



## An Analysis of Etay Wuni Pugut Wedding Song in Asotipo Village, Jayawijaya Regency

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**Abstract.** The purpose of this study is to examine linguistic features, symbolic meaning, cultural values, and social functions. This study employed a qualitative descriptive method to interpret the symbolic expressions embedded in the song. Data were collected through observation, documentation, and interviews with local informants and analysed using a cultural and linguistic approach. The informants used in this study were traditional elders, elders community, and singers of Etay Wene Pugut. The data were collected through observation, documentation, and semi-interview. The findings reveal that Wikaure/Wokaure (marriage) represents a central institution that governs social relationships. Wam Kino Ari Halok/Sayl Kino Ari Halok (requesting pigs as bride wealth) signifies the economic and symbolic aspects of marriage traditions. Alon werek hugaio (lazy man) and Hali wutik/yawu wanilek (never working or collecting firewood) emphasize the importance of diligence and responsibility. Hopase/Hagosa (lack of parental advice) highlights the role of family in morality. In contrast, Nyair ikogorek reflects resistance to traditional bride wealth practices. Wen/yawu ato ware (working in the garden) promotes positive values through expressions as symbolizing productivity and self-reliance. Leere oweak oo (mourning the deceased) and Inyoi/nyagecugi witlauka/watllauke (remembering deceased family members) demonstrate respect for ancestors and a collective memory. Finally, Iwiru/ewero (misfortune) reflects beliefs about fate and life challenges.

**Keywords:** Culture; Ethics; Social Function; Traditional Song; Symbolism.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Culture is one of the most important things that make up any human life, in other words, it can be defined as a combination of values, beliefs, traditions and customs which are reflections of community identity. Member societies - Primary construction of culture, from material practices to oral traditions passed down across generations as a source of collective memory and social continuity in indigenous peoples (Halitopo, Kogoya, & Maitimu, 2025; Mukherjee, 2025; Yikwa, Kogoya, & Halitopo, 2025). Oral traditions serve as pathways in which communities maintain local knowledge, social relations, and collective historical awareness. Of the many types of oral tradition, songs have a pioneering role as they encapsulate language, music, ritual, and symbolism in social event performances.

Song tradition in weddings is also important as wedding ceremonies are social dense ritual spaces where songs, dance, poetry and symbolic communication restates kinship, identity and cultural durability (Filippidou & Koutsouba, 2020; Kononenko, 2022; Nowak, 2000; Zlatanović, 2024). In addition to its artistic dimension, the wedding song is a cultural instrument by which communities manage claims to belonging and maintain collective identity through time, mediated by systems of music, ritual and symbolic communication reflective of ethno-cultural particularities in variable social contexts (Filippidou & Koutsouba, 2020;

Nowak, 2000). The traditional wedding repertoire possesses a series of unique linguistic, symbolic, lament, blessing and ritual forms which reveal the world view, ethics and ideals of a community (Khakimyanova, 2020; Olson, 2017). Wedding songs as manifestations of cultural survival, ethnic identity, familial connections, and shared memory through symbolic and corporeal enactments (Darweish & Robertson, 2021; Olson, 2017; Salaad, 2023). Therefore, wedding songs are social- and identity-maintaining semiotic systems.

Oral tradition wedding serve as of collective memory and times gone by. Wedding songs and oral poetry reactive communal histories, social cohesion and group identities through ritual performance. As a case in point, Palestinian wedding poetry became a means for the public rearticulation of collective identity and cultural rootedness in the face of political restriction and surveillance (Darweish & Robertson, 2021; Nurchotimah, Nurbayani, Fitriyani, Sanusi, & Amelia, 2023; Oynotkinova, 2024). In the same way, (Khakimyanova, 2020; Tso, Gyatso, Tsering, & Turin, 2023) argue that ritual songs are able to preserve profound cultural memories and historical traditions, yet they can undergo transformation in line with the needs of new generations and shifting social contexts. Thus oral traditions are sustained not by cold storage but by active continuities of performance, reinterpretation and adaptation to context. And oral traditions play an important role in language maintenance and worldview transmission as ceremony songs often contain culturally dense words, local dialects, metaphors, and expressions of formulaic language that relate to native knowledge systems (Petrov & Razumóvskaya, 2021). Beyond that, (Лыгденова & Дашинамжилов, 2020) also argue that as in the case of wedding songs for example, engaging in local dialect performances of intergenerational transmission of both linguistic continuity and cultural strongly.

In the context of the *Hubula* community of Jayawijaya Regency in this day and age, with the presence of traditional wedding ceremony among other factors continuing its sociocultural vitality especially in the *Etay Wene Pugut* (Mulaudzi, 2013; Petrov & Razumóvskaya, 2021). Beyond entertainment, the song is also a vehicle for emotions, advice, kin bonding, and social values, transmitted by symbolic language, metaphorical language and traditional expressions that reflect the worldview of the indigenous *Hubula*. Although it has been culturally significant, there seems to be lack of academic studies on *Etay Wene Pugut* in which analyzes on its linguistic structure, semantic and symbolism as well as social functions are need to be conducted and the studies on Papuan societies interestingly focus more on general anthropological and linguist enquiries rather than this. The emerging approach toward the need for specifically targeted studies in the broader field of *ethnography/ethnolinguistics/ethnomusicology*, within particular community/ceremonial

contexts due to the cultural/linguistic complex of Papua (Halitopo & Kogoya, 2024; Petrov & Razumóvskaya, 2021; Tso et al., 2023). In turn, the scarce vestiges of *Etay Wene Pugut* lead to an important area for research, and the susceptibility of this oral tradition is inevitable while facing the waves of contemporary cultural transformation.

“Modernization” and “westernization” led to dramatic changes in the traditional dwellings of the *Hubula* people among others indigenous groups like them. While wedding-song customs are not all vanishing, modernity has affected their contexts, functions, and ways of execution in the forms of urbanization, religious reform, state influence, and the influence of modern forms of entertainment (Nowak, 2000; Zlatanović, 2024). Thus, traditional wedding songs like *Etay Wene Pugut* are being displaced from intimate ritual locales into show performances or being domesticated in modern ceremonies (Darweish & Robertson, 2021; Kononenko, 2022). Exposure to global popular culture among younger generations may weaken their desire to safeguard traditional songs, and formalized systems of preservation may conflict with indigenous systems of oral pedagogy and improvisation (Dyer, 2018). written language on the other hand, the recording of oral traditions has become a major focus of ethnographic and folkloristic study, as performing oral narrative is situational and these narrations are subject to Folk of Tradition bearers (Filippidou & Koutsouba, 2020; Kogoya & Halitopo, 2024b). The need for the systematic recording and transcribing and ethnomusicological documentation that caters to the entire context of performance as well as the verbal text, the local dialect (s), musical-rhythmic structures and ritual significances for prospective analysis and the transfer of culture between generations (Khakimyanova, 2020; Kononenko, 2022; Levaniouk, 2024; Nowak, 2000; Oynotkinova, 2024; Zlatanović, 2024) ."

Based on the above considerations, this study is a study of the traditional wedding song of the *Hubula* people in Asotipo Village Jayawijaya Regency, the *Etay Wene Pugut*. This research attempt to analyze the linguistic feature, symbolic meaning, cultural values, and social function of the song in the traditional wedding ceremony. Drawing upon frameworks in folklore and ethnomusicology, oral tradition theory and symbolic analysis (Kogoya & Halitopo, 2024b), the study seeks to consider *Etay Wene Pugut* not simply as a musical rendition but as a cultural text through which the *Hubula* community expresses its worldview, identity and social patterned living. The novelty value of this study is to discuss a Papuan wedding song in an interdisciplinary approach that has not been put for a detailed analysis. In addition, this study is expected to be meaningful contribution in documenting and preserving the indigenous cultural heritage and to give better understanding of the interplay among language, culture, oral tradition and social continuity in the indigenous culture.

## 2. RESEARCH METHOD

The study are based on qualitative descriptive design (Kogoya & Halitopo, 2024a) to identify and comprehend the meanings, functions, and cultural values of *Etay Wene Pugut* as a traditional wedding song in Asotipo village, Jayawijaya Regency. To show a methodical and true particular of the linguistic features, symbolic meanings and social functions of the song, a descriptive method was applied.

As a purposive sampling technique used in this study, it predicted an allowable selection rather than random chance, the participants in this study were purposefully chosen and were anticipated not necessarily to represent the Cultural group but more to represent the Culture of the tradition. The informants were two traditional leaders, the elders of the community and practitioner of culture or the singers and players of *Etay Wene pugut*.

The study is an application of qualitative descriptive design (Kogoya & Halitopo, 2024a), with the following research objectives, observation, interview and documentation were used to collect the data that is identified as method to fulfil the research goals. The researcher was also interested in contextualizing the *Etay Wene Pugut* in terms of its performance through wedding ceremony. Semi-structured interviews with informants in order to obtain more information of the meaning, function and significance of the song to culture. For further analysis, the researcher obtained audio recordings and written texts of the song, as well as field notes.

**Table 1.** Procedures of Data Collection and Expected Results.

No	Procedures	Results
1	Preparing the interview questions	A list of semi-structured interview questions
2	Preparing supporting tools for the interview	Notebook, telephone, and digital camera
3	Identifying and selecting the informants for the interview	Visits to the informants' houses
4	Conducting in-depth interviews	Recorded interview data
5	Transcribing the interview data	Interview transcripts
6	Checking the typed data and conducting necessary revisions	Completed and verified typed data
7	Translating the <i>Etay Wene Pugut</i> wedding song into English	The written <i>Hubula</i> wedding song text into English

Data analysis in this study is influenced by Miles, Huber man, and Sadana as cited in (Kogoya & Halitopo, 2024a). The following are the three basic modules of the data analysis procedure:

**Reduction of Data:** The process of data reduction entailed choosing, focusing on, simplifying and/or abstracting the data collected through observations and interviews.

**Display of Data:** The matter of dividing the already coded data into subthemes for further analysis and visualization in matrices was part of this attitudinal process. This permitted linguistic structures to be isolated in the data, which made it possible to compare different tribal languages and identify common models and/or significant divergences. An analysis of the data was gathered, summarized, and reported in the form of an integrated outcome.

**Main Focus of Research:** The investigation was the main focus of the research. It attempted to approach an enhanced understanding of Papua's "linguistic diversity" by investigating and documenting the linguistic features of *Etay Wene Pugut* weeding song. This goal, which emphasizes the imperative to support and strengthen language initiatives in the area, is an affirmation of the importance of linguistic research in recording and sustaining cultural diversity and richness.

### 3. FINDING AND DISCUSSION

The results also suggest that *Etay Wene Pugut* is a high culture depicting the interaction of language, meaning and social functions. From the linguistic viewpoint, the deployment of repetition, metaphor, and parallelism is consistent with the mode features of oral literature identified in oral tradition theoretical research.

In its meaning, the song is a reflection of the notion that language and culture are closely linked. The symbolic statements in *Etay Wene Pugut* endorse the assertion that meaning is socially constituted and is permeated by a culture of context. The song's advice and values are a reflection of the community's expectations for marriage and social responsibility.

Moreover the functions of *Etay Wene Pugut* are related to the functionalist perspective of folklore, which tells us cultural utterance have instrumental functions of society: The song is not simply rendered for amusement; it functions as an instrument of education, social cohesion and cultural preservation.

In a modernizing world, the survival of *Etay Wene Pugut* in the Jayawijaya Regency might be questioned. Influence of modern culture might make youth less interested in carrying out the traditional ways. Nonetheless, that this song is still sung in weddings today may be taken as evidence that it has not yet lost its charm.

#### Analysis

"*Etay wuni pugut*" is a song to the moral value of opinion in principle, and how to know the human action. The hermeneutical approach is the science and art of interpretation, with a focus on interpreting texts, signs, and human deeds. In terms of *etay wuni pugut*, the sentence's function in the lyrics is to have a meaningful word. Hermeneutics is the practice of

"producing better understanding" of a text than its authors. Grammatical interpretation is to interpret the meaning of words and sentences, psychological interpretation is to interpret the inner will of the author (mind of author). Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768-1834) *Etay wuni pugut* have some categories there are in wedding ceremony event *wuni pugut*, warm tribe *wuni pugut* and spiritual *wuni pugut*.

**Table 1.** *Etay Wuni Pugut* Wedding Song.

No	Hubula Language	English Language	Meaning
1	<i>Wikaure/wokaure</i>	Marriage	Have wish a girl
2	<i>Alon werek hugaio</i>	To easy	Just needed hard work
3	<i>Hali wutilk/yawu wanilek</i>	Did not work	Lazy person
4	<i>Hopase/hagosa</i>	Your mother\your father	Support system
5	<i>Wam kino ari halok/saly kino ari halok</i>	Request pig	Symbol from whisper and the answered from the problem (gold)
6	<i>Nyair ikogorek</i>	Disliked	Disagree
7	<i>Wen /yawu ato ware</i>	In residue garden	The livelihoods place
8	<i>Leere oweak oo</i>	Broken heart	Cry \ sad
9	<i>Inyoi /nyagecugi witlauka /watllauke</i>	Brother\sister was died	lose the important people
10	<i>Iwiru /ewero</i>	Remember	Sad and feel the something wrong to do

**(Wikaure/wokaure) Marriage**

The word *Wikaure / Wokaure* in marriage means want to marry or have the intention to marry a girl. This statement demonstrated the *Hubula* people sense of marriage, which marriage is not just a man and a woman relationship, but it is a commitment to social and family relationship. The notion of *Wikaure* is related to the start of eating responsibilities: a man states that he is prepared to establish a household and meet obligations such as the payment of bride wealth and family contracts. It is also a sign that honour has been given to cultural customs, and to the participation of the two families in the process of matrimony. This is why the terms *Wikaure* or *Wokaure* are very powerful words within *Hubula* culture as they talk of love, responsibility, and the recognised manner of forming a new home.

**(Alon werek hugaio) To easy**

In the language of *Hubula*, *Alon werek hugaio* means you can make it easy if you put in hard work and you are determined. Though it can be translated as “too easy”, the essence of the phrase conveys a message that “nothing is easy in this world, without sweat you are not supposed to take success in your palms”. Within *Hubula* cultural thinking, this phrase is a powerful life lesson that teaches hard work is required in life if you are to assume the obligations of married life, family support, and social responsibility. It serves as a reminder

that marriage and household duties are not easy and that both bride wealth and household duties can be handled if you persevere and continue your education. Thus *Alon werek hugaio* encapsulates the importance of 'working hard', which includes being disciplined and responsible as foundation stones in *Hubula* society.

***(Hali wutilek\yawu wanilek) Did not work***

*Hali wutilek* or *Yawu wanilek* is slang for a lazy person who is not working. This saying has a significant moral implication in the *Hubula* society, where hard work is equated with responsibility, maturity and adult life (to get married). A person who is not willing to work is sometimes implied to be unready to raise a family, perform customary duties, or assist the community. The phrase is both a warning and social counsel to live a busy productive and responsible life day to day. So *Hali wutilek* or *Yawu wanilek* is the expectation in the culture that all people need to work hard if they want to be respected and to get a solid footing for their life.

***(Hopase\hagosa) Your mother/father***

*Hopase* and *Hagosa* mean “your mother” and “your father” and refer to the family support system. In *Hubula* society the parents enjoy a very high esteem, as they are essential in advising and supporting their children during critical events in life such as wedding. Mothers and fathers have their own bio-logical, emotional, and moral educational story to tell. Their participation in family decisions, like those for arranging marriage and bride wealth contribution, evinces the importance accorded to family solidarity. The terms *Hopase* and *Hagosa* –‘your mother’ and ‘your father’ respectively– represent emotional support, cultural upbringing and the basis of each person’s socio-cultural identity. And thus these words are laden with meaning in *Hubula* culture, speaking of life’s end and the parents need to be central pillars of that life and the greatest support system in both personal and collective relationships.

***(Wam kino ari halok/saly kino ari halok) Request pig***

In the language of *Hubula*, *Wam kino ari halok* and *Saly kino ari halok* are requests for pigs, and marriage and social obligation is intimately linked to the symbol of the pig. Among the *Hubula*, pigs are extremely valuable and often work as bride wealth, signifying honour, commitment and seriousness of marital intentions. The symbolic significance of this idiom is at the heart of the communication between families, since the demand for pigs is simultaneously a proposal and an acknowledgment of social responsibilities vis-a-vis family norms. It may also represent a solution to a difficulty or the execution of a deal, like something valuable, such as gold. This tradition reveals that marriage is not a private affair between two individuals but also a communal and cultural practice, necessitating negotiation, respect, and

mutual understanding between families of both bride and bridegroom. To this day, *Wam kino ari halok* and *Saly kino ari halok* embody the importance of pigs as representations of wealth, accountability and balance within *Hubula* marriage traditions.

#### **(*Nyair ikogorek*) Disliked**

*Nyair ikogorek* is an expression of distaste or disagreement especially used when somebody objects to what somebody is doing or says. In *Hubula* culture, where *Nyair ikogorek* often surfaces around family decisions, arranged marriage negotiations and social obligations. It's a feeling of disapproval when expectations haven't been met, like challenges around bride wealth, family obligations and individual conduct. This term of expression illustrates how community relations are mediated along a continuum of inter-personal and inter-familial understandings, respect and consensus. It is also a warning that peace in a community is dependent on human interactions within it. And so *Nyair ikogorek* is an emotional and social charge as well - it signifies not only personal dislike, but also the necessity of maintaining equanimity and a sense of common purpose within the *Hubula* community.

#### **(*Wen \Yawu Ato Ware*) in Residue Garden**

In the *Hubula* language *Wen* or *Yawu ato ware* means garden residue, that is the left over part of a garden, and it stands for livelihood for the *Hubula* people. For the *Hubula*, the garden is more than a site of cultivation but a vital source of everyday life, subsistence, and family economy. It symbolizes such things as toil, obligation and the people/nature nexus. With the food, materials, and security that the garden delivers, it is at the heart of both family life and community health. In terms of marriage, the access to a garden is a symbol of a person's ability to run a house and social duties. Thus, *Wen* or *Yawu ato ware* is deeply meaningful culturally as a metaphor of livelihood, productivity and the basis of life in *Hubula* society.

#### **(*Leere Oweak Oo*) Broken Heart**

The phrase "*Leere oweak oo*" is meant to be interpreted as a broken heart which represents deep sadness, emotional suffering, and crying tears. This phrase is used to convey a sense of dissatisfaction, grief, or heartache due to personal troubles, family issues, or life challenges. In *Hubula* feelings like sadness are relational (to family obligation and social expectation) and familial (love and marriage). A broken heart can mean abandonment, estrangement, or the inability to meet major commitments like marriage contracts or family pacts. It is also a metaphor laden with human signification of mourning and pain. Hence "*Leere oweak oo*" is not merely a sad expression but a holistic depiction of emotional and societal layers in the *Hubula* culture.

**(*Inyoi \nyagecugi witlauka \watllauke*) Brother\sister was died**

*Inyoi / Nyagecugi witlauka / Watllauke*, translates as losing a brother or sister, is losing a key person for life. The saying has a profound meaning emotionally, as siblings are a vital component of family support, companionship, and community integration within *Hubula* ideology. The loss of a brother or sister causes pain and sorrow, and a feeling of emptiness, as we are being separated from a fellow traveller of daily life, and from one with whom we have shared work and family connections. The *Hubula* people are strongly family orientated, so to many of them losing a sibling is not just an individual shared grief but a collective communal grieving. This is an expression of mourning, remembering, and valuing family cohesion. Because of that, *Inyoi / Nyagecugi witlauka / Watllauke* not only illustrates hurt but also tightly binds the pivotal cultural meaning of sibling relationships to what it means to live as a *Hubula*.

**(*Iwiru\ewero*) Remember**

Sad or *Iwiru* and *Ewero*, a culture of remembering, especially in sadness and an awareness that something bad has been done. These are emotionally charged phrases because it includes the act of remembering, which frequently involves sorrow, contemplation and profound personal feelings related to things we have done or undergone. In *Hubula* society, you can't just remember to do things without you also remembering to identify mistakes, to be sad, and to learn ethical teachings. It may be to do with family relationships, marriage obligations, or grief for the dead, and the mourners know what they could have done differently. This phrase illustrates the significance of emotions and accepting responsibility for one's actions to promote peaceful relations with one's family and cultural community. Thus *Iwiru* and *Ewero* stand for remembering, sadness and introspection as core components in *Hubula* understanding of cultural identity.

**4. CONCLUSION**

The above analysis has confirmed that the utterances in the *Etay Wuni Pugut* are a full demonstration of the cultural values, social norms, and moral teaching patterns of the *Hubula* people in Asotipo village, Jayawijaya regency. The very notion of *Wikaure/Wokaure* (marriage) in which marriage is located as a focal social institution so embedded in traditional obligations including those of *Wam kino ari halok/Saly kino ari halok* (bride wealth consisting of a pig). It shows that a marriage is not just a personal affair but the social, economic and cultural commitments of a family over the community. Moralistic messages are conveyed kindly with terms like *Alon werek hugaio* and *Hali wutilk/Yawu wanilek* which denounce laziness and stress on working hard, being responsible

and productive. *Hopase/Hagosa* emphasizes the necessity of parental guidance to teaching good character and proper living, while *Nyair ikogorek* alludes to opposition or hesitation to traditional marriage duties. Some positive cultural values given in *Wen/Yawu ato ware*: digging and livelihood in gardening work. Feelings and spirituality are conveyed by such terms as *Leere oweak oo* and *Inyoi/Nyagecugi witlauka/Watllauke* which are used when mourning, remembering and honouring the dead of one's kin. In the end, *Iwiru/Ewero* is about sorrow, regret and life reflection in what it says about hardships and errors in life. Thus, *Etay Wuni Pugut* is an ordinary wedding song in a multitude of others but it is also a cultural means through which the moral are transmitted, social norm are sustained, collective memory is preserved and cultural identification of the *Hubula* people is maintained within and outside the homes of generations to come.

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