment. Since the research is explained by sentences, so the researcher used descriptive qualitative method. Descriptive research design attempts to describe systematically a situation, problem, phenomenon, service or program, or provides information about living condition of community, or describes attitudes towards an issue.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Ebgauku as Cultural Identity

In this chapter the researcher discusses in detail about the analysis of the cultural identity related to arrangement of marriage system and also the alteration issue of the Ebgauku as part of cultural identity in Igbo culture which appears through the short story *marriage is a private affair*. In the short story, the researcher found some dialogues and also narrative text which represents the cultural identity of Igbo inside of the story. As explained by Schwartz that culture and identity are the elements which are correlated each other, both of them will be stronger, while becoming one. If it is related to cultural identity, it means we are discussing about culture, identity and vice versa.

The discussion of cultural identity started when in every country and every place appear many cultures and some of them have similarities then cultural identity became the hedges to distinguish one culture to another. The example is Ebgauku or the tradition of the arrangement of marriage. Some cultures in this world have the same system of marriage related to the arrangement, but not all of them believe it as their cultural identity.

Role of Ebgauku in Igbo Tribe in Nigeria Seen in Achebe's *Marriage Is a Private Affair*

Every thought and every people have role part in life. As the illustration is the role of a mother, she is a common girl who has many activities, but since she gave a birth then another role of her life added by becoming a mother. The role of a mother, can be the guidance for the child, be the helper when the child face the difficulties, etc. Role of ebgauku as part of culture in Igbo society means the part of the involvement of ebgauku in Igbo societies' life. How big role of ebaguku can be seen by the affection of society in believing this culture as their cultural identity.

Everything that is done by every people of community in their daily life and done continually by them can be categorized as culture. The other meaning of culture which is known well by people is a production. Culture is a product of people belief of their daily life. In the short story of *Marriage Is a Private Affair*, the researcher found some of the proof related to Ebgauku as part of cultural identity and the alteration of cultural identity in the story in Igbo society. There are some dialogues and narrations from the short story which is related to the explanation related to role of Ebgauku in Igbo tribe in Nigeria.

“You have lived in Lagos all your life, and you know very little about people in remote parts of the country.”

“That’s what you always say. But I don’t believe anybody will be so unlike other people that they will be unhappy when their sons are engaged to marry.”

“Yes. They are most unhappy if the engagement is not arranged by them. In our case it’s worse—you are not even an Ibo.”

(Achebe, 1987:1)

That is the dialogue produced by Nnaemeka toward his wife Nene. This conversation is started by Nene to encourage her husband sending a letter to his father and telling about their situations because she thought Nnaemeka’s father will also feel the happiness between them. The dialogue shown there is culture in Igbo that is Ebgauku or the arrangement of marriage system which is really shown by the dialogue. The arrangement of marriage is believed as the best way to look for the best spouse for the children by parents in Igbo society.

Rule Governing Ebgauku Seen in Achebe’s *Marriage Is a Private Affair*

In a family, in a school, in work place, there must be rule which is made to bound people in doing something which is not allowed and not related with the place surrounding. Rule made are followed by the consequence to minimalize the number of disobedient. Rule is not only made by those elements, but also for culture. As stated by Wijaya in ebgauku there is rule which resulting the consequence. When culture has the identity, the essentialist must realize the existence of the rule which bound their culture. Running the rule have by the culture, makes the existence will stay longer. Ebgauku as one of the cultures which have identity also have rule and the consequences toward the disobedient. Rule of Ebgauku as part of cultural identity made for diminishing the alteration process which is possible appeared when the non-essentialist always supports the acceptance toward new idea.

There is rule, must be consequence of the disobedience, the consequences of the disobedience are different one to another. The most common consequence of the disobedience of Ebgauku is being expelled by the society and people around. In this case, Ebgauku as part of cultural identity can be categorized as norm which is similar with rule, and then the rule are supposed to be followed by the people. If the rule of Ebgauku are not obeyed by the society, there must be consequences which will face them. In the short story there are narration and dialogue which show the consequence of the disobedient of Ebgauku.

“Nene Atang from Calabar. She is the only girl I can marry.”

This was a very rash reply and Nnaemeka expected the storm to burst. But it did not. His father merely walked away into his

room. This was most unexpected and perplexed Nnaemeka. His father's silence was infinitely more menacing than a flood of threatening speech. That night the old man did not eat. (Achebe: 1987:3)

This is the dialogue and the narration of Nnaemeka and his father, Okeke, while both of them try to deliver their best arguments about which girl is best for Nnaemeka's partner of life meanwhile Okeke believes that she is not. In this case, Nnaemeka insists to state that Nene is the best girl for him. Then, at the end of the dialogue, the narration shows that Nnaemeka's father really upset and does not want to talk anymore to him at that night. The narration above shows that it is one of the consequences which are got by Nnaemeka, after he is not following what his father said to choose Ugoye Nweke. Okeke does not say anything and leaves him at that night that is one of the actions taken by Okeke to show his anger to Nnaemeka. The silence of Okeke does not stop only at the night the marriage discussion appears, but it is continued year by year.

CONCLUSION

After doing the analysis, here the researcher finally draws the conclusion that, *Marriage Is a Private Affair's* short story presents about Ebgaugu as part of cultural identity and the alteration of Ebgaugu in Igbo society. This is seen from the narrations and the dialogues of the characters in the short story, moreover the one which is related to the alteration of the Ebgaugu as part of cultural identity in Igbo society. Based on the analysis, Ebgaugu is proven as the part of cultural identity seen in Achebe's *Marriage Is A Private Affair*. The analysis which has been done by the researcher of Ebgaugu as part of cultural identity can be seen from two sides. The first is the role of Ebgaugu in Igbo tribe in Nigeria seen in Achebe's *Marriage Is A Private Affair* and the second is rule governing Ebgaugu seen in Achebe's marriage is a private affair. As the result of the analysis for the role of Ebgaugu In Igbo tribe in Nigeria uses cultural identity theory and is supported by the essentialist view, hence Ebgaugu has big role toward all society. Cultural identity is the product of the time, related to history, which has been already brought and followed by many generations. It can be seen from the short story, when all of the society's life can be affected by one culture that is Ebgaugu.

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