A LINGUISTIC STUDY OF THE THEMES, FUNCTIONS AND AESTHETIC DEVICES OF SELECTED IGBO PROVERBS

BY

ANYANWU, JOSEPHINE IGBEMMA

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF POSTGRADUATE STUDIES, AHMADU BELLO UNIVERSITY, ZARIA IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (PH.D) (ENGLISH LANGUAGE)

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH AND LITERARY STUDIES,
FACULTY OF ARTS,
AHMADU BELLO UNIVERSITY,
ZARIA

SEPTEMBER, 2018

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P13AREN9023

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ZARIA

SEPTEMBER, 2018

DECLARATION

I, **ANYANWU Josephine Igbemma P13AREN9023** hereby declare that all parts of this dissertation have been researched and written by me in the Department of English under the supervision of Prof. (Mrs.) T. O. Gani-Ikilama, Prof. T. Y. Surakat and Dr. S. Abaya. It has not been presented to the best of my knowledge, in any previous application for a higher degree. All quotations are indicated and all sources of information are specifically acknowledged by means of reference.

_____	_____	_____
ANYANWU Josephine Igbemma	**Signature**	**Date.**

CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that this study titled **A LINGUISTIC STUDY OF THE THEMES, FUNCTIONS AND AESTHETIC DEVICES OF SELECTED IGBO PROVERBS** carried out by ANYANWU Josephine Igbemma meets the regulations governing the award of Doctor of Philosophy (Ph. D) in English Language, Department of English and Literary Studies, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria and is approved for its contribution to knowledge and literary quality.

_____ _____

Prof. (Mrs.) T.O Gani-Ikilama Date
Chairman, Supervisory Committee

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Prof. T. Y. Surakat Date
Member, Supervisory Committee

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Dr. S. Abaya Date
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Prof. T. Y. Surakat Date
Head, Department of English and Literary Studies

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Prof. S. Z. Abubakar Date
Dean, School of Postgraduate Studies.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to the Holy Trinity - God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit - the Author and the Finisher of all good things.

It is also dedicated to the loving and evergreen memories of the quad that meant so much to me - my Mother, Ezinne Bernadette Onyebuluzoke Obani, who left so early before dawn; my Father - Pa Livinus Obani - who saw the dawn and dusk of life; my brother - Paulinus C. Obani, who saw the dawn but left before dusk; my eldest sister, mentor and foster mother - Ezinne Regina Adamma Ejere, who saw the dawn, worked hard to see the dusk but ill-health constrained her till her demise. May their souls rest in perfect peace Amen.

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Finally, I am indebted to all those who critiqued, and supported this research. However, I take responsibility for any lapses that may still be found in the work.

ABSTRACT

Among the Igbo people of South Eastern Nigeria, the art of conversation is regarded very highly and proverbs are seen as "*abubo e ji eri okwu*" that is (condiments to speech) or literally defined as "the palm oil and salt with which words are eaten". Igbo proverbs have aesthetic appeals which have revealed that apart from being the store house of the people's wisdom, they appeal to their various senses. The study sets out to examine the common themes and aesthetic devices of Igbo proverbs in order to ascertain the extent to which they affect understanding, meaning and function in communication. As proverbs add sense to discourse, the study portrays that an understanding and effective interpretation of Igbo proverbs depend largely on the knowledge of the different themes in which they are couched and the utilization of the aesthetic devices embedded in them. The study is built on Traditional grammar and Functional grammar. Using Traditional grammar, the study examines the common themes of the proverbs. The theoretical framework for the study is based on the systemic functional linguistic (SFL). Approach to language study proposed by Halliday and Hassan (1985), Butt, Fahey, Spinks, Yallop (1999) and also Halliday and Maitthiessen (2004). The SFL theory is used to analyse the context of culture, context of situation and metafunctional components of the text. These consist of the variables of field, tenor and mode of discourse. These three parameters of context of situation affect our language choices because they reflect the three main uses of language identified by Halliday and Maitthiessen (2004) as the three metafunctions of language – ideational, interpersonal and textual, but the analysis focuses on the first two. The study analysed 40 Igbo proverbs randomly selected from the 200 Igbo proverbs obtained through audio recording and observation of live performances during formal and informal occasions involving Igbo people. Books on Igbo proverbs and interviews with four elderly Igbo men, two elderly women and four youths helped a great deal. The study found that Igbo proverbs are a repository of several aspects of the culture, orature and linguistic habits of the Igbo people. Another finding of the study is that the appreciation of the full functionality of a proverb is a property of the context of use, and the theme of the proverb influences this. The study concludes that the knowledge of the different contextual features facilitate the negotiation of the meaning of Igbo proverbs.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 General Background to the Study

Proverb as a genre in oral literature is couched in high philosophical tapestry of a language. As a branch of human natural language, it constitutes a special form of language use which attracts the attention of linguists. The use of proverbs is buried deep into the past and can be identified in the culture of a people. According to Meider (1985), people from all parts of the world use proverbs and other sayings to transmit their wisdom, knowledge, experiences and feelings. In short, proverbs encapsulate all the orature materials of Ndigbo.

Proverbs have a lot of significance in the communicative life of Igbo people. It is a mark of a mature speaker. It is often used to begin addresses, especially when one aims at making an impressive and powerful speech before an audience of respectable, experienced or elderly Igbo. Igbo proverbs are central to the existence of Igbo language and culture, hence the need to carry out a critical linguistic study, to show how the appropriateness of the themes of proverbs and the identification of the aesthetic devices in them facilitate their understanding, meaning and function in communication. Igbo proverbs reveal a lot about the Igbo and their world view. Okonkwo (1977:99) observes that:

> While some nations quote the Bible or the works and maxims of acknowledged authorities or wise men; or from a carefully worked out code of law, the Igbo quote proverbs (the time-honoured wisdom of their folk) to support and give authority and authenticity to an idea or disputed fact.

The researcher agrees with this observation and adds that there are aesthetic devices in the proverbs which can facilitate their interpretation and understanding

when used in communication. This can conveniently be seen as a kind of style in language use.

The high regards Igbo place on the use of proverbs in communication has led scholars such as Achebe (1958) and (1984) to describe it as the palm oil and salt with which words are eaten. To appreciate the wit and import of Achebe's description of proverbs, one needs to visualise a pot of 'egusi' (melon), 'ewedu' or 'kuka' soup or stew without oil or salt. In other words, it will not appeal to the eater. By implication, any conversation in Igbo land on any topic without proverbs does not appeal to the sensitivities of the listeners and therefore, creates boredom.

The importance of proverbs to Ndigbo, that is Igbo people and other cultures in Nigeria, cannot be overemphasized. This is because in Igbo land, as in most African other Nigerian cultures communication is not considered rich, until it is laced with proverbs, 'the quintessence of a people's collective wisdom sustained and transmitted from generation to generation' (Lawal, Raji and Ajayi, 1997). To Norrik (1997:279), a proverb is the horse that conveys meaning to the destination of effective communication and like language; proverbs are the dress of thought with concise words being the wings with which they fly. While the study of language may not be restricted to the study of proverbs in a particular context, a discussion of proverbs will however border on the study of the language in which such proverbs are couched. This is because there is a symbiotic relationship between language and proverbs (Adedimeji, 2010:4). Language, the human instrument of expression, depends on proverbs in appropriate contexts to achieve its most important function, which is communication.

Commenting on the beauty and aesthetic devices in Igbo proverbs, Ugo (1989:6) remarks that, "a statement becomes "ilu" (proverb) when a metaphorical

inference can be drawn from it, when a deep or universal meaning is suggested by or is derived from the surface meaning". This means that when a surface meaning mirrors the deep generalized or universalized meaning, we have ilu (proverb). The proverb below demonstrates this: "Chukwu na - acharu ehi na - enweghi odu iji"

This means that, God drives off flies for the tailless cow. This proverb transcends the immediate reference to God, flies and cow to the general notion of the relationship between God and nature, as well as the relationship between the all powerful creator and the impotent creature. Thus, similarity and figurativeness in the use of words and expressions are some of the aesthetic devices in Igbo proverbs.

This study sets out to illustrate that the embellishments found in Igbo proverbs are, indeed, aesthetic flavours, in addition to the themes and functions of the proverbs in any discourse. This is because the users of proverbs do so to philosophically communicate much in fewer words. Apart from terseness and fixity, most sayings classed as proverbs are also marked by some poetic quality in style or sense and are, in this way, set out as distinct in form from most straightforward maxims. Economy of words is also achieved through elision. This research being a linguistic study of the themes, functions and aesthetic devices of Igbo proverbs seeks to examine these key issues as they relate to Igbo proverbs. Thus, this work revolves around the thesis that Igbo proverbs are important elements of social interaction, social transformation, political art and sustenance of Igbo language.

1.2 Statement of the Research Problem

The threat to linguistic resource is now recognised as a global crisis, (Kraus, 2007). The UNESCO report (2004) estimates that as many as half of the 6000 languages spoken in the world are ''moribund'', that is, they are spoken by only adults who no longer teach or speak them to their children. One of the worst hit is the

Igbo language of south eastern Nigeria. It is feared that if nothing drastic is done before the year 2050 to save the situation, the Igbo language, despite being one of the three major languages in Nigeria, may go into extinction. (The Nation on Sunday, 2014:67).

An area of linguistic heritage affected by this pervasive drift is the proverbs, the confluence of a people's wisdom, philosophy and value judgment. Apart from the language and cultural erosion caused by the superimposition and influence of the English language, studies in different forms of orature are very scanty (Adedimeji, 2010). This is because there is a predilection for considering traditional things as unsophisticated, antiquated, irrelevant and dispensable.

Since proverbs are not theories, but powerful creative and figurative expressions used in discourse to elicit meaning, the study examines the linguistic situations in which proverbs are used, the effects on the hearer and how the employ the aesthetic tools inherent in the proverbs to decipher meaning and the overall function of the proverb in the communicative environment.

Igbo proverbs perform a dual role; as a communicative instrument and a carrier of social experience. It is the mark of a mature speaker, often used to begin and end an address especially when one aims at making an impressive and powerful speech before an audience of respectable, experienced or elderly Igbo. In essence, when the theme of a proverb refers to a situation in which one is involved, the person is expected to understand the meaning of such a proverb and contribute meaningfully to the discussion to enable a free flow of discourse to take place. If one is unable to do so, he is regarded as 'ofeke'- naive or even foolish (Okonkwo, 1977:105). The Igbo people capture this belief in the proverb which states: "a tuora omanu o mara a tuora ofeke o fejie olu" meaning when a proverb refers to a wise man, he understands, but

when it refers to a fool, he plunges into foolishness. In Igbo culture, proverbs are not meant to be explained to a listener/hearer, instead they are expected to understand or figure out the meaning and respond adequately. Another Igbo proverb substantiate this claim, "a tuora mmadu ilu kowaa ya, ego e ji luo nne ya furu ohia" meaning if a proverb is uttered to a person and the interpretation is given to him, the bride price paid on his mother's head was a waste.

Inadvertently, the functional communicative purposes and aesthetic devices inherent in this linguistic enterprise (proverb) have not been fully proper understanding and use by Igbo speakers in communication. On earlier research on the subject hence, the need to carry out this study so as to fill this research vacuum.

When a linguistic expression has an unusual significance, such an expression attracts the attention of the listener. This may also lead the listener to plunge into finding out its meaning and other linguistic traits. In other words, a proverb is any expression that is unusually significant in transmission and negotiation of meaning. One of the marked distinguishing features of proverbial language is its imaginativeness, figurativeness and marked literalness, rather than unmarked literalness (Wales, 2001). Wales maintains that markedness is used to refer to such features of patterns that are prominent, unusual or figuratively deviant, while unmarkedness indicates what is normal, neutral or linguistically/aesthetically insignificant. Since aesthetics is a principle of beauty or style adopted by a person, group or culture in doing things and the proverb is a property of the culture of a particular group, it is expected that there exists some styles of using them in the different contexts of that particular culture. It is the contention of this study that this style creates beauty and arouses negative or positive reactions which facilitate the interpretation and understanding of the meaning of the proverbs. This is what this

study seeks interrogate from the perspective that the aesthetics of Igbo proverbs manifest itself at all levels of linguistic analysis; be it substance, form and context. The study sets to proffer answer to the following research questions:

i. Which are the common themes in Igbo proverbs?

ii. To what extent are aesthetic devices employed in Igbo proverbs?

iii. What type of functions do Igbo proverbs perform and how do they mirror the philosophy of Ndigbo?

iv. How and to what extent can the use of Igbo proverbs in communication provoke a linguistic reawakening of Igbo language?

1.3 Aim and Objectives

The aim of this study is to ascertain the extent to which the themes, functions and aesthetic devices of Igbo proverbs affect their understanding, interpretation and meaning in communication. The specific objectives of the study are to:

a. Examine the themes of commonly used Igbo proverbs are commonly used.

b. Analyse the extent to which whether Igbo proverbs contain aesthetic devices.

c. Illustrate the functions performed by Igbo proverbs and how they mirror the philosophy and ideology of Ndigbo.

d. Illustrate that a linguistic reawakening of Igbo language and other Nigerian language is possible through the use of proverbs in communication.

There is a symmetrical relationship between language and power (Thornborrow, 1999:52), and proverbs are exalted forms of language usage (Norrick, 1997:279), language is also the foundation of all developments since it is the medium of expressing man's thoughts, ideas and values (Adedimeji, 2010:7). A

study of this nature, no doubt, enacts both cultural efflorescence and linguistic re-awakening.

The study hopes to demonstrate that Igbo proverbs deal with a variety of themes, ranging from social, political and economical. A single proverb is capable of being used in various contexts and hence lending itself to a multiplicity of themes. The research equally hopes to demonstrate that orature in general and proverbs in particular have been and are still very functional in many ways. Apart from the aesthetic delight proverbs provide in discourse, they also serve other vital functions.

The study is hinged on the view understanding of Igbo proverbs largely depends on the knowledge and understanding of the different themes in which they occur and that Igbo proverbs are rich in aesthetic devices. This in fact sets them apart as special form of language use. The proverbs are seen not only as viable today, but dynamic and reflective of the changing socio-cultural, economic and historical situations of the Igbo nation. Igbo proverbs could console, philosophize or depict a human behaviour. Igbo proverbs are seen as the work of profound thinkers, the articulate voice of the people, the expression of their norms, values, ideology and philosophy. No wonder Knappert (1988:148) posits that;

> The proverb strives for no high ideal, difficult of attainment, but merely voices the sum total of everyday experience which has become the common property of a social group and which is after all the basis of the group's morality in a work-a-day world.

The presence and acceptance of a given language in use by a speech community is a symbol of collective identity or mark of a common historical bond because language imposes a certain cultural and social affinity on those who commonly speak it. Specifically, and more importantly, the study advances the Systemic Functional Linguistic approach to language (Adegbija, 1999). The work is thus significant to the

theorization, elucidation and experimentation of the Systemic Functional Linguistic approach as well as aesthetics, on Igbo proverbs both of which are fused for the analysis of data. As a Trans-disciplinary study, the submissions, analysis and findings of this research would be of relevance to all those who are interested in the phenomenon of language, the most enduring of every peoples cultural heritage (Babajide, 2000: l).

1.4 Scope and Delimitation of the Study

The scope of this study is limited to the examination of themes, functions and aesthetic devices in selected Igbo proverbs. It tries to study how Igbo people use language (proverbs) in different themes and contexts. Here, we bear in mind Okpewho's (1992:36) apt observation and advice that:

> The days of "ragbag" or dragnet' collecting, when, one went into the field and collected everything one could find-songs, tales, proverbs, riddles etc and published the entire thing under a catch-all title like the Ashanti folklore, must be judged pretty well over.

The study covers proverbs as used by Igbo speakers located in the five south eastern states of Nigeria. The states are Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo. This zone was chosen due to its seemingly homogenous culture. The researcher is not unmindful of the fact that there are dialectal variations across these states. However, these dialectal variations do not in any way tamper with the meaning of such proverbs. The coverage of the study elucidates the fact that the use and understanding of Igbo proverbs is a creative activity and enterprise. The linguistic framework is a blend of the Systemic Functional Linguistic approach to language which emphasizes that the meaning potential of language is functionally organized and the Traditional Grammar which discusses the themes of the proverbs.

The study does not claim to have collected and analysed all available Igbo proverbs, a feat that Taylor (1962) cited in Maiyanga (1998:8) says, "Is impossible". Therefore, proverbs available through written documentation in textbooks, live coverage of traditional Igbo ceremonies, some proceedings of village and clan meetings and other ceremonies were used.

1.5 Justification of the Study

The study of proverbs in Nigeria, and Igbo proverbs in particular has received some scholarly attention recently, but most of the works done have been in the ethnographic collection of Igbo proverbs. To the best knowledge of the researcher, not much has been done on the linguistic aspect. Earlier studies on Igbo proverbs cover specific aspects like context, functions etc. An all embracing and encompassing heading as in this study which is comprehensive enough to cover the themes, functions and aesthetic devices is not available.

The use of proverbs is central to the Igbo world view so much so that there is hardly any aspect of the people's life in which proverbs are not found. The study provides a thorough knowledge of the themes and aesthetic devices present in Igbo proverbs which will facilitate their understanding in communication. This will in turn curtail the misinterpretation, misplacement and misunderstanding that arise whenever Igbo proverbs are used. The study will assist learners and teachers of English as a second language to appreciate the influence of culture in understanding any language. It will help translators, book writers, editors and other social workers. The study also helps to show the link between art (aesthetics) and language especially as it affects a particular people. According to Taylor (1962:139) cited in Maiyanga (1998:5):

> Problems in the study of proverbs are attractive because they involve a small mass of comparatively accessible materials. They are, moreover, easy to grasp and execute. They interest scholars with the most varied

> abilities, for whatever talent one may possess linguistic, critical or bibliographical it can find application in the study of proverbs.

Zenner (1970:429) shares the same view with Taylor and thus asserts that "Proverbs and other forms of folklore are valuable tools to the social scientist, providing him with a baseline for the comparison of recent responses to inquiries about social attitudes". If mere collections and classifications of proverbs can give the above positive results, a linguistic research such as this will lay bare the intrinsic and extrinsic characteristics of Igbo world view as showcased in her proverbs. Further studies in this direction concerning other linguistic groups in Nigeria will be provoked at the end of this study. This could be a major key to the unity and mutual co-existence of her inhabitants. Thus, the study is justified, as findings will add to the growing body of knowledge on proverbs.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 The Igbo People, Land and Language

The Igbo occupy the five eastern states of Nigeria namely: Abia, Anambra, Eboinyi, Enugu and Imo. These states are collectively referred to as "Alaigbo" (Igbo land) and the people known as "Ndigbo" (Igbo people). There are also native speakers of Igbo in two other states of Delta and Rivers, though they are minorities in those states. Igbo language is also spoken as a second language in the Niger Delta and Cross River Basin. According to Ofomata (2002:1), the land surface of Igbo land lies between latitudes 4° 15' and 7° 05' south and 8° 30' east. It covers a total surface area of approximately 41,000 square kilometres. In today's world, Igbo people are found in virtually every nook and cranny of Nigeria and the world as settlers who engage in trade, commerce and civil service work, etc, for their daily survival. Besides a skilful use of proverbs as part of Igbo culture, kinship, religion and other occupations also abound.

The Igbo people need to be understood when they speak and since they cannot express themselves clearly without using proverbs extensively in their speech, it is needful for an understanding of the functions, aesthetics and themes of Igbo proverbs to be studied for effective interaction and communication among themselves and other people from other languages.

About half of the population of Ndigbo live outside the Igbo cultural environment. These people are not likely to possess competence in the use of the language, let alone utilize the resource base of proverbs which are instrumental to the understanding of the language and the culture.



Fig. 1.0: Map of Nigeria showing the six geopolitical zones, location of Igbo land and other Igbo speaking areas (Delta and Rivers States, Cross-River Basin and Niger Delta)

Greenberg (1963) notes that Igbo belongs to the Niger-Congo language family and is classified in the 'kwa' language phyla alongside Akan, Gbe, Igala, Nupe, Ebira, Edo, Idoma, Yoruba, etc. Williamson (1989) has however redrawn this picture by reducing the 'kwa' to only 'Akan' and 'Gbe', the rest are classified as the enlarged Benue-Congo phyla. Languages in this group share some structural similarities, especially in relation to word roots or stems. For instance, the number three may be represented thus:

ato = Igbo

ita = Efik

ato = Fon, Togo

eto = Ewe, Ghana

eha = Bini

eta = Yoruba.

Outside these structural similarities, Igbo has some characteristics distinctive to it. Emenanjo (1978:93) describes Igbo as an agglutinating language. This explains why the smallest meaningful grammatical elements in the language are affixes, enclitics and tonal morphemes. An element may have grammatical (inflectional) meaning or simply lexical (semantic) meaning. For example in Igbo, in a sequence of two Igbo words in which one is an adjective which describes a noun, the noun comes before the adjective e.g:

"ewu ojii"

Goat (noun) black (adjective) = black goat

"ofe oma"

Soup good = (good/palatable soup)

Another interesting feature of Igbo language is that it has eight significant vowels and each of them carries a tone; namely low, high and mid. The tonal nature of the language makes it possible for the pitch of the voice to be used in realizing meaning differences in words or utterances. Each of these vowels are conditioned by vowel harmony in pure Igbo words, but is not the same in loan words or some proper nouns. The vowels are in two sets, known as light vowels (a, i, o, u) and heavy vowels (e, i, o, u). These two groups are also called harmony groups; this is because only vowels of one group can co-occur in words, For example;

Onu = mouth

Ofe = soup

Ikwe = mortar

Akwukwo = book

This restriction excludes proper names such as “Ifeoma”, “Onyedika”, which are compound words, and borrowed words such as “ashawo” – loose person, “akamu” – maize pap, “osikapa” – rice, etc. There are twenty-eight (28) Igbo consonants, with nine of them having two letters though not clusters because; they are realized as one sound. Examples are:

kp as in “akpa” = bag

gb as in “agba” = jaw

gh as in “agha” = war.

In Igbo language, words and concepts have range of meanings, which are connotational and therefore elastic in their applications. For instance, the word “nwanne” stands for brother/sister. But in communication, it can connote the following: brother/sister, any blood relation, a person from the same village, state, town, ethnic group or even from the same country for those in Diaspora, intimate relationships such as friends or husband/wife or someone of the same religious faith. So, when an Igbo person introduces someone as “nwanne m” it can connote any of the ones mentioned above depending on the physical location of the speaker or the remoteness of the audience/listener or both; but the initial meaning of brother/sister does not change irrespective of place or audience.

Another word is “di” meaning husband which has a more complex semantic field and defies sex dichotomy. Someone’s brother’s wife could address her as “di m” that is my husband, despite the fact that she is a female. This is because in Igbo land and in most African ideology, a woman is married not only to her husband, but to every member of his family. As Agu (2009:31) notes, the characteristic nature of Igbo language needs to be understood in the extrapolation of the meanings of Igbo words, and by extension, the proverbs so as to avoid misunderstanding and misinterpretation.

In addition to this, identifying the theme of the proverb makes it easier for a listener to decipher its meaning.

2.1 Igbo Dialects

Igbo has many geographical dialects and Igbo dialectology is still in its infancy. The dialects differ from one geographical area to another. However, one standard or central Igbo exists. The standard Igbo is derived from the different dialects that exist in Igbo land. Ogbalu (1972) notes that a close observation reveals that the bulk of the standard Igbo are from the Onitsha Igbo, Orlu Igbo, Umuahia Igbo and Owerri Igbo.

Ogbalu (1972:78) recognizes the fact that differences in geographical dialects have given rise to dialectal differences inherent in most Igbo proverbs, although he believes that the themes of these proverbs have remained the same. As such, their meanings have not been altered. As opined Emenanjo (1975), the standard Igbo which is used in most written Igbo today is a social phenomenon and a reality; but for linguistic efficiency, the forms in standard Igbo are no worse than those found in the different dialects. Emenanjo (1978:101) observes that the pattern of standard Igbo can be complicated at some points by what should be called "styles". He identifies the formal and the informal styles. While the informal style is noticed in spontaneous and unguarded conversation, the formal one is found at times or heard in carefully and laboriously written texts for examinations, and publications. At some point, however, the line between what is formal and what is informal cannot be easily located in speech, if it must be done effectively. He argues that this is because very often, in the bid to communicate across dialects people do not confine themselves to standard formal locutions. In additions, non-formal phrasings sometimes have an aptness and a vigour that make them attractive and ipso facto, acceptable.

2.2 Definitions of Language

Language is a tool of significant expression, since it provides individuals with the much needed tools for expressing their thoughts, and the exploitation of their environment. The universality and diversity of speech has led to a significant inference: that language is an immensely ancient heritage of the human race, whether or not all forms of speech are the historical outgrowth of a single pristine form. Palmer (1976:25) asserts that "Language exists primarily for the free expression of thoughts; communication and other social uses of language are of secondary importance". He maintains that apart from providing information, language enables people to relate to one another. It is a veritable tool of communication and a vehicle of human expression. In the words of Jesperson (1933:2), "Language is nothing but a set of human habits, the purpose of which is to give expression to thoughts and feelings and especially to impart them to others".

Language is a systematic resource for expressing meaning in context. Linguistics, according to Halliday (1985:76), is the study of how people exchange meanings through the use of language. This view of language as a system for meaning potential implies that language exists and therefore must be studied in contexts, such as professional settings, classrooms, and other language environments. Halliday (1985:96), states that particular aspects of a given context such as the topics discussed, the language users and the medium of communication define the meanings likely to be expressed and the language likely to be used to express those meanings. Since language is defined as a systematic resource, Halliday (1985:97) maintains that the organizing principle in linguistic description is system rather than structure.

The definition of language is explicated further by Carrol (1964:7) who asserts that;

> Language is a structural system of arbitrary vocal sounds and sequences of sounds which is used or can be used in interpersonal communication by an aggregation of human beings and which rather exhaustively catalogues the things, events and processes in the human environment.

In the same vein, Ibileye (1998: 10) posits that;

> Language is the vehicle that bears communication. In specific forms of communication, language is employed to varied goals. Styles and registers are peculiarities of specific fields in which language is employed. Specifically, registers permit the use of lexical items that take up specific or specialized meanings by reason of the narrow focus of their deployment.

The definitions of language in the above excerpts capture aptly the characteristics, roles and positions of language in any society. To sum it up, language is a semiotic symbol by which man expresses himself. In describing language as a description of choice, Halliday (1985:92) asserts that, the available choices that language users can make in a given setting to realize a particular linguistic product depends on aspects of the context in which the language is used in communication. Language is regulated in its usage, in that every language including Igbo, has its langue (language considered as a communication system of a particular community rather than the way individual people speak). The use of proverbs by the Igbo is a system of communication that belongs to the people and is accepted by the people. This is because the totality of their communicative life is embedded in their proverbs which are important aspects of their culture. Thus, langue also governs the norms and mores of the language.

Language is not just a mere string of words; it has a dual function – as a means of communication and a carrier of culture and history. Our whole conception of ourselves both individually and collectively is sometimes reflected in our ability to

transmit images of the world and reality through spoken language. The success of this depends largely on saying much in a few words and in appropriate contexts too. Proverbs can lead us to achieve this skilfully. A speaker's skillful deployment of proverbs is like a fighter's skillful use of arms and ammunition. Hence, it is of much value in speech among the Igbo people, Nigerians and African societies in general. From the foregoing, the importance of natural language in human life has been established. As Maiyanga (1998:4) points out, natural language is a systematized phenomenon, a calculus consisting of a network of hidden rules tacitly employed whenever we speak or try to understand what is spoken. Sapir (1931), believes that the real world is to a large extent unconsciously built up on the language habits of groups. Corroborating this view Tswanya (2007:5) asserts that:

> The interconnection between language and sustainable development lies in the function of language as a means of communication, a vehicle of culture and a documentary of folk wisdom. The functions performed by language per time are dependent on its interaction with outside forces such as politics, history, psychology and culture. It serves as a basis for man's identity, means of expression and a window of reality.

Chumbow (1994:8) and Tswanya (2007:5) believe that language is a means by which skilled and educated professionals are trained so that they can contribute to National development. This training has given rise to the emergence of scholars such as Bamgbose (1987), Fafunwa (1970) and Chumbow (1994) who have demonstrated using different projects that children taught in their native languages while learning English as a second language performed better in academics than those taught in English. These experiments in Mexico, Philippines and the Ife projects in Nigeria showed the same positive results. Tswanya (2007:6) then posits that children be taught in the language of their experience in order to harness their full potential for sustainable development. Oladosu (2007:12) in agreeing with Tswanya (2007) posits

that language is not only a means of communication, but also the very substance of the soul and culture of a people whose concepts and thoughts it embodies and articulates.

In agreement with this view, Agu (2010:8) submits that language constitutes a reservoir in which the cultural heritage of a people, its songs, traditions, history, literature, religion, folk, mythologies, proverbs, etc are preserved and handed down from one generation to the other. Nwachukwu (2002:18) maintains that Igbo milieu despite civilisation is largely oral than written. What this means is that spoken words are as powerful as or even more powerful than the written symbols. The use of Igbo proverbs in communication occupies an enviable position among other oral forms such as anecdotes, songs, riddles etc. as such knowing and using Igbo proverbs is a gateway to knowing the language and culture of the Igbo people. As Adedimeji (2010) notes there is a systematic decline and erosion of this linguistic heritage (proverbs) because most educated Africans, Ndigbo inclusive remain "tankers" – those who store foreign concepts in their heads instead of "lateral thinkers" – those who are capable of taking a concept out of its content and applying it on all sides and in different contexts.

Olaofe (1998) makes a plausible assertion when he notes that the more Ndigbo become highly educated, the less their children are likely to become conversant with Igbo language. This assertion is not only true for Ndigbo and their language but for other indigenous nationalities and theirs as well. In other words, as people get richly educated in languages such as English, French etc other than their own languages, there is the tendency for them to neglect their native languages. Hence, the endangerment being faced by Igbo language Olaofe (1998) therefore further warns that:

> No Nigerian language will be immune to the problem of extinction in the next millennium. The issue of extinction has become a global attraction. The survival or extinction of any language depends largely on the attitudes of the adult speakers of such a language.

Corroborating this view, Onyemelukwe (1999:5) submits that language which is a medium of communication as well as a vehicle for the transmission of the culture of an ethnic group from one generation to the other is not static but dynamic. Its life and its continuous use by human groups serve as a means of sustainable development. Emenanjo and Bleambo (1999: i) in agreeing with Olaofe (1998) and Onyemelukwe (1999) assert that if a language is in use, it is alive, vibrant and dynamic, grows and survives. But if a language is not used by its indigenous speakers, then, its continuous survival is threatened; for it could be lost to language shift.

It is worthy to note that Nigeria as a multi-lingual nation has about 400 indigenous languages, numerous dialects, English and French as her first and second official languages to her credit. As such, she can be described as a classic example of the Blessings of Babel. (Emenanjo and Bleambo, 1991: i), (Onyemelukwe, 2004:37). They further assert that: this fertile linguistic terrain and diversity makes the country a rich ground, model, and reference point for varied sociolinguistic and pragmatic activities and possibilities. This research being a linguistic study of the themes, functions and aesthetic devices of Igbo proverbs seeks to identify different ways in which contextual and aesthetic features inherent in the proverbs of Ndigbo can facilitate their interpretation and understanding in communication. As Wolfgang (1993) asserts a good maxim is never out of season. It is against this backdrop that the study seeks to investigate how the appropriate utilization of Igbo proverbs in communication can revive the language which is already endangered specie

2.3 Proverbs, Language and Culture – The Tripod that Shape Society

Proverbs are subset of orature which when generically defined includes other forms such as folktales, legends, myth, songs, etc (Cartey, 1999) cited in Adedimeji (2010). In developed societies of the West, proverbs are regarded as "ancient survivals in the modern age" and were viewed from the point of the past; but in most developing and underdeveloped societies such as Nigeria, Ghana, etc, proverbs are seen as part and parcel of the contemporary culture. One of the manifestations of language lays in the literature i.e oral and written forms of a people. The medium of any lit-orature is language; as such there is no clear demarcation between them.

The dichotomy between language and lit-orature is as absurd as the dichotomy between child and man (Brooks, 1964:97) cited in (Adedimeji, 2010:18).

He notes further that both language and the lit-orature of a people are products of their culture Biobaku (1984:1) cited in Adedimeji (2010:18) defines culture as the sum total of human achievement, while Olarinmoye (1993), notes that culture supplies us our habits of life and the process of self-fulfilment which defines everything man does for self realization. According to Emenanjo and Bleambo (1999), the basis of development is culture and any society that aims at progress without its culture is only deceiving itself by engaging in self-immolation. They maintain that most developed societies are great by virtue of having great confidence in their cultures, promoting and enhancing them as springboards for the drive to progress. Culture combines language and lit-orature to serve its diverse functions. Lit-orature depends on language to transmit and preserve culture while language reveals cultural values and showcases literary and oral activities. Akindele and Adegbite (1999:5), while presenting the connection between language and culture, posit three major ways of relationships: Language is an aspect of culture, language is an

instrument of thought and language expresses culture. Ngugi (1995:20) in Adedimeji (2010) sees it as a tripod and sums it as follows:

> Language carries culture, and culture carries particularly through orature and literature, the entire body of values by which we come to perceive ourselves and our place in the world.

2.4 Theories of Orature

Divergent views trail the study of orature materials in Africa, ranging from the Eurocentric critics to the postcolonial writers; especially, when it comes to analysing them in the emergence of many theoretical approaches. The study however reviews the evolutionist, the diffusionist, psycho analytical, structuralist, the relativist, the functional and contextualist approaches. What informs the selection is the fact that these theories give a fair representation of the arguments often advanced for and against the validity of orature materials in Africa.

The evolutionists see orature items as mere survival and as mere simple forms. They view orature from the vantage point of European superiority. Notable proponents of this theory include Hall (1994), Taylor (1994), Finnegan (1976) and Echeruo (1973). The evolutionists assume that existing cultures evolved gradually from a "lower" to a "higher" one. This means a uni-lineal development i.e from backward to a more progressive or advanced culture. Evolutionist critics see progress as an attribute of a cultural system and that there is a correlation between technical advancement with higher culture, (Akuso, 1995). The evolutionists assert that "content" and not context is a prerequisite for discussing orature in Africa. Echeruo, (1973) a popular proponent of this theory asserts that African orature does not pass for European forms because it is functionally spiritual, sacred and used in transcendental occasions. The evolutionists believe that Africa never had literature or

its genres and aesthetic sensibility. Okafor (1991) deconstructs the likes of Echeruo's perception of African orature with a European critical lens. He argues that "misunderstanding arises when African orature is evaluated on the basis of western critical criteria".

Closely related to the evolutionist is the diffusionist, who sees orature as mainly originating from developed societies to underdeveloped ones and thus implying that most orature materials in Africa that bear resemblance to European ones have found their ways from Europe or other developed nations. Some early Europeans like Rattray, (1969) and Warner, (1929) who wrote about Africa had ignorantly misrepresented Africa as a dark continent whose people basked in primitive customs of animism and religious fetish. This study maintains that such view of African orature is very parochial. Rattray, (1969) for instance merely collected and translated Hausa proverbs in Hausa folklore and customs without any attempt at explaining them.

The two schools have little or nothing to offer because they are mainly in the service of colonial administrators and anthropologists. Akuso (1995) asserts that the major shortfall of these two approaches is their failure to realize that evolution alone cannot explain the plethora of differences which are visible in primitive societies and those foreign criteria cannot be used in analyzing African orature. This study maintains that the myths, legends, proverbs, riddles or tales of one society differ from the others. Orature materials in Africa and Igbo proverbs in particular derive from the confluence of Igbo cosmology and ideology. In another dimension, the limitations of such European scholars and critics have helped to set the pace for a more rigorous and critical study of African/Nigerian orature. Okafor, (1991) quips "the immediate next task for African literary scholars is to look within and look around the context and

culture of its epistemeaned verbalization in order to evolve poetics of readings and interpretations that would excavate its unique indigenous technology and theory of existence".

The psycho-analytical and structural approaches to orature tend to universalize orature items as neither having fixed syntagmatic or paradigmatic structures with merely slight semantic variation or as echoes of primordial voice of a mythical past often manifesting themselves in dreams that are highly sexual in symbols (Tadi 2006). The Structuralist and the Psychoanalysts fail to situate their evaluation of orature within the context of usage and equally pay little attention to other issues of forms like the various aesthetic techniques embedded in the structure of proverbs. The approach is mono-directional and as such not endearing to the study.

The Relativists' approach to orature holds a contrary view to the other schools of thought. They maintain that the structure of any orature material is determined by the function it serves in a particular culture. The basic tenet of relativism is that truths are relative and may vary according to the individual, the group, the place or the time. The relativist theory also regards human nature and values as subjects to the changing socio-cultural conditions rather than being absolute or universal (Op. cit). It postulates the idea that context should be used in the analysis of orature materials.

Putting up a defence in favour of relativism, Chinweizu and Madubike (1980:296-297) oppose the evolutionists view of African orature. According to them, "African literature is an autonomous entity separate and apart from all other literatures. It has its own traditions, models and norms. Its constituency is separate and radically different from that of European or other literatures".

They further submit that the societal values and not textual values should guide criticisms. In the same vein, Obiechina, (1978) enunciates this fact and accuses

the evolutionist of having been misled by their strong reliance on writing, the faculties it provides and the neglect of oral traditions. Soyinka, (1988) also argues that the definition of cultural forms does not lie in technical details of form and content. Even though these are important, what should be of primary concern is the cosmology which informs them. This is true of proverbs in that the cosmology of a particular culture influences the proverbs of that culture to a large extent.

The study taps from the relativists approach to orature in that it identifies the fact that human nature and values are dynamic and that context is important in analyzing orature materials. However, the approach like the other approaches discussed above fails to look at how the aesthetic devices in proverbs engender meaning in communication. The relativist position that truth is relative also contradicts sharply with one characteristic nature of proverbs that this study postulates: proverbs hold measure of universal truth. For instance proverbs like "all fingers are not equal", "if a young dog does not know how to steal, the others teach him", "misfortune and fortune are sisters" etc have equivalent forms not only in many Nigerian/African cultures, but several world cultures at large.

The contextualists like Malinowski, (1946), Hymes, (1964) in Ezirim (2000) believe that language only becomes intelligible when placed within a context of situation. They view orature as a dynamic item, an ever changing idea that exists and has full meaning in situational interactions (Tadi, 2005). Malinowski, (1946) cited in Ezirim, (2000:12) maintains that

> It should be clear at once that the conception of meaning as contained in an utterance is false and futile. A statement spoken in real life is never detached from the situation in which it has been uttered. A word without a linguistic context is a mere figment and stands for nothing by itself, so in reality of a spoken living tangle, the utterance has no meaning except in context.

Other contextualists like Abrahams and Babcock (1994:420) and Seitel, (1994:123) posit that orature studies should be holistic and take into cognizance the surrounding environment of any oral performance or context. Hence, in their view, one needs to know why a proverb is used, what the effect of the proverb is and what might be its importance in speech. They also stipulate that orature studies should be systematically and comprehensively undertaken in such a way that the historical and cultural details of the items are examined. The meanings of text should also be spelt out in relation to the people whose past and present it perpetuates. Equally cogent is that the oral expressive practice needs to be looked into, particularly the role of the participant audience in the narration of tales or the speaker and listener in the case of proverbs (Ibid). In analyzing any orature material, one must pay close attention to the place and time of utterance, those involved in the utterance and the nature of the relationship of such people; what gave birth to the utterance and the nature of the form of the utterance. The function that the utterance is expected to serve and the expected way the hearer is supposed to decode the utterance is also key issues that the contextualists take into account.

The views expressed by the contextualists are very relevant to the present study because context cancels the apparent contradictions in proverbs, explains the multiplicity of meanings which proverbs represent and to a large extent determine the strategy users adopt in solidifying their positions and the validity of certain truths expressed in proverbs. Insight from this approach is highly favoured in this study.

Oral literature or orature gave birth to written literature and the two intertwine in contemporary literature. From time immemorial, literature had existed in oral forms among the various peoples in Nigeria (Adedimeji, 2007). Stories, myths, legends, folklore, proverbs, poetry performance and such other forms of oral tradition

had been preserved and transmitted from generation to generation. The main goal of orature or oral literature was mainly to impart moral lessons. At the end of a typical story in a moonlit night or at other times, the narrator would ask the audience, "What has the story taught us?" Oral literary forms also entertain, educate and offer explanations, however glib, for mysteries.

Adedimeji (2010:23) submits that true African/Nigerian literature is ideally "lit-orature" as it is composed of several forms of orality/orature among which are myths, legends, folktales, proverbs etc and the representation of all these in written forms as prose, drama, and poetry. He maintains that African literature is a product of African cosmology as well as a product of African orature. Orature itself in Africa is a product of African cosmology while African cosmology, is also a product of African metaphysics (Ogunjimi and Na'Allah, 1991). It is the cosmological and metaphysical experience of Africans that permeate African oral traditions from which the modern written literature is derived.

Orature is a vibrant, dynamic and living art. It is a tradition that ensures continuity as the values, norms, mores, aspirations, hopes, despairs and frustrations of every society are passed through it. Orature is thus not a static, lifeless artefact as the evolutionist might propose (Tadi, 2006). Hence, despite technological advancement in the field of information and culture, orature is not only alive, but functional and delightful till date (Op. cit). The orature materials of "Ndigbo", chief among them the proverbs (ilu), encapsulate the life of the people including their political, economic and religious practices. The totality of the people's experience in short is embedded in the very matrix of their proverbs, Okonkwo, (1977).

2.5 The Place of Proverbs in Igbo Language and Culture

Ogbalu (1972:28) notes with nostalgia that in no language do proverbs play a more important role than in Igbo. This is because among the Igbo people, the art of conversation are regarded very highly and the people see proverbs as "abubo eji eri okwu" that is (the condiments to speech) Achebe (1984:7) has the English rendition as "the palm oil and salt with which words are eaten". Ugonna (1994) after a comprehensive description of the concept of "ilu" (proverbs) sums it up as "a kind of mirror which reflects human experience".

The basic social unit of Igbo society is the "Umunna" (patrilinage). It is made up of the male descendants of the founder ancestor by whose name the lineage is sometimes called. The "Umunna" is the central engine house of Igbo proverbs. It also forms the nucleus of the ruling class. Igbo proverbs emanate from the elders who are the backbone of "Umunna". The elders after a hard day's farm work or hunting, etc relax in the family "obi" central parlour to teach the young ones through storytelling and songs, the culture of the people. These teachings are laden with pungent Igbo proverbs, idioms, parables, anecdotes, etc.

At the moment, such settings hardly exist because most Igbo families are now interested in the display of affluence through installation of satellite dishes and other sophisticated communication gadgets which hardly promote Igbo culture and language. Village set ups are now gradually changing from the traditional Igbo houses to modern ones. Children and the youths on their own part are not interested in learning their native language (NL) where they would encounter the use of proverbs. As Agu (2009) notes, they are glued to some of their favourite television programmes or on the computer/phones browsing foreign films and programmes while some

educated parents consciously suppress their wards native languages in favour of English language.

In the Igbo milieu, what may constitute the language of a discourse from the beginning to the end may be proverbs. Listeners only nod their heads in affirmation to the points raised. Igbo proverbs have important social, cultural and linguistic functions. As a communicative tool, proverbs depict the values, norms, aspirations likes and dislikes of the society. They validate and reject certain practices, advocate the maintenance of certain forms of social order. They are educational/instructional tools and purveyors of the culture, ideology and cosmology of the Igbo people. Nwadike (1981) Proverbs serve aesthetic and decorative purposes in speech through the use of imagery, metaphor, etc to make a speech explicit and memorable. By their indirect forms of expressions, proverbs lighten conversations that might be tensed. Igbo proverbs reflect the totality of the life of the Igbo people in that any aspect of life in which the Igbo are involved have proverbs that illustrate them hence, their thematic patterning and arrangement Nwachukwu (1993). These themes include truth versus falsehood, diligence versus laziness, obedience versus disobedience, conflict versus diplomacy, time management, hope versus despair among others.

It is imperative therefore that a lot of importance is attached to the use of proverbs by Igbo people. The neglect of this important area of linguistic heritage by Igbo speakers is considered as being a major factor in the language dearth and cultural erosion that Igbo language and culture currently face Achebe (1984). As such, even though Igbo language is the third largest indigenous spoken language in Nigeria, it is on the verge of extinction, Aikawa (2001).

2.6 Definition of Proverbs

Paremiology, deriving from the Greek "Paroimia" which means "proverb" is the study of proverbs. Proverbs have been studied since the time of Aristotle and paremiography (the collection of proverbs) has been done for millennia, from the classical period through the Sumerian cuneiform tablets to the middle ages up to the present times (Mieder, 1932).

A proverb is a highly loaded and concise phrase or sentence which is used to substitute what could otherwise be expressed in a longer speech. Several scholars have defined proverbs in diverse ways. Mieder (1989:13) admits that there are more definition attempts than there are proverbs. Trench (2003:7), remarks that nothing is harder to define than the concept. This difficulty led Taylor (1981:31) in an obvious escapist strategy to state that, "the definition of a proverb is too difficult to repay the undertaking... an incommunicable quality tells us this sentence is proverbial and that the other is not. Needless to say, such an incommunicable quality does not exist. In 1996, during a discussion at the Tokyo International Proverb Conference, professor Mieder mentioned that, Taylor has probably considered it a joke. Unfortunately, it has often been taken seriously and it is quoted over and over again, as it was done in Tokyo too. It might be enough to mention that not a mysterious incommunicable quality, but among others the currency decides that a sentence is a proverb or not. For instance, if we change only one word "gold" in the English proverb 'All that glitters is not gold' to 'diamond", then it is not an English proverb any more, although all the so-called "markers" would indicate it as such, its currency is zero, it is not told so in this form.

Another scholar, Malcolm (1989) openly proposes a tautology involving an implied impossibility of definition; "I shall take refuge in the tautology that a proverb

is an expression we recognize as proverbial" (Malcolm, 1989:205). With sheer diversity of the academic interests of proverb, scholars have enriched the literature of proverbs with several traditions of definitions, ranging from the philosophical, "short saying of philosophical nature, of great antiquity, the product of the masses rather than of the classes, constantly applicable and appealing because it bears a semblance of the universal truth" (Whiting, 1994). To the anthropological, "Proverbs are short, generally known sentences of the folk that contain wisdom, truths, morals and traditional views in metaphorical, fixed and memoroizable form and that are handed down orally from generation to generation" (Akporobaro and Emovon, 1994).

Proverbs can also be conceptualized from the linguistic perspective, "a proverb is a stereotyped linguistic entity expressing a fixed idea". On the surface linguistic level, it is an artistic picture; on the level of ideas, a judgment, as a work of art of folklore, it belongs to the secondary semiotic systems. It is also a communication system with a double code, a carrier of information at the level of language, but at the same time, the information carries another content too becoming an instrument of poetic expression (Vöö, 1989:19). In cognitive perspective, Honeck (1997:18) construes a proverb as a "discourse deviant, relatively concrete, present (non past) tense statement that uses characteristic linguistic markers to arouse cognitive ideas that serve to categorise style or aesthetics: rhyme, metaphor, simile, alliteration hyperbole among other aesthetic devices with which proverbs are spiced or flavoured". It is the combination of these elements or at least the presence of one that makes proverbs memorable. The conceptual characterization of proverbs informs the formal definition of proverb by Lau, Tokofsky and Winick (2004:2) as "message passed between and among people .., brief and pithy wise and witty, rhetorically forceful, but discretely indirect".

Proverbs constitute a form of exalted language through which people communicate their norms, beliefs, attitudes and cosmological perception. Proverbs help to beautify speech events, thus fulfilling the dual role of all literatures-entertaining people and exploring the meaning of life. In the Nigerian-linguistic and cultural milieu, a proverb is a functional means of communication and also a very elegant and artistic performance (Achebe, cited in Ogbaa 1981:5). Proverbs thus become the horse that conveys meaning to the destination of effective communication (Adedimeji, 2010). Norrick, 1997:279) likened proverbs to the dress of thought with concise words being the wings with which they fly.

As Adedmeji (2010) notes, despite the wisdom that proverbs conventionally engender, it is still realized that the Nigerian society is plagued with problems related to leadership, politics, security, administration business, family etc. This situation is predicated chiefly on applying foreign (socio-political economic, educational etc) solutions to peculiar local problems, resulting in counter-productive measures. It is against this background that language, the hub around which all human activities revolve, and proverbs, the expression of a fundamental truth owing its birth to the people are considered the spring-board through which all developments can be launched (Bamgbose, 1987).

Burger in Mieder (1974:2) defines a proverb from the functional perspective, A proverb is a general statement or judgment, explaining, classifying or assessing a situation. Another scholar viewed proverb from the behavioral angle, “A proverb is a standard statement of moral and colloquial imperatives in fixed metaphorical paradigmatic form, it deals with fundamental logical relationships” (Barley, 1970:741). Other traditions of definitions are the rhetorical “proverb is a popular set phrase having no author, known mostly in different languages, expressing in one

sentence a principle, advice, a genuine or assumed truth in a general, concise form. Its basic idea being of general validity, or at least its users consider it as such (Nagy, 1979:645).

In 1932, while citing other previous definitions, Bartlett Jere Whiting, a foremost paremilogist, gave the following description which has served as the basis of subsequent definitions of proverbs through the integration of many tradition of definition.

> A proverb is an expression which, owing its birth to people, testifies its origin in form and phrase. It expresses what is apparently a fundamental truth that is, truism in homely language, often adorned, however, with alliteration and rhyme. It is usually short, but need to be, it is usually true but need not be. Some proverbs have both a literal and a figurative meaning, either of which makes perfect sense; but more often they have but one of the two. A proverb must be venerable; it must bear the sign of antiquity, and since such signs may be counterfeited by a clever literary man, it should be attested in different places and different times (Whiting, 1932 / 1994: 302).

While Mieder (1993:14) further considers a proverb as "a concise statement of apparent truth that has had, or will have some currency among the people, Finnegan (1976:389) views it as rich source of imagery and succinct expression on which more elaborate forms can draw. She goes further to point out some of the characteristics of proverbs as allusive wordings, metaphorical forms and symbolic terms. As to what constitutes a proverb, she opines that it is a saying in more or less fixed form marked by shortness, sense, and salt and distinguished by the popular acceptance of the truth tersely expressed in it. Finnegan's definition contains some useful pointers for the analysis of African proverbs and Igbo proverbs in particular. This is because in addition to terseness and relative fixity, most sayings classed as proverbs are also marked by some kind of poetic quality in style or sense, and are in this way set apart

in form from more straight forward maxims. Yusuf (1997: 1) expresses a similar view to that of Finnegan. He succinctly defines proverbs as a short, witty, traditional, ideological – laden statement". As a special form of language, proverbs can be viewed as compact expressions used to impact impressions or popular expressions which succinctly convey truth and wisdom with a view to teaching, praising, commending, advising, correcting, indicting, warning, rebuking or castigating. The following Igbo proverbs illustrate this fact, "Mmadu anaghi anyu nsi ebe ohia ka ya elu" meaning a person does not pass excreta where the bush is taller than them. The proverb "Anu laa taa, echi bu nta" meaning (if the game escapes today, tomorrow is another hunting day), perhaps arose from hunting experiences which are pan-Igbo, (Nwadike, 2009).

2.7 The Origin of Proverbs

Determining the origin of proverbs is difficult because a typical proverb is anonymous and also rooted in antiquity; a saying from the people by the people and for the people. According to Francis Bacon, "The genius, wit and spirit of a nation are discovered by their proverbs" (Akporobaro and Emovon 1994:14). So, from time immemorial, proverbs have been coined to express meanings and impress listeners. Proverbs are among the most ancient literary forms and also among the most universal expressive materials that hold measures of truth Whiting (1994). They are anonymous wisdom of the common man for ages. They often bear the stem of minds by no means on human nature, on national characters or life, and even when we doubt their wisdom, we can still often admire their trenchancy, their brevity and imaginative imagery, Finnegan (1976).

Various cultures consider proverbs crucial to meaning negotiation and life generally. Among the Yorubas a "proverb is the horse of speech, speech is the horse of proverb", when speech is lost, we use proverbs to find it (Lindfors, 1973 and Richards, 1984). Among the Igala people, "Ita" (proverb) is for the witty. That is why they say of proverb as "it is the eye that sees the proverb that uses it" for proverbs are not the preserve of kings (Maiyanga, 1998:8). Usman (1992) in his "Ita Igala" (Igala proverbs) maintains that the proverb does three things to the people: enliven statements, thicken a talk and tells that one is an Igala. The Tangle people of Gombe State see proverb as "sam kwi bolji (matter whose head is turned upside down), a very inclusive phrase that denotes the metaphoricalness of the sayings and the aesthetic features it contains (Tadi, 2005).

In Europe and Asia, research efforts have discovered that a considerable part of the well known proverbs may be traced back to the Greco-Roman classics, the Hebrew and Greek Bible. Taylor, (1931) records a proverb that says "One swallow does not make a summer" by Aristotle; "He that sows the wind will reap the whirlwind" derives from the book of Hosea in the old testament of the Bible. In America, the proverb "Time is money" was coined by Benjamin Franklin in 1748. Paczolay (1984), observes that in the Far-East, the literary sources of proverbs are mainly the Chinese classics, the historical records (Shiji), the Book of Zhuang Zi and the Confucian Analects (Lun Yu), and in part to some Sanskrit classics, like the Panchatantra, the Nirvana Sutra, etc. In the process of folkorization, the sources have fallen into oblivion and in due time, but sometimes in slightly changed form, the quotations became genuine proverbs.

2.8 The Nature and Structure of Proverbs

Three factors appear to determine the nature of proverbs: the universal/general, the local/cultural and the attitudinal/personal. A typical proverb must have been informed by a general observation, which can be universally acknowledged, made up of local/cultural beliefs and some measures of individual dispositions to people and phenomena (Adedimeji, 2007 and 2010).

The universal/general nature of proverbs concerns the universality of certain natural phenomena. According to Oseni (2003:12), the sky, the earth, the sea, fire, air, people, parts of the body, animals etc are natural entities of which no nation or race can justifiably claim exclusive ownership. Different people in different places coin proverbs around such natural entities and this reality accounts for the equivalent and near equivalent forms of proverbs. Based on this factor, ideas expressed in many Nigerian proverbs are universal and our proverbs are not only, but "miniature literary forms which appeal to the wide public and the generality of mankind because they exploit the common reservoir of human experience and common sense" (Akporobaro and Emovon, 1994:10). Proverbs like "all fingers are not equal", "the illness of death has no medicine", "One who trust God will never fail", "if a young dog doesn't know how to steal, the others teach him", "misfortune and fortune are sisters", "what is sweet kills", etc have equivalent and near equivalent forms not only in many Nigerian/African cultures, but several world cultures at large.

In many African cultures, a feeling for language, for imagery and for the expression of abstract ideas through compressed and allusive phraseology comes out particularly clearly in proverbs. The figurative quality of proverbs is especially striking; one of their most noticeable characteristics is their allusive wording usually

in metaphorical form, the general stress often laid on the significance of speaking in symbolic terms (Finnegan, 1976: 390).

Proverbs, in short, are closely interwoven with other aspects of linguistics and literary behaviour. They overlap with other kinds of verbal arts, and they appear in certain specialized forms. Their use in the forms of "proverb names" is one. For instance, among the "Ovimbundu" of Southern Africa, the woman's name "Simbovala" is a shortened form of the proverb "while you mark out a field, death marks you out in life "this means that, in life you are in the midst of death.

Proverbs are also sometimes connected with artistic media: they can be drummed especially in most African and Nigerian cultures such as Yoruba or Zulu. The drum proverbs of Ghana or Dahomey are also striking examples. The literary significance of proverbs in Africa is also brought out by their close connection with other forms of oral literature and a distinction does not exist in terminology between proverbs and other literary expressions. Proverbs are closely related to anecdotes, so much so that anecdotes are sometimes just illustrations of a proverb. While a proverb is frequently an anecdote in a nutshell, for instance, the Nyanga proverb of South Africa "pity killed the francolin" is a direct allusion to the story in which the francolin came to the help of a python and was in return eaten by it. The Swahili poem about "silence" based on the proverb "much silence has a mighty noise" (still waters run deep) are elaborated and drawn out in its verses. Proverbs are also sometimes connected with riddles. They also frequently occur in general conversation and in oratory to embellish, conceal or hint (Finnegan, 1976). Among the Efiks of Southern Nigeria, a number of "tone riddles" which the responses are said to be proverbs have been noted. The neighboring Anang Ibibio have a distinct class of proverb riddles distinguished from their simple riddles which are only to amuse. In these, both

portions of the riddles consist of a proverb. One example is “the vine grows along the edge of the pit” meaning “He is made to speak in public”. This is explained by the fact that the Anang take great pride in eloquence and their children are trained very early to develop verbal skills. The proverb instructs children to attempt public speaking as early as possible, but at the same time recognize that this is difficult for them: just as a vine has to struggle to grow along the edge of a hole (and not into it, which would be easier, but would be cut off from the sun), so a child must struggle to overcome his shyness and endeavour to speak.

The local/cultural factor accounts for the distinctiveness of some proverbs to certain cultures based on their peculiar experiences and socio-geographical location. For instance, African proverbs are distinguishable with reference to the plants and animals that are abundant in Africa (Adedimeji, 2010). In Nigeria, the pragmatics and ethnography of the different Nigerian cultures/ethnic groups would make one know or believe when told that “Allah does not create the expert in chewing any grain” and “if you see your brother’s beard on fire, seek water to pour on your own” are Hausa proverbs; that “when a man says yes, his chi also says yes” “money has no end in giving satisfaction” and “He who brings kola brings life” are Igbo sayings, while “what is to be done should be done at the right time”; “we don’t invoke the spirit of Sango in harmattan season” and “the person on whose head a coconut is broken does not wait to partake in eating it” are Yoruba sayings (Akporobaro and Emovon, 1994). Obiefuna (1978) asserts this fact when he opines that the phraseology of many of our proverbs has been influenced by our natural environment, which in turn influences our cultural attitude and systems of values.

Igbo proverbs are drawn from the wide gamut of Igbo cultural experience which includes folklore, beliefs values, emotions, attitudes and the entire system of

thought and feelings, flora and fauna and natural elements (Obiefuna 1978:156, Finnegan 1976:422). In cultural attitudes, riverine towns that do a lot of fishing will have proverbs connected with this. For instance, the proverb "Onye ndidi na eri azu ukpo" meaning the patient eats fish caught with hook. In the Igbo hinterland where people carry out arable farming, many of their proverbs are related to the type of crops they produce. For instance the proverb "A na-asoro isi ji, isi ede asi na ọ bu ya ka a na-asoro" - when the head of the yam is respected, the head of cocoyam claims the respect, is typical of yam and cocoyam producing communities (Nwadike, 2009:26).

Striding across inter-cultural boundaries, a similar thing can be seen in the parables used by Jesus Christ of Nazareth in the Bible which some refer to as proverbs, anecdotes, metaphors or similes. He used things his audiences were very familiar with. The parable of the Mustard seed in Mathew 13:31-32, the Fig tree in Luke 21:29-31 and the Workers in the vineyard in Matt 20:1-16 are things located in the geographical environment of His audience and which they have experience in. Historical and anecdotal proverbs relating to specific personages and cultural events also belong to, and are conditioned by, this category. For instance, the cultural practice of sacrificing fowls to deities in Igbo land to appease them underlines the proverb "He has used one fowl to appease two gods"; the English rendition of it being using one stone to kill two birds. Another proverb that connects to sacrifice is, "The person who talks how much I owe Agwu (small deity) does he talk of how much he owes Amadioha (big deity)". The English version of it is "remove the log in your eyes to see clearly to remove the speck in another person's eye (Nwadike, 2009:28).

The attitudinal/personal factor concerns individuals' reactions to issues and people. In this instance, proverbs may not have universal applicability and may not be

borne out of cultural values; rather, they would show some people's attitude to others, which are often subjective or idiosyncratic, derived usually through hasty generalizations and faulty conclusions (Adedimeji, 2010). Among several Nigerian ethnic groups, there are proverbs and proverbial expressions that are used to characterize, praise and lampoon others, even within the same large cultures. In Igbo land for instance, among the Izii people of Abakaliki, in Eboinyi state, they love and guard jealously the female genitalia. On account of this therefore, they have many proverbs connected with it, for example "A hafuru atashi ikpu bu ya ba a luuru nwaanyi?" meaning, does one have to abandon sex just because a woman has gonorrhea, afterwards, was the woman married for gonorrhea? Nwodike (2009) the Yorubas also have proverbs that portray people's attitude to themselves and others. For example, "A jise bi Oyo laari, Oyo kii se bii baba enikan" meaning, (we only see those who imitate the people of Oyo, the Oyo people imitate no one's father) evidently shows how highly the people of Oyo regard themselves. Another proverb in this category is "Ibadan ti o jale, oju lo nro" an Ibadan man that does not steal is only persevering where it is entailed that there is a limit to human endurance/perseverance and that a typical Ibadan man is a thief (Adedimeji, 2010:17).

Proverbs of this nature also abound to characterize or denigrate Islam and Christianity, considered to be foreign to several Nigerian cultures as well as their adherents, especially among the Igbo and Yoruba. An example of this is the Igbo proverb "A na ekwu n'oku gbara Fada, a na – aju afu onu ya?" meaning, "A Rev. Father gets burnt, you ask for his beard i.e what caused the fire?" In Yoruba language the same proverb reads "enbeere irugbon ki lofe sababi?" Aafaa jona, Aataa (Islamic scholar) gets burnt, you ask for his beard; or what caused the fire?" (Adedimeji, 2007). The proverbs of each Nigerian community in essence go a long way in

determining their life styles and those proverbs engender their social outlook as a people, communicating their feelings and emotions, beliefs and practices (Ibid).

Proverbs have currency in that they are known and often quoted in a small or large region in one or several linguistic communities or in a part of such community. As Mieder (1993) asserts "proverbs have history, they come and go if not used any longer". Trench (2003:7) aptly notes that three cardinal points constitute the form of proverbs: shortness, sense and salt. While shortness relates to size, sense relates to the message, the content and the profound meaning underpinning proverbs, and salt appertains to topics aesthetics in order to make a pragmatic point about them.

In terms of structure, a proverb may be a phrase, or a sentence, where the sentence itself can be declarative, interrogative, imperative or complete fragmentary structures, depending on the sense and the effect it is intended to communicate and create. Proverbs appear in the form of short sentences, having a standard text, allowing sometimes some standard variants too, where the order of words may be changed or some of the words replaced by others that can be considered synonymous with that particular context. Sometimes, additions and omissions also appear (Op. cit). In his contribution on the structure of proverbs, Omoloso (2007:10) adds that proverbs may be simple, complex, compound, compound – complex or multiple sentences.

Another important fact about the structure of proverbs is that there are no general rules for their formations. However, pithiness and economy are always noticeable. This can however, be achieved effectively through the system of elision and concord. The subject noun, for example can be omitted as in this proverb, "It is worked while still fresh i.e "make the hay while the sun shines". Omoloso (2007) economy of words is also often achieved through elision: not only are whole words

left out, often for the sake of rhythm, but vowels are frequently elided, especially the final vowel of a word. This terse expression is illustrated using this Igbo proverb "Ka o, di n'ofu" i.e let it be so. Ezirim (2001) furthermore, proverbs are often quoted in abbreviated forms. The Igbo proverb "were ire gi guo eze gi onu" i.e "use your tongue to count your teeth" is an abbreviated form of the complete saying "were ire guo eze gi onu abughi n'onwere nke na efu efu mana o ka i lerue anya". i.e "using your tongue to count your teeth" does not mean that any one is missing, it is for you to be cautious, Onwudufor (2008).

The actual wording may take the form of a simple positive or negative proposition, as in the Swahili proverb "The goat-eater pays a cow" i.e "sow the wind and reap the whirl wind" or the Igbo proverb" Onye kwe, chi ya ekwe" i.e "if one says yes, one's "chi (god) says yes also" Nwadike (1981). Double propositions in which the second portion is explanatory are also common, as in the Bantu proverb "A male is a millipede, he is not driven away with one driving only" (A man does not take a single refusal from a girl" Finnegan (1976). The Igbo proverb "Egbe bere Ugo bere nke si ibe ya ebela nku kwaa ya" i.e (let the kite perch, and let the eagle perch, anyone that says no, let its wing break) meaning "live and let live", is a copions example of double propositions.

Another common form is reduplication, with repeated words or syllables. This usually comes at the beginning, as in the Swahili proverb "hurry, hurry, has no blessings" (harka, haraka, haina baraka) or the Igbo proverb "ka abia ka abia mere awo, epioghi odu" i.e procastenation is dangerous. Among the Bantus, the Igbo, and elsewhere, the use of quoted words attributed to some actual or fictional persona is another device for giving point and sometimes authority to a proverbial saying. The form sometimes known as "Wellerism" (Finnegan, 1976:403). This may be humorous

as in the proverb. 'l'll die for a big thing says the biting ant on the big toe", but is usually serious. The Igbo proverb "Udara si na o, bughi naani ya mutara nwa a na apiwa onu" meaning, "The bush apple says she is not the only one who has begotten a child whose mouth is broken". This is saying that no one person in particular is marked out to suffer misfortune and tribulations. Another example states, "Ugbala onye ara si na ihe ya ga eme di otutu tinyere egwu ya ga agba n'ahia na ndi ya ga atu okwute", i.e. Ugbala, the mentally deranged woman said that she has many things to do, including her dance in the market square, and the pebbles she will have to throw at people. Whenever one employs this proverb, one simply refers to the many fishes one has to fry. Nwadike (1981) another Igbo Wellerism states "Jadum, Onye ara gwara ozu: "a juo gi elu, juo, gi ala, ngi kpochikpochi" (Jadum, the mentally deranged once said to a corpse, whatever they ask you, keep very, very silent). This proverb explains that in all provocation, silence is golden. There are also miscellaneous patterns of fairly frequent occurrences such as the widespread if.., then…, formula, the use of the rhetorical question etc. Whatever the details, however, it is clear that some sort of heightened speech, in one form or another is commonly used in proverbs: and that this serves to set them apart from ordinary speech.

2.9 Translation: Definition and General Types

To translate means to express the meaning of a speech or writing in a different language. Translation is the process of changing something that is written or spoken into another language. Translation can take different shapes; ranging from rough/free translation that does not follow the original words exactly or word for word/literal translation; that is following the original words exactly.

Catford (1965) in Surakat (1987) defines translation as the replacement of textual material in one language (SL) by equivalent textual material in another language (TL). This implies the substitution of (TL) material for SL meaning. Catford (1965) outlines a linguistic approach to the study of translation. Translation is seen as a language activity which has a scientific linguistic explanation and as such belongs to a branch of applied comparative linguistics. This chain applies to the Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG) from where (SFL) emerged and which is the same linguistic model that is adopted in the analysis of data for this study. Catford identifies some broad categories of translation in terms of extent, levels and ranks of translation.

(a) The Extent category considers (in a syntagmatic sense) whether the translation is full or partial. A translation is full when every part of the (SL) text is replaced by (TL) text material, but partial when some part or parts of the SL text are left untranslated. They are simply transferred or incorporated in the TL text. Consider the translation of the Igbo proverbs below:

i. Proverb: *Eziokwu bu ndu*

Translation: Truth is life.

ii. Proverb: *Ukpara okpoko gburu nti chiri ya*

Translation: Okpoko (bird) kills any stubborn insects.

In the illustration above, the translation in "i" is full while in "ii", it is partial because the SL word *"okpoko"* is untranslated, but rather incorporated in the TL text by way of transliteration. Moreover, the SL lexical items *"nti chiri"* is replaced by its non-equivalent TL word stubborn.

Surakat (1987) in agreeing with Catford (1968) posits that the significance of the concept of full and partial translation lies in the fact that it is not always possible

to find exact equivalence between SL and TL textual materials. Surakat (1987) therefore submits that in a situation where an SL item has no TL equivalent, borrowing or transference is allowed or alternatively the SL item may be replaced by its non-equivalent TL expression (as for *"nti chiri"* and "stubborn") respectively in the example given above. He maintains further that transference can also be used deliberately for the purpose of introducing "local flavour" into the TL text.

(b) On the category of levels, Catford identifies total and restricted translation. Total translation means the replacement of SL grammar and lexis by the equivalent of TL grammar and lexis with consequential replacement of SL phonology/graphology by non-equivalent TL phonology/graphology. This is Interlineal translation in its normal sense.

Restricted translation on the other hand is the replacement of SL textual material by equivalent TL textual material at only one level that is translation performed only at the phonological or at the graphological level or at only one of the two levels of grammar and lexis. This type is form-based rather than content-based and is of limited relevance to this work.

(c) Rank of translation refers to any of the grammatical or linguistic unit that is sentence, clause group, word or morpheme on which translation equivalence is based. When translation is restricted to just one of these ranks, it is called "bounded" or "rank-bound". There is also the "free" or "unbounded" translation in which case equivalence shunt up and down the rank scale, mostly at the higher rank sometimes between larger units than the sentence. The unbounded or free translation is most effective and meaningful in this study because it is content based and context sensitive, although the rank of sentence is regarded as the basic unit of linguistic or grammatical analysis.

2.10 Translation Techniques

There are different techniques of translation and they will be discussed under two broad categories based on Formal Correspondence and Textual Equivalence. Formal correspondence relates to a mechanical reproduction of SL textual materials in the TL. All forms of restricted and bounded translation are based on formal correspondence. For instance, a word or phrase in the SL is matched interlineally by a word or group in the TL without taking into consideration the context of the utterance or the phonological or graphological features. This technique has been used at different points for translating scriptural or Biblical texts, scientific or technical text and even literary and poetic genres.

Textual equivalence on the other hand is an attempt to reproduce the ideas of the SL text in the TL on the basis of the contextual or co-textual factors without a need for the presentation of the SL formal structure. Catford's concepts of full, total unbounded or free translation are all based on the principles of contextual equivalence.

The principles of formal correspondence and textual equivalence serve as the broad bases for categorizing techniques of translation. On the angle of comparative analysis, formal correspondence technique is interlinear or literal-translation that is a process whereby the primary senses of all words in the original language are translated as though out of context and the word order of the original is retained. It is form-based and inadequate in translating literary texts, especially where the SL and TL are typologically and culturally unrelated as the case may be. The technique is insensitive to the context of utterance and the theme of the text.

In Igbo proverbs, a single lexical item in the SL may require a phrase or a clause in the TL and vice-versa. It does not accommodate what happens when there is

a cultural gap between SL and TL. If there are no TL equivalents for SL item, the latter should be incorporated in the TL text through transliteration or transference. Descriptive phrases or circumlocution may also be used for an SL item which lacks equivalence in the TL. The formal correspondence does not respect context of situation, the translation of ambiguous and polysemons texts. Homographs and other ambivalent expressions which should give clues to the correct interpretation are ignored. The technique is not effective in translating figurative expressions such as metaphors, proverbs, idioms, etc.

The semantic translation technique attempts to render as closely as the semantic and syntactic structures of the second language allow. This technique remains within the original culture and assists the reader only in its connotations if they constitute the essential human non-ethic message of the text. There is also the communicative translation which is also based on the principle of contextual equivalence. It is TL biased and reader-oriented whereas semantic translation is SL biased and author-centred. This technique is dynamic, natural and subjective. The communicative and semantic translation can be blended or synthesized within the text and the intention of the translator. Such a blend is regarded as an effective and functional approach suitable for translating the SL text or Igbo proverbs. Therefore, the principle of contextual equivalence (free, semantic and communicative techniques) serves as the basis for the translations in this study.

Catford also recognises translation problems and categorized them under two general headings – Language and Culture which he refers to as linguistic and cultural untranslability. Linguistic untranslability occurs when an SL item or text has no formal corresponding feature in the TL. This results in untranslability on the linguistic level "where there is no lexical or syntactic substitute in the TL for an SL item.

Lexical ambiguity becomes a translation problem if the items are to be translated in isolation or out of context. Language varieties such as idiolects, dialects, style or registers can be untranslatable depending on the nature of the SL text, the SL and TL. Cultural untranslability occurs when a situational feature that is functionally relevant for the SL text is completely absent from the culture of the TL. Catford (1965) cites the translation of the French expression "Bon appétit" into English. He maintains that the difficulty is not finding approximate words for the expression, but the fact that the convention surrounding "Bon appétit" is not found in English. Exact translation is impossible. This is also the case with some Igbo proverbs as such cultural untranslability inhibits the full understanding of these problems.

Nida (1975) cited in Surakat (1987) in his article "Linguistics and Ethnology in translation problems" treats all translation problems as cultural, because he regards language as a part of culture. He groups these problems under ecological factors, material culture, social culture, religious culture and linguistic culture. There are also problems in translating figures of speech and figurative expressions. This is also true of most Igbo proverbs thus corroborating Okowkwo (1977) view. As such in translating the Igbo proverbs used in the study, the SL items are usually incorporated in the TL through literal translation and transference of meaning.

2.11 The Meaning of Meaning

The term "meaning" is at the centre of Semantics. It is defined as the thing or idea that a word, expression or sign represents in a language. Wittgenstein (1963) cited in Anyanwu (2006:13) defines the meaning of a word as its use in the language, while Morris (1946) sees it as combination of words that are determined by sets of rules which regulate their use. Firth, (1957:225) posits that normal linguistic

behaviour is meaningful efforts directed towards the maintenance of an appropriate pattern of life. The key term in the Firthian definition of meaning is the context.

Crystal and Davy (1988) argue that since language performs social acts, a speaker's intention and how it is interpreted by the hearer, what Searle (1965) calls "felicity conditions" depend upon the social context. Most linguistic scholars believe that the meaning of an utterance cannot be ascertained outside the environment of its use. This environment of use is what Firth (1957: 226) calls "context of situation". The researcher agrees with Firth's assertion in that the use and meaning of proverbs in Igbo land is contextually situated. This context is also considered in forming the themes of the proverbs. This is because a conversation may begin and end with a proverb. The theme influences the situation and vice-versa.

Firth believes that language performs social functions and its interpretation must take into account the social settings. How proverbs are used depend on the society in question. Whatever the situation might be, Fingesin (1970: 417) has this to say:

> In particular societies, there may be certain rules or tendencies about the sorts of occasions in which proverbs are most frequent or suitable or the classes of who should use them. Some people may use proverbs in a particular sophisticated way as the basis for more elaborate forms of literature, while others stress the useful aspects of proverbs.

Situational contexts of proverbs are very relevant because proverbs touch almost all aspects of human existence on earth. Since life is characterized by a variety of activities, it follows that each of these activities has proverbs that are relatively suitable to it or more compatible with it. The sense in proverbs is discernible from the varied meanings or multiple interpretations which they evoke in given situations. That

is to say, a proverb can have different meanings and perform different functions when used in different contexts (Surakat, 2010:138).

Proverbs are very important vehicles of expression in Igbo land. The trend and development of the language, lies so much on the constant use of proverbs in appropriate contexts. A person who uses proverbs and idioms frequently and appropriately is considered to have much wisdom and a command of the language and Proverbs are continually created on a daily bases. The growth of talent depends to a great extent on the user's accumulation of existing proverbs, his experience and observations, and his ability to formulate new ones.

2.11.1 Contextual theory of meaning

This theory is developed by Firth (1957) in association with the anthropologist Malinowski. (1949). According to this theory, the most important thing about language is its social function. He maintains that normal linguistic behaviour as a whole is a meaningful effort directed towards the maintenance of an appropriate pattern of life. Firth (1957:275) quoted in Anyanwu (2006) posits that

> The meaning of an expression will consist in a serial contextualization of facts, context within context each one being a function and an organ of the bigger context and all context finding a place in what might be called the context of culture.

He argues that every utterance occurs in a culturally determined context of situation and the meaning of an utterance is the totality of its contribution to the maintenance of that pattern of life in the society in which the speaker lives and the affirmation of the speaker's role and personality within the society. Semantics and pragmatics in the Firthian view, relate utterance to their context of situation. They see language expressions or utterances as bits of socially significant behaviour which can only be interpreted by contextualizing them in relation to a particular culture. This

view has something to offer to this study because proverbs cannot be meaningfully interpreted without contextualizing them. The theory however has its pitfalls in that it does not address the issue of the theme, the function of the language, nor does it account for the extra linguistic features such as aesthetics which adds beauty to language. In essence, context alone does not give the full import of the meaning of a proverb.

2.11.2 The three levels of meaning

a) Literal meaning of proverbs

With regards to the literal level of meaning, Emananjo (1975: 189) has this to say, "This deals with the understanding or visualization of the actual statement or picture being projected by the words used in the proverbs".

We seem to face the meaning of proverbs in their usual or obvious sense without allegory or metaphor. At the literal level, the meaning of the proverbs can be gleaned from the imagery used in the proverb. The issue is really one of the picturesque or graphic natures of proverbs, which facilitate visualization of the scenario presented in them. Another source of arriving at meaning at this level is from information through the use of the characteristic constituent element. This is because proverbs constitute a reservoir of religious, historical and social knowledge within a community. This process will be highlighted with the aid of some proverbs in chapter four. It is also important to note that, it is at this level that interest in most proverbs starts (Ogbalu, 1972).

b) Philosophical meaning of proverbs

The meaning given at this level is based on the knowledge of the belief system and ideas of the people. In other words, it deals with the principles underlying the actions and behavioured patterns of the people. Commenting on the philosophical

meaning of proverbs, Okonkwo (1977:100) asserts thus, "the philosophical meaning bears the general truth and is very important". This is clearly brought out in interpreting the meaning of any Igbo proverb.

c) Contextual meaning of proverbs

The meaning of proverbs at this level is based on the circumstances or situations in which the proverbs are used. According to Seitel (1976:140)…although relatively simple in their application of metaphor, proverbs are one of the most complex genres that are most sensitive to context. Here, Seitel seems to be saying that proverbs cannot be understood in isolation. As noted by Emenanjo (1979), proverbs without contextual meaning are nothing but vague statements. The study therefore asserts that in looking at the meaning of a proverb, different aspect of context needs to be considered. This consideration is very important in understanding the meaning of any Igbo proverb. Other scholars like Ezirim (2001), Gumpez (1982), Malinowski (1946) in Eggins (2000) etc all acclaim this view. Okonkwo (1977:101) opines that the contextual meaning of Igbo proverbs can be illustrated using a given situation for example a story, a parable (Ukabiulu) as the case may be.

He notes further that Igbo proverbs reveal a lot about the Igbo and they quote proverbs to support and give authority and authenticity to an idea or a disputed fact. Okonkwo (1977:108) illustrates this using an anecdote of a case of two people contesting the ownership of a bread-fruit tree standing right on the boundary between their lands. When the matter was referred to the traditional rulers and judges known as the "Ndi ichie", and after much discussion, an elderly grey haired "ichie" said, 'Ndi Igbo turu ilu si, na 'osisi di n'oke dawara oke' that is the Igbo people say that, 'a tree on the boundary breaks the boundary', the bread fruit tree, he explained, belongs equally to the two contestants who own the two pieces of land. The decision arrived at

then, was that the contestants should own the tree jointly and share its fruits equally. This was accepted as a just decision supported by the wise proverb of the land.

2.12 Themes Definition and Subtypes: As they relate to Traditional Grammar

In contemporary literary studies, a theme is the central topic a text treats (Collins, 2012). It is the subject of a discourse, discussion, meditation or composition. In literature, music, art etc. It can be seen as a unifying or dominant idea, image or motive repeated or developed though out a work (Weitz, 2012). In grammar, it is the element common to all or most of the forms of an inflectional paradigm, often consisting of a root with certain formative elements or modifications.

In linguistics, it is the first major constituent of a sentence, usually but not necessarily the subject. For instance in the sentence, History I do like, "history" is the theme of the sentence even though it is the object of the verb. Themes can be divided into two categories: a work's thematic concept is what readers "think the work is about" and its thematic statement being "what the work says about the subject" (Griffith, 2010).

The most common contemporary understanding of theme is an idea or point that is central to a story, which can often be summed in a single word. (e.g love, death, betrayal)or expressions (Ibid). Typical examples of themes of these types are conflict between the individual and society; coming of age; humans in conflict with technology; nostalgia; and the dangers of unchecked ambition. A theme may be exemplified by the actions, utterances, or thought of a character in a novel. An example of this would be the theme "loneliness" in John Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men*, wherein many of the characters seem to be lonely (Ibid). It may differ from the thesis- the text or author's implied worldview and a story may have several themes.

Themes often explore historically common or cross-cultural recognizable ideas, such as ethical questions, and are usually implied rather than stated explicitly. An example of this would be whether one should live a seemingly better life, at the price of giving up parts of one's humanity, which is a theme in Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* (Ibid). Along with plot, character, setting and style, theme is considered one of the fundamental components of fiction. Various techniques may be used to express many more themes.

2.13 Thematic Techniques

Leitworstil

Leitworstil is the repetition of a wording, often with a theme, in a narrative to make sure it catches the reader's attention. An example of a leitworstil is the recurring phrase. "So it goes", in Kurt Vonnegut's novel *Slaughterhouse five* (Ibid). Its seeming message is that the world is deterministic: those things only could have happened in one way, and that the future already is predetermined. But given the anti-war tone of the story, the message perhaps is on the contrary, that things could have been different. A non fictional example of leitworstil is in the book *Too Soon Old, Too Late Smart: Thirty True Things You Need To Know Now* written by Gordon Livingstone, which is an anthology of personal anecdotes multiple times interjected by the phrases "don't do the same thing and expect different results". It is a bad idea to lie to yourself" and "no one likes to be told what to do".

2.14 Thematic Patterning

Thematic patterning is another technique which means the intersection of a recurring motif in a narrative. For example, various scenes in John Steinbeck's *Of*

Mice and Men are about loneliness (Ibid). This technique also dates back to *One Thousand and One Nights*. To organize any text into a coherent whole, writers and speakers need to keep their readers and listeners well informed about where they are and where they are going. The grammatical resources to sign post the way through clauses, clause complexes and paragraphs, from the beginning to the end of a text is the theme. Halliday (2004:348) characterizes theme as what the message is concerned with i.e the point of departure for what the speaker is going to say. It functions as a starting point for the experiences to be unfolded in a clause. The structure which carries this line of meaning is known as the thematic structure. We may assume that in all languages, the clause has the character of a message; it has some form of organization which it fits in with, and contributes to the flow of discourse. But there are different ways in which this may be achieved. In English, as in many other languages, the clause is organized as a message by having distinct status assigned to one part of it. This part is enunciated as the Theme, it combines with the remainder known as the Rheme so that the two constitute a message.

2.15 Definition of Themes as they relate to Systemic Functional Linguistics

The Prague school of linguistics identifies the theme as the element which serves as the point of departure of the message; it is that which locates and orients the clause within its context. The rheme according to the Prague school is the remainder of the message, the part in which the theme is developed. As a message structure therefore, a clause consists of a theme accompanied by a rheme (Halliday, 2004:65). The sentences below illustrate further:

Theme		**Rheme**
The lion	-	beat the unicorn all around the town

All round the lion - the lion beat the unicorn

By the lion - the unicorn was beaten all round the town

The unicorn - was beaten all round the town by the lion.

As can be seen from these examples, the theme always starts from the beginning of the clause. It is what sets the scene for the clause itself and positions it in relation to the unfolding text. This suggests that the speaker/writer selects the desired theme- that there can be variation in what is chosen as the thematic element in the clause, and this is so. Halliday (2004:66) observes that the theme of a clause is the first group or phrase that has some functions in the experiential structure of the clause.

Some grammarians use the term topic and comment instead of theme and rheme; but the topic-comment terminology carries rather different connotations. Topic usually refers to only one particular kind of theme, the topical theme and it tends to be used as a cover term for two concepts that are functionally distinct. It therefore seems preferable to retain the terms theme and rheme (Smith and Wilson 1997:317).

Typically, the theme is picked up by the appropriate pronoun in its natural place in the clause. Such picking up may occur even if the theme is not explicitly announced by a thematic marker as is usually the case in speech where intonation can be used. Sometimes the theme is not picked up in this way, but is left to the listener to infer the relationship. This device enables the speaker or writer to select a theme without disturbing the overall arrangements of the clause. The theme of a clause is frequently marked off in speech by intonation being spoken on a separate tone group; this is especially likely when the theme is either an adverbial group or prepositional

phrase or a nominal group not functioning as subject. In other words, where the theme is anything other than that which is most expected. An example is given below:

a) In this job + Anne we're // working with silver // [marked theme]

b) The people that buy silver + // love it [unmarked theme]

Two assumptions have been established: that the theme of a clause consists of just one structural element, and that the element is represented by just one unit-one nominal group, adverbial group or prepositional phrase. These two assumptions hold for the examples in 'a' and 'b' above.

A common variant of this elementary pattern is that in which the theme consists of two or more groups or phrases forming a single structural element. The examples below illustrate further.

	Theme		**Rheme**
i.	The Walrus and the carpenter	-	were walking close at hand
ii.	On the ground or in the air	-	small creatures live and breathe

Any element of clause structure may be represented by a complex of two more groups or phrases. Such a group or phrase complex functions as a theme in the normal way. Two nominal groups joined by and, such as "the Warlus and the Capenter, make up a nominal group complex. The two prepositional phrases "from house to house" similarly make up a prepositional phrase complex.

Another example of pro-opposition in the theme is whereby two or more separate elements are grouped together so that they form a single constituent of the theme + rheme structure. This kind of clause is known as a thematic equative (Halliday, 2004). This is because it sets up the theme + rheme structure in the form of an equation, where theme = rheme. The identifying clause type is exploited to form this structure. In a thematic equative, all the elements of the clause are organized into

two constituents linked by a relationship of identity- a kind of equals sign expressed by some form of the verb "be". The following examples illustrate thematic equative.

	Theme		**Rheme**
a)	What the duke gave to my aunt	-	was the tea pot
b)	The one who gave my aunt that tea pot	-	was the Duke
c)	The one the duke gave the tea pot to	-	was my aunt

The illustrations in "a" "b" and "c" above contain a structural feature known as nominalization; whereby any element or group of elements is made to function as a nominal group in the clause. As such, the nominalization serves a thematic purpose. The thematic equative pattern allows for all possible distributions of the clause into theme and rheme.

The second of these features adds a semantic component of exclusiveness. The meaning is "this and this alone". So, the meaning of what the Duke gave my aunt was that teapot is something like "I am going to tell you about the Duke's gift to my aunt: it was that teapot- .and nothing else". Contrast that with the Duke gave my aunt that teapot, where the meaning 'is' I am going to tell you something about the Duke; he gave my aunt that teapot" (with no implication that he did not give-or-do-other things as well).

Hence, even when the theme is not being extended beyond one element, this identifying structure still contributes something to the meaning of the message. It serves to express this feature of exclusiveness. This is also the explanation of the marked form. Compare 'a loaf of bread we need" and "a loaf of bread is what we need: both of these have "a loaf of bread" as theme; but whereas the former implies "among other things", the latter implies "and nothing else". Some very common

expressions have this marked equative structure, including all those beginning with that's what, that's why, etc See example below:

Subject

a) That's what they don't tell us (equative)

b) That is why they don't tell us (non equative)

Igbo proverbs exhibit this feature of exclusiveness and marked equative. As Nwadike (1981) noted, the meaning of the proverbs stand out in conversations and proverb can also be used to exclude an intruder from understanding the theme of the conversation.

2.15.1 Textual, interpersonal and topical themes

Halliday (2004:90) maintains that language has a textual function, so it has textual meanings. It is used to organize experiential and interpersonal meanings into a linear and coherent whole.

2.15.2 Topical theme

Simple themes contain only the experiential or topical elements. This means that if the theme of a clause ends with the first constituent that is a participant, circumstance or process, the constituent is referred to in its textual function as the topical theme. For instance;

And so the teacher turns it out

When the prince saw Cinderella

The underlined are topical themes.

2.15.3 Textual themes

Quite often we preface our experiential meanings with a group of phrase whose function is to connect our message to the previous text. Textual themes help to distinguish text-creating meanings from the experiential meaning in the topical theme. The textual theme is indicated positionally and is placed at the beginning of the

clause. Each of the following clauses begins with a textual theme which connects its experiential meanings to the meanings of the neighbouring clauses.

Textual theme	**Topical theme**	**Rheme**
But	The pig	Would not
Nevertheless	The alternative	Was not an alluring one

Halliday (2004:93) remarks that it is often possible to tell something about the purpose of a text by examining its textual themes. Textual themes are likely to come from a different set of connecting words. In a discussion text, for example, conjunctions such as if, although, unless, because, etc are likely to introduce dependent clauses which enhance the argument. Other conjunctive adjuncts may also be thematic if they are used at the beginning of a clause, to signpost the development of the discussion (Halliday, 2004:94).

2.15.4 Interpersonal themes

At times, clauses may begin with interpersonal meanings indicating the kind of interaction between speakers and the positions which they are taking. At these times, we are using interpersonal theme (Halliday, 2004:94). The most common examples of interpersonal theme are the finite in interrogative clauses, where it precedes the subject and immediately signals that the speaker demands information. Initial vocatives, mood and common adjuncts can also function as interpersonal theme. The following examples have interpersonal theme combined with topical theme.

Interpersonal	**Topical**	**Rheme**
May	We	Have some butter for the slice of bread?
Could	The team	Have beaten the grand finalists?

Probably They Could

This is not usually the case in Igbo proverbs. The lexical items specifying the interpersonal and topical themes are within the same clause and may be marked by the repetition of the lexical item to create the needed effect for instance the proverb *ka-abia ka-abia mere awo epughi odu* meaning procrastination is dangerous. The repetition of "ka-abia", within the same clause creates the topical theme.

2.16 The Notion of Markedness and its Application to Theme

In linguistics, when a state of affair is unmarked, it means that it is the most expected common and unremarkable case. Conversely, when something is marked, it means that it is unusual and should be noticed because of the way it stands out (Halliday, 2004:95). That is the case with proverbs generally and Igbo proverbs in particular. Applying this concept to the theme, we can separate the typical and expected pattern from the atypical and unexpected. Because all choices are meaningful, when we find the marked themes, we look for the purpose behind the speakers' message to a particular group or phrase; more often it is to build a coherent text which is easy to follow.

2.16.1 The information unit: given + new

The concept of "discourse flow" introduces the textual component within the grammar as the resource for creating discourse-text that 'hangs together' with itself and with its context of situation (Halliday, 2004:87). These textual resources are of two kinds (i) structural (ii) cohesive. The grammar construes structural units up to the rank of the clause complex (what lies behind the sentence); but although the grammar stops here, the semantic does not, in that the basic semantic unit-text can be as long as

a novel, an epic or a treatise. The grammar provides other non-structural resources for managing the flow of discourse for creating semantic links across sentences. These are referred to as cohesion. Cohesion helps to create text by providing texture. Halliday and Hassan (1976) maintain, that the primary factor of whether a set of sentences do or do not constitute a text depends on cohesive relationships between and within the sentences which create texture.

This is because though cohesion is necessary, it is not a sufficient condition for the creation of text. The textual or text forming component of linguistic is system of which cohesion is one part (Lotfipour-Saedi, 1971). According to him, cohesion is one of the textual features which creates the texture of a text and helps in its naturalization. The focus of the study lies on the theme and rheme relationship (thematic structure) as they relate to the use of Igbo proverbs in communication to negotiate meaning. The thematic structure is largely of mind, existing as structural options for the speaker to say what he wants to say and how he wants to say it.

The grammar manages the discourse flow by structural means which involves two systems at work, the theme system and the system of information. The former construes the clause in the guise of a message, made up of theme + rheme, while the latter is a system not of the clause, but of a separate grammatical unit, the information unit (Halliday and Hassan, 1976). He further states that the information unit is a unit that is parallel to the clause and the other units belonging to the same rank scale as the clause. There is a close semantic relationship between the system of information and the system of theme between information structure and thematic structure. This is reflected in the unmarked relationship between the two. Although they are related, Given + New and Theme + Rheme are not the same thing. The theme is what I, the speaker, choose to take as my point of departure. The Given is what you, the listener,

already know about or is accessible to you. Theme + Rheme is speaker- oriented, whereas Given + New is listener-oriented (Halliday, 2004:93).

These examples show how theme is illustrated in grammar. The study however, looks at the theme as it relates to orature material (proverbs). As such, Griffith (2010), Halliday (2004) and Collins (2012) definitions are adopted for the research. Smith and Liedlich (1968:172) suggested the following steps in theme development and interpretation.

i. Selecting a topic: knowing the subject
ii. Narrowing of topic: restrict or limit the subject to the point you can handle in the time available
iii. Think through the topic: consider carefully what you want to say to achieve the purpose. This preliminary thinking will give you the framework of your ideas to minimize frustration
iv. Gathering and organizing materials – A theme requires more facts, illustrations and judgments to support ideas; and accumulating these materials take time. Materials can be gathered from personal experiences, lessons, discussions, books, magazines, etc.
v. Outlining - working out the relationships and development of your thoughts more thoroughly.
vi. Presentation of the subject or writing the draft and final copy. Issues or points that need to be emphasized must be handled as such.

Like the paragraph, the theme requires careful attention to unity, development, coherence and emphasis. Because of its complexity in speech or writing, one must plan the construction of the theme in greater detail. To be able to do this, the following steps should be adopted:

i. Decide upon a subject or choose the topic

ii. Limit your topic to the interest and background of your reader or audience

iii. Think through the subject, analyze and classify until what you have makes sense (Smith and Liedlech, 1968:173).

Proverbs generally deal with almost any subject that touches humanity. Because of their figurative nature, even when their subjects seem to be animals or plants, they are often thematic comments on man and his environment. Proverbs are deep, precise reflections on human life, based on observation and often give us insights into the happenings in society from psychological, social, political and or economic perspective. They also mirror the relationship between man and the cosmos. Hence, proverbs could be on the relationship between man and God, agriculture or work in general, war, women and children or abstract things like love, kindness, greed and foolishness. In the words of Courlander (1975: 1):

> The myths, legends, epics, tales, historical poems and countless traditional oral literary forms of African people have been woven out of the substance of human experience. Struggles with land and the elements, movements and migrations, wars between kingdoms, conflicts over pasture and waterholes, and wrestling with the myster of existence, life and death. They are products of long reflections about the relations among humans, between human kind and the animal world; responses to the challenges of the unknown, and reason of chaos and accident.

The proverbs of one society differ from that of other societies in their thematic concerns based on the social experiences of the different societies. Art reflects the way of life of a people and shows their inner world. Thus as Amos (1977: 16) aptly puts it.

> The very selection of themes as adequate for folk expression depends upon cultural rules of communication and is indicative of the conception the members of the community have of the subject. Not all cultural

> knowledge and socio historical experience are the proper topics of songs, narratives, riddles or proverbs.

Difficulties abound in the categorization of proverbs according to themes. Finnegan (1976:404) rightly observes that: "Since proverbs can refer to practically any situation, it would be impossible to give any comprehensive account of the content of African proverbs". Therefore, in examining the themes of Igbo proverbs, we shall only look at the major ones that are commonly used. In all eight themes have been identified and will be examined. Some of the themes criss cross one another as they mirror the interrelatedness of human affairs.

2.17 Themes of Igbo Proverbs: As they Relate to Literature in Traditional Grammar

2.17.1 Truth versus falsehood

Human behaviour is often one of the major themes of Igbo proverbs. This is because human beings are the centre of the universe and their behaviour desirable or despicable often has consequences for those they live with. That is why characterization is central to narratives whether oral or written. Nwadike (1981:2) In proverbs, the comments are on the actions or type of behaviour, as sustained characterization is not possible in a gnomic narrative form. Some Igbo proverbs deal with the complexity of human beings and also reveal that human beings differ in behaviours. Truth is cherished in the life of an Igbo, but at the same time, it may be difficult to say when someone says the truth. Subsequently, telling lies does not show on someone's face or is not determined by the person's age. The following proverbs illustrate these beliefs.

Proverb: *Enwe si na ya agaghi agoro nwa ya kwo n' azu*

Literal translation: Monkey said he will not attest for the child on his back

Translation: One can only speak/attest of what he/she is certain

Even though the subject of the proverb above is an animal, the thematic comment refers to a human being. This shows that certainty is inevitable when one says the truth or makes a factual statement. This is illustrated in yet another Igbo proverb, which links truth to life.

Proverb: *Ezi okwu bu ndu*

Literal translation: Good talk is life

Translation: Truth is life

Nothing can be compared to life; as such truth is a highly cherished virtue among the Igbos. The metaphorical way in which this proverb is used shows how apt the theme can be captured in a conversation. The theme of truth can be used as a simile in a conversation.

Proverb: *Ezi okwu di ka afo ime adighi ekpuchi ya aka*

Literal translation: Good talk is like pregnancy cannot be covered with hand

Translation: Truth is like pregnancy, it cannot be concealed

Proverb: *Ezi okwu di ka okporo akpu a naghi aroji ya aroji*

Literal translation: Good talk is like cassava stem, it cannot be bent over

Translation: Truth is like a cassava stem, one cannot bend it without breaking.

In the two proverbs shown above, truth is likened to pregnancy and a cassava stem. The inability to hide pregnancy or bend the cassava stem shows how difficult it is to cover truth, no matter how one tries, as the resultant consequences may be disastrous. Igbo proverbs having truth as subject matters are always quoted by the "Ndiche" traditional judges when cases are decided. They use it to buttress their

points and give credibility to their judgments. One of the parties involved in the case may also quote it to enliven his submission or authenticate his claims.

2.17.2 Conflict versus diplomacy

Igbo proverbs constitute a language of diplomacy among the Igbos. It is used in settling disputes among villages, towns, clans and even among brothers. Any time there is conflict as in the settlement of bride price during marriage ceremonies, commerce, disputes over ownership of lands, trees, etc, quarrels/fight between husband and wife or brothers, what is normally used to convince the warring parties easily are proverbs. Onwudufor (2002) the ability of the speaker to utilize the appropriate proverbs that refer to the subject matter in question creates a platform for peace. For instance, in settling disputes between brothers or couples, the speaker can utter this proverb.

Proverb: *Ire na eze na-alukwa ogu ma kpeziekwa*

Literal translation: Tongue and teeth also fight each other yet they settle

Translation: Closeness does not stop fighting or quarrelling

In this proverb, the inevitability of conflict in people's life is illustrated. There is no way people can stay together without having misunderstanding just as the teeth and the tongue are two inseparable children of the mouth who often live peacefully. Sometimes however, the teeth can bite the tongue. This metaphorical proverb is used where one expresses surprise at friends, brothers or married couples fighting each other. The speaker reminds the listener of this philosophical truth of conflict as an inevitable part of social life. Today, the proverb is relevant in relation to the various conflicts that have bedeviled our societies and nation. Another proverb that illustrates the first one is:

Proverb: *Iwe nwanne adighi eru n'okpukpu*

Literal translation: Annoyance of brother does not reach the bone

Translation: Forgiving your brother who erred should be instant or should not be delayed.

This proverb is used when settling a dispute between brothers, clans or close relation. The user utters it to remind them that prolonging their settlement is unusual as forgiveness should not be delayed. Delaying it might do more harm to the relationship.

2.17.3 Diligence versus laziness

A number of Igbo proverbs deal with the theme of diligence while laziness is eschewed. Igbo people are known for their doggedness and industriousness in whatever they are set to achieve. An average Igbo man believes in what he can do for himself without relying on anybody, Emenanjo (1989). The following Igbo proverbs are uttered when such themes are being discussed.

Proverb: *Aka aja aja na-ebute onu mmanu mmanu*

Literal translation: Hand sand sand cause mouth oil oil

Translation: The hand soiled with sand gives rise to mouth laden with oil

This proverb illustrates the result of hardwork. The hand soiled with sand is the hand of the hardworking farmer. As such, the outcome is the rich harvest and constant food he will have in his store.

Proverb: *Okuku siri a boo a boo erie erie*

Literal translation: Fowl said one to cultivate, one to eat

Translation: The fowl said that, if one cultivates, one finds something to eat.

The proverb signifies that hardwork is rewarding because the occasion of feasting was brought about by hardwork.

Proverb: *Ngala kpuchie ute, aguu ekpughe ya*

Literal translation: Pride cover mat hunger uncovers it

Translation: Pride may make one not to work, but hunger will surely expose the person.

The sharp contrast of the action of pride and hunger is clearly shown in the life of the person involved. One covers and the other one uncovers. The uncovering is usually done in a disgraceful manner, thus, illustrating the need for one to eschew pride when looking for job/what one can engage himself/herself in.

2.17.4 Praise versus lampoon

Like most African societies, Igbo people lay emphasis on manliness or being courageous in whatever one is doing. In the past, inter-tribal and inter-clan wars were fought in Igbo land. Hence courage, endurance and strength were the qualities mostly expected of men who had to defend their societies against all kinds of aggressions, Nwodo (2006). Inevitably therefore, some Igbo proverbs allude to the subject of manliness.

Proverb: *Mberde ka eji ama dike*

Literal translation: Sudden to use know (the) strong

Translation: A strong person is known by his ability not to be overwhelmed by a sudden misfortune.

This proverb is used when encouraging young men to live and act like men as that is one striking quality that distinguishes them from women or children. Immediately this proverb is uttered, enough strength is injected into the person as he is once more reminded of his status as a man. Other proverbs that illustrate the theme of manliness are:

Proverb: *Agaghi aso mgbagbu ghara iga ogu*

Literal translation: Will not dread shooting refuse to go war

Translation: The idea of being killed does not stop one from going to war

This proverb is used to encourage people to attempt very difficult task(s). This notion encouraged the Igbo in the three and half years of the Biafran war. The general idea is to encourage people to rise up to the challenges of the moment, by reminding them that the fear of risks had never been known by itself to solve any problem. This proverb thus, metaphorically shows the quality of men illustrated in the Igbo world view. In serious situations whereby the person is aggrieved to the extent of fighting, the following proverb may be uttered to support the person's action.

Proverb: *A naghi akpa nwa agu aka n'odu ma o di ndu ma onwuru anwu*

Literal translation: Not touch child lion on the tail whether alive or dead

Translation: One should not touch the tail of a young lion and go scot free whether it is alive or dead.

This indicates that one cannot provoke a person unnecessarily without being ruthlessly dealt with. The metaphorical lion in this proverb shows a strong and daring person or community. Contextually, the proverb cautions the listener to be careful and not to seek trouble which cannot be contained. The proverb is akin to the English, "don't stir the hornet, and the Hausa 'don't poke at the anus of a monster". The "hornet" and the "monster" are both revengeful and violent, and are often feared like a young lion that is as dangerous as its mother.

2.17.5 Unity versus disunity

Throughout the ages past and even up till the present, man has felt the need for togetherness, for solidarity, for oneness etc Igbo society like most pre-capitalist societies, emphasized the need for kinship, brotherhood and communal living. It was and is still understood that however great one might be, one would not be able to live and perform certain duties alone. The egalitarian principles of the Igbo society are

anchored in the spirit of mutual assistance and strong kinship bonds, Onwudufor (2008). Wherever Igbo people go, they form societies which help them link one another. Hence individualism is seen as detrimental to the community, the individual and the group. Proverbs that illustrate this theme are:

Proverb: *A nyukoo amiri onu o gba ufufu*

Literal translation: Stay together urinate urine it brings foam

Translation: When (people) urinate at a spot, it foams.

The general idea of this proverb is to encourage unity and togetherness. It is mostly used during family meetings (Aladimma) or in the umunna (kinship gathering). As has been pointed out, the family in Igbo is made up of umunna "kinsmen" who when they stick together become even stronger. "In the spirit of togetherness, we stand, divided we fall" or "Unity is strength" as Nigerians often remind one another. A united family for example, is usually reckoned with as they usually seem strong and prosperous. In Maasai and Oromo languages of Kenya, the need for unity is equally conveyed in proverbs. The Maasai states "an elephant is not able to withstand a beating from many". This shows that people need to come together to overcome a great difficulty". The Oromo on the other hand say "one finger does not catch a fly". To stress the need that many are better than one, Ecclesiastes (4:12) states:

Though one may be overpowered,

Two can defend themselves,

A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.

The need for unity is also expressed in the Igbo proverb which says:

Proverb: *Otu mkpisi aziza di mfe mgbaji mana igbaji ukwu aziza adighi mfe*

Literal translation: One broom stick is easy to break but to break a bunch of broom is not easy.

Translation: A lath is easy to break unlike attempting to break the bunch which is difficult.

This Igbo proverb tries to caution against individualism, while solidarity and unity are encouraged. Unity prevents the enemy from gaining access to the family. Just as a bunch of broom sticks together and functions very well in sweeping and keeping the surroundings clean, a single stick (lath) cannot do it; as such, being united helps fellow members of the family to achieve comparable success.

2.17.6 Hope versus despair

Life is generally a mixture of joy and sadness, of hope and despair, of the good and the bad. Igbo people experience such moments of desolation, hopelessness and sadness (Nwachukwu, 1993). Some Igbo proverbs capture the various individual and communal expressions and spirit of disillusionment. The feeling of abandonment and helplessness is brought out in the following Igbo proverbs.

Proverb: *Mmiri attala n' osimiri*

Literal translation: Water dried in ocean

Translation: The worst has happened (water has dried in the ocean)

It is a fact that water cannot dry up in the ocean. So, water drying up in the ocean suggests a grave situation. An acute situation of suffering, which may be that the source of livelihood or even property (as in fire disaster has occurred). The victim is overwhelmed and almost believes that the world has come to an end in his life. The victim can compare his loss with that of another person greater than he who did not survive similar situation, and thus states.

Proverb: *Mmiri a riri enyi,gini ka m bu mbe ga-eme?*

Literal translation: This river swallows elephant what will I a tortoise do?

Translation: How can a tortoise gear up beside a river that swallowed an elephant?

This proverb is in a rhetorical question form. The victim sees the extent of his loss as enormous considering his position and the quantity of what he has lost. Hence, hope is paradoxically presented as a source of sorrow and despair. The defeatist acceptance demonstrated by the victim shows the level of sadness and hopelessness portrayed in the proverb.

2.17.7 Obedience versus disobedience

Proverbs can be used as means of warning people to abstain from danger and be loyal to the rules and regulations of the society. Stubborn people or those who fail to heed the advice of elders or parents are rebuked through the use of some proverbs which centre on such themes (Ogbalu, 1972). Examples are:

a. Proverb: *A gwa nti ma o nughi e gburu isi, nti esoro*

Literal translation: To tell ear and it does not hear to cut head, ear joins

Translation: If the ear is told and it fails to hear/listen when the head is cut off, the ear follows it

b. Proverb: *Ukpana Okpoko gburu nti chiri ya*

Literal translation: Insect bird (Okpoko) kill ear is close

Translation: An insect (locust) that is killed by Okpoko (bird) is deaf ‘Okpoko (a kind of bird that moves with great noise)

c. Proverb: *Nwata bulie nna ya elu ogodo awuchie ya anya*

Literal translation: Child carried father up cloth covers his eyes

Translation: If a child disregards the words of his father, he will be overtaken by misfortunes/woes

d. Proverb: *Irube isi kakwa ichu aja mma*

Literal translation: To obey is better than sacrifice

Translation: Obedience is always better than sacrifice

These proverbs show that if a child or someone fails to heed the advice of elders/parents, he gets into trouble. The proverbs point out the evil in not paying heed to the words of advice provided well before any untoward event.

Thus, we have seen that Igbo proverbs deal with diverse themes and some of them have been briefly looked at. Others which we have not discussed here, but which also abound in Igbo proverbs include praise, resignation to fate, reciprocity, cause and effect, skill and expertise, marriage, man's relationship with God etc. Hence, like most African proverbs, the themes of Igbo proverbs are as numerous as the societal experience of the people. The divergent themes reflect the variety and complexity of human experience. Some of the theme are polythematic in nature just as most of them equally have a variety of functions.

2.17.8 Time management

A lot of Igbo proverbs deal with the theme of time, either directly or indirectly. Igbo proverbs concretely capture the various individual and communal expressions on time. Igbo society is capitalistic in nature and individual or communal hard work is highly cherished. The people therefore attach great importance to time. To an average Igbo man or woman, the proverb "Time is money" which was coined by Benjamin Franklin (1748) is a regular anthem which is recited whenever business transactions are delayed, Onwnaeme, (1981). The theme of time therefore features prominently in discussions. The following proverbs illustrate this theme.

Proverb: *Oge adighi eche mmadu, mmadu na-eche oge*

Literal translation: Time does not wait person persons is wait time

Translation: Time waits for no one

Meaning that, one needs to plan his/her life with the time available for him/her.

Proverb: *Anu bu uzo na-anu mmiri oma*

Literal translation: Animal is door is drink water good

Translation: The animal that comes first drinks fresh water

Meaning that, the early bird catches the worm

The proverbs in I and II above illustrate the need for one to be time conscious in whatever one wants to embark upon. Most successes and failures in life are usually attributed to poor or proper management of time. Delay has caused some people their fortunes which they have lived to regret.

In the event that one is known for late coming or not being time conscious, the following proverbs are used to re-emphasize the importance of time:

a. Proverb: *E mee ngwa ngwa e meghara odachi*

Literal translation: If done fastly fastly it avoids accident

Translation: Acting promptly prevents problem

Meaning that, a stitch in time saves nine or punctuality is the soul of business.

b. Proverb: *Were ehihie chowa ewu oji*

Literal translation: Use day time to search goat black

Translation: Search for the black goat while it is still day (make hay while the sun shines)

2.18 Aesthetic/Rhetorical Devices

Aesthetics is the study of beauty and taste, whether in the form of the comic, the tragic, or the sublime. The word derives from the Greek “aisthetikos” meaning “of

sense perception". Aesthetics has traditionally been part of philosophical pursuits like epistemology or ethics, but it started to come into its own and became a more independent pursuit under Immanuel Kant, the German philosopher who saw aesthetics as a unitary and self sufficient type of human experience. For Immanuel Kant, the aesthetic experience of beauty is a judgment of a subjective, but similar human truth, since all people should agree that "this rose is beautiful" if it is in fact is. When we discuss the aesthetics aspects of experience, we are employing 'aesthetic' as an adjective that relates to the noun "experience". Aesthetics can also be used as a noun when it becomes a central topic for discussion, example, when we are engaged in the study of aesthetics an interest in what happened in the socio cultural context is being discussed. Thus, aesthetics is the philosophy of art, beauty and perception.

Aesthetics is a concept not easily broken down into simpler ideas, making it difficult to explain. When we speak of something that creates an aesthetic experience, we are usually talking about some form of art. However, not all works of art necessarily create an aesthetic experience. Those studying aesthetics seek to understand why some things arouse positive reactions whereas others arouse negative ones or do not arouse any reaction at all. The very question of how and why aesthetic experiences are created is itself also a subject of aesthetics. In this manner, the field of aesthetics begins to cross into the philosophy of the mind because it touches on how and why aspects of our brain and consciousness operate.

Collins (2009) defines aesthetics as the philosophical theory or set of principles governing the idea of beauty at a given time and place. It is also a principle of taste or style adopted by a particular person, group or culture in doing things. In this definition, aesthetics is related to style. Aesthetics leads us to a variety of issues involving politics, morality and more.

Malcolm (2004) defines aesthetics as a branch of philosophy dealing with the nature of beauty, art, and taste and with the creation and appreciation of beauty. It is more scientifically defined as the study of sensory or sensori-emotional values, sometimes called judgments of sentiments and taste.

Aesthetic/rhetorical or stylistic devices are the totality of the elements with which texts assume such "characteristics of situationally distinctive uses of language" (Crystal and Davy, 1969). As stylistics studies literary discourse from a linguistic orientation (Widdowson, 1975:3), the devices used in attaining the literary and linguistic distinctiveness of texts are the crucial components of stylistic investigation. The ability to employ aesthetic devices to oral and written discourse as well as the capacity to identify and interpret them can be considered "stylistic competence". The study adopts the definition of Collins (2009), (Crystal and Davy, 1969) and (Widdowson, 1975:3) as most appropriate for the treatment of aesthetics.

This functional contextuality catano, (1988) and interpretation which is anchored in a social theory is encapsulated in Wales (2001) definition of stylistics.

> The goal of most stylistic studies is not simply to describe the formal features of text for their own sake, but in order to show their functional significance for the interpretation of the text, in order to relate literary effects of linguistic causes where these are felt to be relevant.

By this, the scope of stylistics has been widened to incorporate the framework of critical linguistic, Fowler (1996) and Locke (2004). Some of the sub fields are literary, linguistic, discourse cognitive, feminist, forensic stylistic etc. Three of them that are relevant to this study will be reviewed.

Literary stylistics is an approach that seeks to investigate the aesthetic functions of literary discourse (Abraham and Harphan, 2009). Its primary interest in the analysis of texts is the identification of the linguistic techniques and patterning

and literary antithesis etc. that determine artistic motivations. The artistic form (aesthetics) is the central concern where the analysis of the texts reveals striking aesthetic elements that reinforce the message and the mood projected by the literary writer. Literary stylistics relies on a vague impressionistic account of relevant patterns and makes only tentative statements whose true value depends on subjective observations, evaluation and interpretation.

Linguistic stylistics according to Kolawole (1997) examines in precise and definite terms, the formal patterns that constitute literary discourse. The toolkits are deployed to investigate the workings of language in literary texts. The stylistician offers a systematic and procedural account of the interrelatedness of the lexical and grammatical patterning, together with the sequence and relations that characterize the language.

Linguistic stylistics is therefore the study and interpretation of the formal properties of texts written or spoken, literary or nonliterary existing as an isolated item in the world. This means that any text is accessible to linguistic analysis (Halliday, 1973) and it is an effective method of literary study (Simpson, 2004). Linguistic stylistics is based on linguistic orientation and involves a number of interrelated levels of language. These levels are phonetics, phonology, graphology, morphology lexis, semantics, and pragmatics and discourse analysis.

Discourse analysis focuses on the analysis of language used in naturally occurring context. Stubbs (1993) views discourse analysis as the sociolinguistic analysis of natural language that describes instances of language use in context. The linguistic variables to analyze reflect the functions of linguistic forms that make up the literary text. Conversely, the functions spell out the role or message the linguistic form conveys or performs in the text. The meaning of linguistic forms are interpreted

against the background of Contexts of situation, context of culture and context of text, known as intertextuality (Leckie-Tarry, 1995).

The foregoing discussion has revealed that the trends of stylistic analysis have expanded to include a consideration of text i.e. the lexico-grammatical choices or options, the reading (listening position of readers/listeners and a consideration of text within its socio-cultural context. Knowledge of these three distinct but interrelated strands would be utilized in the analysis and discussion of the Igbo proverbs used for this study.

In exploring the language of proverbs, phonological patterning is a significant necessity that projects the thematic concerns of the proverbs. According to Nowothy (1962: 201) features of sound and spelling can emphasize meaning for they are devices of persuasion. Sounds have no inherent meaning, as such can be interpreted out of context, but in relation to the subject matter being uttered by the speaker, Short (2010). Nowothy (1982) eloquently underscores the initiative function of sounds and the mimetic capability to sustain meaning connection. These phonological devices are alliteration, assonance, onomatopoeia, repetition, rhyme, rhythm, symbolism, etc. This is true of most Igbo proverbs in that the identification of the phonological devices in them is an effective means of interpreting the meaning of the proverbs.

Graphology deals with the visual medium of language writing system, such as alphabet, spelling, pronunciation, (Simpson, 2004). Graphological information of a text also incorporates any significant pictorial and iconic devices which give supplementary assistance to the writing system of the language. The system of graphology offers creative potentials to speakers and writers to shape their artistic message in strategically motivated ways. In Igbo language, vowel harmony and tone marking are very crucial in the understanding of the meaning of Igbo proverbs.

Though this is not the focus of the study insight from it will be drawn in the discussion of the proverbs. The focus is on the third layer which is context.

Proverbs are artistic creations and distinct utterances that create delight by the very nature of their constructions. Igbo Proverbs have aesthetic appeals and the study of the various formal devices employed in their usage has revealed that apart from being the store house of the people's wisdom, they have aesthetic or stylistic qualities that appeal to our various senses (Ugonna, 1989:4). They are akin to poetry in the way they are contrived and particularly in their figurative structure. Finnegan (1976:395) maintains that

> In discussing the style and structure of African proverbs, one of the first things one notices is the poetic form in which many are expressed. This, allied to their figurative mode of expression, served to some degree to set them apart from everyday speech.

Nwachukwu (1990:380), agreeing with Finnegan, argues that "the coiners of Igbo proverbs aim at aesthetic statements and then their cognitive value". He notes further that Igbo culture in spite of modernism is still largely on oral milieu in which uttered words remain as influential if not more influential than written symbols. In similar manner, Adeyemi (2010) commenting on Yoruba literature notes that language full of proverbs and other rhetorical devices is not enough, adequate use of aesthetic ornament is required. The presence of aesthetic features referred to as "salt" by Surakat (2010) is fully present in proverbs. He maintains that the salt of proverbs refers to the poetic and aesthetic features found in wise sayings. Alliteration, hyperbole, paradox, parallelism, metaphor, synecdoche, etc, are some of the examples.

Osisanwo (2008) remarks that the poetic function of language explores the creative resources of language to achieve aesthetic purposes. This function of

language establishes the interdependence and interconnectedness between language and literature. This is because language is the material of literature as stone or bronze is of sculptor, paint of picture or sound of music (Weinreich,1993:23).

Proverbial language is couched in rhythmic and metrical patterns, congealed images, mystified dictions, subtle metaphors, lexical cohesion, sound devices, symbolisms etc to evoke feelings, emotions, profound thoughts and ideas, marvelous admiration and enthusiasm in the listener/hearer/reader. These are achieved through a deliberate employment and manipulation of the resources of the language which serves as building blocks for constructing proverbs. In other words, proverbial language differs sharply from ordinary or everyday language. Consequently, the style and technique employed in proverbs shape the subject matter, the interlocutors and the roles they play in any communicative event.

There are several aesthetic devices which constitute the metalanguage of stylistic investigation. Alabi (2003), for instance, discusses one hundred stylistic devices while Wales (2001) accounts for over six hundred of such terms and devices in her dictionary. Proverbs in general and Igbo proverbs in particular make overwhelming use of aesthetic devices. Twenty of them are discussed in this study. These are: imagery; simile, allusion, metaphor, irony, repetition, antithesis, alliteration, assonance, idioms, metonymy, symbolism, hyperbole, rhetorical question, personification, paradox, ellipsis, polypototon, rhyme and rhythm. The concern of this study is not just in identifying them, but the level in which they influence the understanding and interpretation of the proverbs at the level of linguistic analysis

When a linguistic expression has an “unusual significance”, such an expression attracts the attention of the listener. This may also lead the listener to plunge into finding out its meaning and other linguistic traits. In other words,

proverbial language is any expression that is unusually significant in the transmission and negotiation of meaning. Some of the distinguishing features of proverbial language are imaginativeness, figurativeness and marked literariness rather than unmarked literalness.

Wales (2001) maintains that markedness is used to refer to such features of patterns that are prominent, unusual or figuratively deviant, while unmarkedness indicates what is normal, neutral or linguistically, aesthetically/stylistically insignificant. Aesthetics is a principle of beauty or style adopted by a person, group or culture in doing things. Since proverb is a property of the culture of a particular group, it behoves that there exist some styles of using them in different contexts of that particular culture. Some of these styles create beauty, positive and negative reactions. It is the contention of this study that style creates beauty and arouses negative or positive reactions which facilitate the understanding of the meaning of the proverb. Brief discussions of these are as follows:

1. **Imagery**

   Imagery is the use of words and phrases that appeal to the listeners/readers' senses and imagination such that the expressions create mental pictures. Imagery may be visual (appealing to the senses of sight) kinetic (showing motion and change), or static (giving timeless quality). Proverbs like "a picture paints a thousand words" "a new room sweeps" etc create vivid images (Adedimeji 2010: 109). Through the use of appropriate language structure, nemotechnical devices, Igbo proverbs achieve clarity of thought, vividness and conciseness of form.

2. **Simile**

Simile is a word or phrase that compares something to something else, using the words "like" or "as" It is regarded as indirect comparison. Ugo (1989:5) writing on Igbo proverbs submits that proverbs have the meaning of the Hebrew word "marshal" which has been rendered in translation as "proverbium" which means similitude. He however tries to establish a distinction between "ilu" (proverbs) and the Jewish "marshal". While the Jewish "marshal" stresses instruction and moralizing, "ilu" (proverb) is as large as life. To Ugo, the essential element of any Igbo proverb is its similitude i.e similarity between statements and common human experience.

3. **Allusion**

Allusive proverbs help in enriching the memory of the listener. As in literature, allusions are used as a way of achieving brevity. It is a device whereby meaning is associated with another context. Ugonna (1994) rightly observes that the use of allusions in Igbo proverbs presupposes a prior knowledge on the listener; or otherwise the effect will not be felt. Most of the allusions in Igbo proverbs are Biblical, while others are anecdotal or fictional and yet, some historical. An example is the Proverb "Nwata bulie nna ya elu, ogodo awuchie ya anya" which means, a child who disregards his father up, the father is always overtaken by misfortunes. This is a Biblical allusion from St. Luke's gospel chapter 15:11-18 Proverbs make use of allusions in order to enhance meaning through comparison and contrast. The use of allusions reveals the fact that the imagination is capable of recalling historical reality or fictitious happenings to depict a current phenomenon (Wales, 2001).

4. **Metaphor**

Metaphor is a literary/aesthetic device through which "reference" is carried over or mapped onto another on the basis of some perceived similarity between the two fields (Wales, 2001:250). It is derived from the Greek "metaphor" which means "to carry across" or "carry over". Unlike simile where the comparison is explicit or indirect, metaphor compares one thing with another implicitly or directly as it serves as "a descriptive application of qualities from one thing to another" (Moody, 1968:20). As a stylistic device, Ullmann (1977:212) cites. Aristotle's submission on the strength of metaphor, that "the greatest thing by far is to have a command of metaphor… it is a mark of ingenuity". Igbo Proverbs are rich in metaphors Ugonna (1974:6) notes that: "a statement becomes (ilu) a proverb, when a metaphorical inference can be drawn from it, when a deeper or universal meaning is suggested by or is derived from the surface meaning". Metaphor is one of the ornate devices in the hands of literary artists used for rhetorical embellishment or aesthetism. It conceptualizes the way we think, act and speak, Lakoff and Turner, (1989). They conclude that metaphors are not just unique creations, but are rather part of the ways members of a culture conceptualize their experience. Bromelo (2008:89) sees metaphor as umbrella ideas which are rarely explicitly expressed, but nonetheless are accepted and shared by the whole community of language users. He concludes that metaphor is a way of life and highly indispensable justifying the phrase "metaphor we live by".

Examples of metaphorical proverbs are, "Time is money," "Variety is the spice of life" "No man is an Island". Wales, (2001:251), observes that the use of metaphor is pervasive and that it is not limited to literary or semi literary

language like advertising, but rather cuts across everyday linguistic interaction, and proverbs rely heavily on metaphors.

5. **Irony**

This is a strange, funny or sad situation in which things happen in the opposite way to what one would expect. The result may be tragic, bitter, sad or humorous. Ugonna (1974:12) opines that some Igbo proverbs can be conceived as masks, which while trying to disguise the truth, give it more prominence. The proverbial mask is akin to irony.

6. **Repetition**

Repetition is the re-statement of what has been stated. It is "a powerful resource of interpersonal involvement and rapport" (Wales, 2001:321). As a primary rhetorical device of spoken language, it is mainly used for emphasis and phonological foregrounding. Repetition takes place at lexical and supralexical levels. Abrahams (1972:120) submits that the repetition of words and phrases are sound techniques which give Igbo proverbs sense of form, add to their musicality to achieve emphatic function. There is the use of repetition in such proverbs as "A friend to all is a friend to none" "A good beginning makes a good end" etc. the analysis of data in this study accounts for lexical repetition.

7. **Contrast**

Contrast is used to emphasize unlike ideas or characters, to show their opposites. People or ideas are sometimes best appreciated by bringing out what they are not Opata, (1998). This technique abound in Igbo proverbs to emphasize and stress a fact that is glaring. In most cases, the lexical contrast is associated with the grammatical features of negation, and by so doing re-

enforces the contrast between them (Ibid). It is especially so in the case of two clauses where one is usually a negation of the other. Contrast is employed for euphony thus making the proverbs more memorable in style and structure Ugonna, (1974).

8. **Alliteration**

This is the repetition of the initial consonant in two or more words. It is a deliberate phonological device with which sounds are fore-grounded for emphasis and to aid memorability (Wales, 2001:14). It is also called "initial rhyme" and is designed to have special effect on hearers and thereby draw special attention to particular concepts. This may explain why proverbs feature widely in traditional songs and this facilitates their memorizations and widespread use Nwadike, (1981).

Abrahams (1972:119) sees alliteration as the repetition of speech sounds in a sequence of nearby words and it is usually applied to consonants only, when the recurrent sound occurs in a conscious position at the beginning of a word. Example is "A smooth sea never made a skilled mariner".

9. **Assonance**

Assonance is a partial or half rhyme in which the same vowel is repeated in words or the repetition of similar vowel sounds in expressions. Like alliteration, assonance is observable as a phonic device in some Igbo proverbs and they also create rhythm, cohesion and lexical linkages (Abrahams, 1972:120). Examples of proverbs that manifest this device include "A stitch in time saves nine", "Time and tide wait for no man."

10. **Metonymy**

This is a stylistic device in which an attribute of something is used to stand for the thing itself (Encarta Dictionary, 2010). For Diji (2015:18), metonymy is the representation of one thing by something closely associated with it. One thing is understood through another, because it concerns itself with contiguous relationship. It is different from, though related to synecdoche where a part is used to represent a whole. Examples of metonymy are "A house divided against itself cannot stand" "Two heads are better than one".

11. **Hyperbole**

Hyperbole is a device that depends on deliberate exaggeration or intentional over-statement. Wales (2001:190), submits that hyperbole is not telling lies because "there is normally no intent to deceive one's listeners, who will no doubt infer the true state of affairs anyway". Igbo people overstate or exaggerate in some of their proverbs, and this is normally for the sake of emphasis, satire and humour Ugonna, (1974). Examples of such proverbs are: "An apple a day keeps the doctor away".

12. **Rhetorical Question**

This is a question that is asked not for the sake of getting an answer, but to assert something which is known to the addresser and cannot be denied (Wales, 2001:346). To Ohmann (1971), rhetorical question is a quasi-speech act in that it appeals to readers or listeners reason emotionally by exploiting it though proverbs usually take the declarative form. The tenor of discourse, the context of situation and the desired perlocutionary effect do make users render them as interrogatives or rhetorical questions.

Abrahams (1972) sees it as a forcible way of stating a fact. An example of this device is seen in the prover, "can you teach an old dog new tricks?".

Wamitila (2000:416) observes that, rhetorical question serve as clear indicators of the oral discourse situation in which most of the proverbs are used. Like all figurative expressions, the paremic rhetorical questions are indirect ways of pointing to certain truths and are appropriate to the spoken form of language (Abrahams, 1972).

13. **Personification**

This is an aesthetic device in which human attributes are given to inanimate or non human objects, Wales, (2001:294) sees personification as a feature of metaphor, idioms and proverbs. An example of a proverb with the device include; "Walls have ears"

14. **Paradox**

This figurative device is derived from the Greek 'Paradoxos' meaning 'contrary to opinion' A paradox is a statement which seems to be senseless, absurd or contradictory, but which contains an element of truth (Diji, 2002:10). It is a kind of expanded oxymoron. The reader must probe beyond the literal meaning to find a deeper, usually more philosophical meaning which will reconcile the apparent absurdity, (Wales, 2001:282). A Proverb relying on this device is "the pen is mightier than the sword".

Paradox reflects the contradictory nature of the world. Human beings live in a complex environment where certain occurrences appear absurd or meaningless, but reveal some inner truth. This device adds depth of feeling and profundity of thoughts to the Igbo people in their use of proverbs because of its wittiness (Nwachukwu, 2002).

15. **Polypototon**

This is a stylistic device that involves the repetition of words derived from the same root, (Wales, 2001:308). When the derivatives of a word are used in the same utterance or line, polypototon is at force (Adedemeji, 2010:112).

Example of a proverb with this device is: "when in Rome, do as the Romans do". An Igbo proverb containing this device is "A na-eji ego acho ego" meaning, you use money to look for money, Nwadike (1981).

16. **Ellipsis**

Ellipsis is the omission of part of an utterance or grammatical structure, which can be readily understood by the learner or reader in the co-text or the context, and which can be 'recovered' explicitly; (Wales, 2001:121). In other words, it is the omission of one or more words from a sentence, especially when what is omitted can be understood from the context. Ellipsis is used in proverbs in order to achieve implicit cohesion and maintain shortness which is one of the notable characteristics of proverbs, Encerta Dictionary, (2010). Examples of proverbs where one or more elements are ellipted are "more haste, less speed"

17. **Onomatopoeia**

This device refers to a word or group of words, whose sounds suggest their meaning. Onomatopoeia is a combination of elements from alliteration and assonance. It is the echoing of vowels, the class of consonants, repetition of words and the rhythm of the verse itself (Diji 2015:14). This repetition and rhythm give clue to the meaning of the proverbs. Example of an Igbo proverb with this device is a "Gidogidi bu ugwu eze" meaning the strength of a king lies in his subjects, Ugonna (1974).

18. **Idioms/Idiomatic Expression**

An idiom is an expression whose meaning is different from the meaning of the individual words. Idiomatic expression deviates from ordinary plain language and to some extent, a complex language as it signifies more than what it apparently indicates. Idioms raise discourse above the ordinary level, enliven and dignify language by adding charm and clarity to it. The complementary roles of idioms in proverbs have made some people see them as the same with proverbs but they are not. Okoli (1996) observes that, a good idiomatic expression in a proverb, enlivens and enchants the discourse.

An idiom is known as "akpaalaokwu" in Igbo language that is the bras with which words are propped up and presented to the titillating ears of eventual consumers (Ibid). It is literary lingerie in proverbs, while the later is a literary condiment (Achebe, 1979). In a language like Igbo where a word may mean many things and where the tone makes a lot of difference, idioms are bound to play vital roles in communication. This peculiarity may account for the difficulty which foreigners experience in understanding Igbo language. Emenanjo (1989) gives the following illustration using the word "Ukwu" (leg) which can be used idiomatically to mean different things;

a. "Ibi ukwu ije" _ to save time

b. "Ukwu idi mma" _ to be lucky

c. "Ezi ukwu ikpo mmadu" _ to be fortunate

d. "Ajo ukwu" _ to have ill-luck

e. "Ukwu oma" _ to be well favoured/fortunate

19. **Rhyme**

Rhyme is a phonological device involving the use of similar and identical sounds to create a pattern, Adedimeji (2010). In order words, rhyme occurs "when a word with an ending that sounds similar to the ending of another word" is used. The most frequent type is the end rhyme (where two units-commonly monosyllabic word are matched by identical sequence of sounds stretching from the vowel. This is usually stressed to the end of the words, with the initial sound varied) especially, in poetry (Wales, 2001:346). Internal rhyme, occurs when words marked by the same sound pattern are often found in proverbs are used. Examples of proverbs with internal rhymes are; "Behind every great man there is a great woman", "The best defense is a good offence".

20. **Rhythm**

The word rhythm is derived from the same Greek root "rhuthmos" which means 'flow'. As rhyme, rhythm is basically a perceptual pattern of accented or stressed and unaccented or unstressed syllable in a language, (Wales 2001:348) Rhythm is used to refer to patterns of repetition which apply to any text, giving it its characteristics texture or structure (Adedimeji, 2010). The following proverbs contain a sense of rhythm "Jack of all trades, master of none", one good turn deserves another.

The repetition creates rhythmic effect which, not only attracts the listener, but pushes him/her to plunge into action to decipher the meaning of the proverbs and make contributions by citing other proverbs with the same theme or that are relevant to the situation.

2.18.1 Aesthetics and Proverbs

The aesthetics of a proverb manifests itself at all levels of linguistic analysis especially phonology, morphology, semantics and pragmatics. This means that proverbs have peculiar sound patterns accounting for most of the features of sound like repetition, alliteration, assonance, onomatopoeia, etc. Forms like rhyme and rhythm which are mainly properties of poetry are also present in the phonetic peculiarity of proverbs. These not only add beauty to the language but suggest the meaning of the proverbs.

Proverbs also allow unusual words, sentence formation processes, borne out of creativity to achieve the desired significance. Words and sentences are formed to stress and stretch the established conventions with a view to adding beauty or aesthetic quality to the expression while influencing meaning. Some proverbs are designed elliptically so as to achieve implicit cohesion and maintain shortness which is one of its notable features. Idiomatic expressions also abound in proverbs. Idiomatic expressions deviate from the ordinary plain language and so raise discourse above the ordinary level to enliven, dignify, and add charm and clarity to it. Their presence in proverbs, not only adds beauty but create lingering feelings in the minds of the listeners. At the level of syntax or word combination too, proverbial language allow unusual word combinations and idiosyncratic word pattern. At this level, grammatical conventions of punctuations, sentence structure and word forms are flouted for aesthetic effects. Examples of these abound in most Nigeria and African proverbs. In most tonal languages like Igbo, Yoruba, Igala, Edo, Idoma etc where tone determine the meaning of most words, the proverbs are used in discourse with this in mind. Other aspects of morphology that add beauty and create style in proverbs are the assimilation of vowel and realization of consonants.

At the semantic level, meaning is the object or goal of linguistics and literary activities. The literal meaning is the denotative, cognitive or logical meaning. The literary meaning pertains to literature or the connotation, figurative meaning; but for proverb, meaning extends to the third and fourth larger known as the contextual and philosophical level (Okonkwo, 1977:100). This is because the context of situation and the context of culture which provoke philosophical reasoning must agree in the interpretation of any Igbo proverb. Tropes like metaphor, personification, irony, allusion etc. operate.

The totality of what the unusual significance engenders is referred to as style (Crystal and Davy, 1969). In essence, proverbs tend to express ideas differently, generate multiple options, locate direction through indirection, and break the rule, etc. All these distinguish it from ordinary or plain language to an exalted language. Ngugi (1995:2009) maintains that language is inseparable from us as a community of human beings with specific relationship to the word. Proverbs deal with things and express language in a practical and sensible way. This fact is explored by utilizing the world view and culture of the community that construes it, though there are some that are universals. A brief discussion of these features is presented below:.

2.18.2 Lexical features

This deals with words or lexical items. Lexical features play distinguishing aesthetic features in proverbs. The patterns of occurrence of lexical items in proverbs are significantly different from those that are observable in ordinary conversational language. Two such patterns are features of repetition and features of contrast. Nwachukwu (2002:46) posits that the repetition of a lexical item is sometimes within the same clause and at other times, clauses in different clauses within the proverbs. He argues further that the repetition has a linking kind of effect on the clause. This

feature is observable in Igbo proverbs and it creates aesthetic effect. Examples of lexical repetition are given below:

i. Proverb: *Onye ohi ma nzo ukwu onye ohi nelu nkume*

Literal translation: A thief knows foot prints a thief on top stone

Translation: Only a thief can recognize the foot prints of a thief on a rock.

The Word 'onye ohi' thief is repeated on the same clause in one sentence clause proverb.

ii. Proverb: *Aka weta, aka weta onu eju*

Literal translation: Hand bring hand bring mouth full

Translation: If the hand continues to bring, the mouth will get filled up

The words 'aka'- hand, 'weta'- bring are repeated in different clauses, in the same proverb

iii. Proverb: *Nkita adighi aju oku ma o na- aju nri*

Literal translation: Dog does not refuse call, but it refuses food

Translation: A dog does not refuse a call, but it can refuse food.

The word "aju"- refuse is repeated in the first and second clauses of the proverb. These repetitions not only create aesthetic effect, but also aid a listener to decipher the manning of the proverb.

2.18.3 Lexical contrast

Lexical contrast is associated with the grammatical feature of negation, the effect of which re-enforces the contrast between the lexical items concerned (Nwachukwu, 2002). The aesthetic effect is seen in the case of two clauses of the

same sentence where one is usually a negation of the other. Examples are given below:

1. Proverb: *Mmadu adighi enwe ara mana aṅu avu*

Literal translation: person does not have breast and drink pus

Translation: One does not have breast and drink pus. The two contrasting words are "ara" – breast and "avu" – pus. While breast milk is edible, "avu" – pus is poisonous.

Proverb: *A na-aria oria aria ma adighi aria onwu*

Literal translation: We suffer sickness, but do not suffer death

Translation: Sickness can be cured, but there is no cure for death.

The contrast is between "oria" – sickness and onwu- death. This is the opposition between the temporary nature of sickness and the finality of death's permanence.

2.18.4 Phonological features

Linguistically, phonology deals with sounds. It is the subfield of linguistics that studies the structure and systematic patterning of sounds in human language (Akmajian, 2001). The phonological structure of Igbo proverbs deals with rhyme; that is how identical sound pattern out in proverbs. It is the sameness of sound of the ending of two or more words in a proverb, line or verse. The occurrences of words with similar sounds are designed to have special effect on hearers, thereby drawing special attention to particular concepts and enhancing meaning and interpretation. This may explain why proverbs feature widely in traditional songs. This aesthetic device facilitates the memorization and widespread use of proverbs in discourse and this aesthetic feature is carried out in two ways: alliteration and assonance.

Alliteration is the repetition of consonant speech sounds in a sequence of nearby words:

a. Proverb: *Nwata ibe ya kpakara na nku si na ha kpatara n'ohia ojoo.*

Literal translation: Child mate his fetched (more) fire wood said that they fetched in bad bush.

Translation: A child whose mates logs are bigger than his, said that they fetched theirs from an evil bush

The sound that is repeated is /kp/ in kpakara and 'kpatara'

b. Proverb: *Nne na nwa gbaa izu ntakiri ji aghoo anya nri*

Literal translation: Mother and child have discussion small yam becomes big food

Translation: When a mother and her child have a discussion, a small tuber of yam becomes big food.

The sound /n/ is repeated in 'nne'-mother, 'nwa'-child, 'ntakiri'-small and 'nri'- food

Assonance: This is the repetition of identical or similar vowel sounds in a sequence of words. Example is given below:

c. Proverb: *A na ekwu na- ahughi aku e ji aluru nwa okorobia nwanyi ndi no n'ulo na- amu nwoke nwoke*

Literal translation: It is said (we) do not see money to marry a wife for a bachelor those at home continue to born male.

Translation: There is no money to get a wife for a bachelor, the women at home continue to give birth to male children.

The vowel sound /u/ is repeated in a sequence in the words "ahughi" – not see, 'aku' – wealth, 'aluru' – to marry, 'n'ulo'- at home, 'na – amu" to give birth.

2.18.5 Idioms and idiomatic expressions

Igbo language has a great wealth of idioms. In Igbo, a word may mean so many things because intonation makes a lot of difference and a well written passage in Igbo cannot do without idioms and idiomatic expressions. This peculiarity accounts for the difficulty that foreigners or non speakers experience in understanding the language. Idiomatic expressions are integral aspects of Igbo proverbs. As the name applies 'akpaala-okwu'– idioms mean the brass that props up the word, while "ilu" – proverbs is the palm oil with which words are eaten. As such, knowing the meaning of an idiom facilitates the understanding of its meaning in a proverb. Examples are given below:

i. Idiom: "Itu na mkpu" meaning to try the impossible

Proverb: *Nwata gba aka ari oji na–atu na mkpu" meaning,a child that is climbing the iroko tree empty handed is trying the impossible.*

ii. Idiom: "Ikwoasa mmiri na nkume" means to do something that is futile or useless.

Proverb: *I nye ya ndumodu di ka ikwosa mmiri na nkume" meaning it is a waste of time advising him.*

iii. Idiom: I no n'okpuru ukwu – to be within reach

Proverb: *O hughi nke no nokpuru ukwu ya foduzie nke di anya*. This means that he could not get at that which is within his reach, how much more that which is far.

Aesthetic devices are thus an integral part of the proverbs Igbo people deploy in their discourse. The devices aid in verifying the situations or ideas that the proverbs present. The aesthetic devices are concrete proof of the fact that proverbs are works of art having humanistic values and appealing to the people's senses. By their subtle and indirect forms of expressions, proverbs lighten conversations that might otherwise be

tense. The world of tragedy and human suffering is presented in a delightful manner and ensures hope even in moments of despair. Like poetry therefore, the proverb is a deep well of imagination from which the society draws its pedagogic, philosophic and aesthetic sustenance (Richards, 2000:21). The Igbo paremic landscape as we have seen is filled with joy and sadness, work and leisure, praise and admonition. It is a world of the valiant and of the sluggard, of the courageous and the cowardly, of love and hatred. It is in fact a world in which content and form exist in harmony.

2.19 The Functions of Proverbs

Functionally, proverbs are deployed to serve a broad spectrum of purposes. They are typically conversational and rely on figurative language to offer solutions to problems. It is in the light of this that the Yorubas say that "a wise man who knows proverbs reconciles difficulties" and "a proverb is the horse of conversation; when the conversation lags, a proverb will revive it" (Leslau and Leslau, 1985:5) or proverbs are horses of speech; if communication is lost, we use proverbs to find" (Lindfors, 1973: 79). The Igbos would say "mgbe ilu m gwuru ka okwu m gwuru" i.e when my proverbs end my speech ends also Ezirim (2010). This means that there cannot be any effective conversation in Igbo language without proverbs because "it is the salt of speech (Op.cit). Any pot of soup without, salt is tasteless as speech without proverb is (Agu, 2009).

Mieder (1993:11) shares the same view when he remarks that proverbs exhibit semantic indefiniteness due to their hetero-situationality, poly functionality and poly-semanticity. In the same vein, Parker (1974:15) maintains that proverbs also serve as moralizing, sermonizing and didactic tools in the hands of the user. The range of functions that proverbs perform is summarized by Krikmann (1985:58) as follows:

> With the aid of a proverb, one can aim to provide an endorsement to… statements and opinions, forecast, something, express doubts, reproach someone … accuse someone of something, justify or excuse somebody, mock somebody, jeer at somebody's misfortune, repent of something, advise against something or interdict somebody from doing something and so on, and so forth.

Finnegan (1976) corroborates this fact when she asserts that the most often mentioned is the oratory function of proverbs is the oratory one particularly in law cases or disputes. In this situation, proverbs are often used by one or other of the parties to get at his opponent or try to make out a good case for himself by drawing some analogy through the image of a proverb. For instance, in one Anang Ibibio law case (Ibid) the plaintiff managed to stir up antagonism towards the accused (a chronic thief) by alluding to his past record and untrustworthy reputation. He quotes a proverb "if a dog plucks palm fruits from a cluster, he does not fear a porcupine" i.e if a dog can deal with the sharp needles of the palm fruit; he is likely to face the porcupine's prickles; similarly, a thief will not be afraid to steal again. As part of his defence, the accused quoted a proverb which was influential in winning over the judge to acquit him, hinting at the way in which he alone had no sympathizers and supporters. He said, "A single partridge flying through the bush leaves no path" (Ibid). Counselors and judges also use proverbs to comment obliquely on the conduct of those involved. Telling lies, for instance, only makes matters worse. "An animal caught in a net, only entangles itself further with wild struggles", and so a man is told in court that, "It is patience which gets you out of the net".

According to a Yoruba proverb, "A counselor who understands proverbs soon sets matters right; and a difficult law case is often ended by the public citation of an apt proverb which performs much the same generalizing function of citing legal precedents in other societies. As notes by Finnegan (1976) among the Limba of

Kenya for instance, an elder in court tries to persuade one party to a dispute not to be angry with someone younger by reminding them that one 'does not shoot the chimpanzee for its ugliness' i.e "one should not go to extremes in punishing a child, however bad". Proverbs are also used to smooth over a disagreement or bring a dispute to a close In stating the end of a dispute, the Yoruba would say, "when the face is washed, you finish at the chin". In a less formal context, the Kikugu of Kenya brings an interminable and profitless discussion to an end by asking the question "when new clothes are sewn, where do the old ones go?".

Proverbs fulfil educational functions like other verbal forms such as riddles. In some societies, they are used to lay stress on initiation ceremonies. The initiates may be instructed in the proverbs and aphorisms current in the society. Instruction through proverbs provides a means for relatively formal education and transmission of cultural traditions. Proverbs with their implicit generalized import are clearly a suitable and succinct form in which people verbalize socially prescribed actions and attitudes (Op.cit). Proverbs are sometimes used quite formally and consciously as a vehicle to achieve the ends, and in the same sort of contexts, that we associate with formal education. Thus, the conveying of a people's experience and expectations can be performed in a particularly effective way through the use of proverbs in many African societies (Otakpor, 2009). They are consciously used not only to make effective points, but also to embellish speeches in a way admired and appreciated by interlocutors. It is part of the art of an accomplished orator to adorn his rhetoric with apt and appealing proverbs. The Igbo man's reputation for eloquence largely arises from his skilful use of proverbs Nwachukwu, (1993) and a Zulu orator who can quote aptly, readily and greatly is admired. Finnegan, 1976: 415.

The literary function of proverbs in ordinary speech is sometimes taken further and shades into more elaborate forms like the Akan drum proverbs, Fulani epigrams, or Zulu bird songs (Finnegan, 1976). Proverbs like prose are not normally used specifically for entertainment, but are more involved in everyday situations Nwadike, (1981). Sometimes proverbs function as tools in argument though mostly reserved for the elderly. The young may not presume to press a point with their elders (Ezirim, 2001).

Proverbs often function to represent a people's philosophy. In proverbs, the whole range of human experience can be commented on and analyzed, generalizations and principles expressed in a graphic and concise form, and the wider implications of specific situations brought to mind (Finnegan, 1976). In all these contexts, proverb is a vehicle particularly situated to give depth and elegance through its allusive, figurative and poetic mode of expression (Finnegan, 1976:416).

In clearer terms, Ogunjimi and Na' Allah (2005) summarize the functions of proverbs especially in Africa to:

a. Give substance to speeches, since ideas are put in concrete terms through this medium;
b. Show the depth of knowledge and wisdom in African heritage.
c. Entertain, enlighten and educate the listeners;
d. Command respect for the speaker and show his level of maturity.
e. Expose and explore the socio-cultural realities and literary culture of Africa;
f. Demonstrate the tradition of rhetoric and eloquence in the articulation of ideas by Africans.
g. Help in settling disputes, explaining and expressing issues

h. Provide warning, rebuke, praises, suggestions and advice,

i. Present the cosmological views and interests of the speaker

j. Teach logic and science.

Mieder (1985) bifurcates the functions of proverbs as positive (serving good purposes such as teaching, training, etc) and negative (serving bad ends such as abusing, rebuking etc). This division is generic and it is evident that many functions fall under this dual category. However, the bifurcation is restrictive as some functions may be considered to be similar, but the contextual constraints and co-textual references help in determining the functions performed by proverbs in varying contexts.

2.19.1 Metafunctional components

Halliday and Maitthiessen (2004:13) assert that language has evolved for three major purposes. These are:

To talk about what is happening, what will happen and what has happened;

To interact (or to do things with language) and/or to express a point of view;

To turn the output of the previous two functions into a coherent whole.

Halliday calls these main functions the metafunction of language; they are ideational, interpersonal and textual. The ideational uses language to encode our experience of the world and to convey a picture of reality or the knowledge resources of a culture. Ideational conveys ideas to the hearer through a sense-sound mapping. This function is sub-divided into two: the experiential and logical sub functions. The experiential function encodes experiences while the logical connects those experiences.

The interpersonal metafunction uses language to encode interaction and to relate how people behave in particular situations that are, the degree of formality that

a culture assigns to these situations and the roles that people assume as consequences (Leckie-Tarry, 1995:23). Textual metafuntion uses language to organize our experiential, logical and interpersonal meanings into a coherent whole (Halliday and Matheissen, 2004). The textual knowledge also emphasizes the knowledge gained from other texts, knowledge of text structure and semantic relations. These were however not considered in the analysis. The analysis focuses mainly on the ideational and interpersonal metafunctions, by implication how language is used as a tool of communication to establish and maintain appropriate social links with other people. Functions concern the purpose or the whole essence of any communicative event. However, the interpretation of textual meaning and by extension, ideational and interpersonal meaning is tempered and shaped by the reader or listener through the deployment of intertextual parameter or extra linguistic features such as aesthetics in his reading or interpretation process.

Halliday (2004) integrates all three metafunctions within the grammar. Leech (1988) has a contrary view. He maintains that ideational function belongs to grammar which conveys ideas to the hearer through a sense-sound mapping and that the interpersonal and textual functions belong to pragmatics. According to him, the speakers' point of view (Interpersonal and textual function) may be characterized as input and output constraints on the grammar. From the hearer's point of view, these constraints are reversed; that is textual constraints input while interpersonal constraints output.

Halliday however believes that the ideational function is a major component of meaning in the language system which is basic to more or less all uses of language. Leech agrees with this assention and adds that it is the ideational function that makes human language what it is; an extraordinary powerful instrument of thought and

communication. Without the ideational component, the grammar and human language could well be in the same communicative league as gibbons and Chimpanzees. The researcher agrees with both Halliday and Leech and posits that, to a very large extent the culture and beliefs of a particular people influence their ideas and experiences of language and how it is construed or interpreted. As captured by Halliday (1994) the textual metafunction of language breathes relevance into the other two – ideational and interpersonal. The proverbs used in the analysis are grouped under different themes meaning that all have textual functions. The other two metafunctions however account for the type of ideas and experiences conveyed by the proverbs and the type of interactions people exhibit in particular situations of use.

2.20 Functions of Igbo Proverbs

Some of the notable functions of Igbo proverbs are education of the youths and children, purveyor of culture, revelation of cultural motif philosophy and ideology, statement of universal truth, director of social and moral life, and embellishment of speech etc.

2.20.1 Education and instruction

One of the major functions of Igbo proverbs is education, particularly that of youths and children. Through it, youths are taught the norms and values of the society and come to know what is expected of them and what they should avoid. This education through proverbs is imparted informally (Nwachukwu, 1990). The use of particular proverbs often arises out of the social interactional situations in which the youth and the elders found themselves. The proverbs are often used to let the youth know that it is the voice of communal wisdom that is speaking the echoes of ancestral truth which they, the young ones should do well to hearken to. Thus, Igbo proverbs

try to instruct people in the communalistic principles of the society. They are made to understand that working as a group in harmony is far better than individual's actions. Youths are often taught to develop the spirit of oneness, or group's solidarity and brotherhood. For instance,

Proverb:	*Egbe bere ugo bere nke si ibe ya ebele nku kwakwa ya*
Literal translation:	Kite perch eagle perch anyone that says mate should not perch let its wing break.
Translation:	Let the kite perch, let the eagle perch, which ever does not want the other to perch should have its wing broken

With time, the structure of this proverb has been altered thus replacing the wordings with words that reflect love and concern for one's kit and kin. This renders it thus "let the kite perch, let the eagle perch as well, anyone that does not want the other to perch, let its wing not be broken rather, it should show its mate where to perch". This illustrates the dynamic nature of proverbs as they lend themselves to the changing values of the society just as other forms of language grow daily.

The idea of the proverb is "to live and let live" in which the strong neither oppress the weak nor the weak the strong. All should try to live in peace. Those who do not want peace with others or insist on causing disharmony have only themselves to be blamed. Thus, peaceful coexistence is encouraged and taught.

The need for brotherhood is also stressed using the following proverb:

Igbo proverb:	*Ozu siwe isi enyi ka nwanne alaa*
Literal translation:	Corpse start smelling friend greater than brother goes away
Translation:	Ones brother can never abandon one in time of serious need.

The Igbo observe this phenomenon and use the imagery (smelling corpse) to show that only one's brother/sister can help one in times of serious need. So when a situation gets out of hand, one's brother or sister cannot deny him/her. When in difficulty therefore, the first person one should contact is one's relation as kinship was and is still relatively a very important aspect of the Igbo people. Closely related to the educational function of Igbo proverbs is its role in advising members of the society. People are advised not to show off unnecessarily. The Igbo culture value modesty and despise show off or exhibitionism; arrogance is also frowned at. Some proverbs are designed to advise people not to blow their trumpets. An arrogant and boastful person may be corrected by saying:

Proverb: *O bu ibu anaghi ebu ala*

Literal translation: Person (who) carries load does not carry earth

Translation: The man who carries a load will not carry the earth with it.

This proverb is uttered to caution a boastful individual who goes on and on about something that he has done. When such a person becomes a victim of misfortune like theft, another proverb is thrown to his face:

Proverb: *Onye kpatara nku ahuhu di si ngwere biara ya oriri*

Literal translation: Person who brings firewood with ants say lizard come and feast.

Translation: One who brings in ant infested firewood invites lizard to a feast

The proverb metaphorically advises one to avoid indulging in acts that will expose him/her to trouble/danger. On the other hand, when the theme is on humility, the proverb below may be uttered.

Proverb: *Ikpere abuo na aka abuo ni ala ka nwa ehi ji anuta nne ya ara*

Literal translation: Two knees and two hands on the ground that a young calf uses to suck breast from its mother

Translation: It is only when the young calf bends down well with two knees and hinds on the ground that it will be able to suck its mother's breast

The proverb is uttered while advising a young bride about to leave for her husband's house. She is told to be humble to her groom and in-laws. It is also used to advise a person, whether male or female who is going to a new place like school, to learn a trade or work.

Still on the educational function of proverbs Worton (1998:389) cited in Ezirim (2001:30) advocates that proverbs should be taught in foreign language classrooms by language teachers in Spain. This is because language text should contain more information about the cultures of the community in which the language is spoken. He posits further that language, as an integral part of culture is connected to a cultural understanding of the people who speak that language. Worton's assertion is based on the position of the Russian paremiologist, G. I. Permiakov in Mieder (1989:389) who notes that:

> No speaker of a foreign language can hope to gain cultural literacy in the target language without the knowledge of its paremiological milieu.

He goes further to assert that the very characteristic nature of proverbs that mark them as proverbs from normal speech are the same that make them valuable for use in classroom. These features are their easy memorability, terseness and salt based. Knappert (1998:97) also posits that any moral lesson to be learnt from African tales has a form of proverbial colouration or the other. He readily employs some Swahili proverbs to give credence to his assertion:

The strength of the lion is in his teeth
The strength of the giraffe is in his tall neck
The strength of the ant is in their number

Proverbs are used quite formally and consciously as a vehicle to achieve the ends that we associate with formal education. In many African cultures, proverbs are essential to life and language: without them, the language would be but a skeleton without flesh, a body without soul (Nyembezi, 1954:44 in Finnegan, 1976:415).

The functional ways of utilizing Igbo proverbs come out clearly in their communicative functions as they relate their significance in the society. Nwachukwu (2002) defines the function of any recurrent activity as the part it plays in the social life as a whole and the contribution it makes to the maintenance of the structural continuity. Unlike other orature materials such as folk-tales, legends, myth, riddles, etc that have gradually been eroded by modernity, proverbs have retained their status in the modern age.

2.20.2 Purveyor of culture

Igbo proverbs provide information and ideas about Igbo culture. As noted by Opata, (1998) oral cultures, which are prevalent in third world societies, are proverbs oriented. Some of these proverbs are riddles, which hide meaning from outsiders but vividly portray it to insiders, while others are simply concise, overt descriptions of cultural concepts. The understanding and proper utilization of such proverbs is an effective tool in culture learning, Nwachukwu, (1990).

A new comer must develop the linguistic fluency to catch succinct statements of cultural reality; otherwise, he will hear them as simply incoherent sentences. The proverbs form mnemonic device in Igbo land in which everything worth knowing and relevant to day-to-day life has to be committed to memory. They also ensure that the ideas and values encapsulated in them are easily reproduced (Obiechina, 1976: 156).

Igbo people believe in the idea of a decent burial for all and sundry; they use proverbs to provide reinforcement for this. Culturally, burial ceremonies in Igbo land work out as very important events in which even a family that could not provide much care for a relation in his life time spare no expense in organizing an elaborate burial when such a relation dies. It is irrelevant if the necessary funds have to be borrowed. No one cares, what matters most is what is usually termed "a befitting burial". Some Igbo proverbs that explain this aspect of culture are as follows:

Proverb: *Ihe oma emere onye nwuru anwu bu olili eliri ya*

Literal translation: Good thing done person dead is burial given him

Translation: The best thing that was done for the dead person is to bury him/her.

This proverb invariably, occurs during burial ceremonies in Igbo land in order to reinforce the belief. One can however utter another proverb to refute that claim and create more insights into the appropriate thing to be done, saying:

Proverb: *O bughi nani onye nwuru anwu ka a na-edozi olu, a na-edozikwa onye di ndu olu*

Literal translation: It is not only person dead that one stretch neck, one stretch also person who is alive neck.

Translation: It is not only the dead person that needs to have his neck stretched, a living person also needs to have his or her neck stretched.

This proverb illustrates the fact that the cultural belief among Igbo people in the necessity to give a befitting burial does not preclude the necessity to take good care of the living, most particularly the aged. As such people should render help to their relatives when they are alive instead of waiting to give a befitting burial when

he/she dies. This explains why Igbo people living far away from their homes return regularly to visit their parents, kiths and kins. Such visits are always opportunities to present gifts to them and also solve some teething problems that they may be encountering, Nwadike, (2009).

2.20.3 Revelation of cultural motif philosophy and ideology

A motif is an idea, phrase or subject that is typical of a particular person or group. In this regard, most Igbo proverbs reveal cultural motifs, philosophy and ideology of the Igbo nation (Nwachukwu, 1990). This fact is presented in the following Igbo proverb:

Proverb: *Onye wetare oji wetara ndu*

Literal translation: Person brought kolanut, brought life.

Translation: He, who brings kolanut, brings life.

Kolanut (oji) is a kind of fruit that Igbo hold in high regard. It signifies so many things to the Igbo including life. Hence, it revels cultural motif and ideology any time it is presented. There are rules guiding its presentation, breaking, blessing and sharing among the Igbo. The failure to present kolanut at any cultural or social gathering of ndigbo signifies danger or bad omen, hence, the attributes given to the person who brings it as having brought life. In other cultural groups, little or no importance may be attached to it. Indirect reference and attribute is also given to Chukwu 'God' the provider of all things, who makes it possible for the person to bring it out (Onyemelukwe, 2004).

Another proverb that reveals another ideology and philosophy of the Igbo people aptly is stated below:

Proverb: Onye kwe chi ya ekwe

Literal translation: One says yes god his says yes

Translation: If one say yes, one's guardian spirit says yes also. The English rendition being 'Determination, is the key to success'

Igbo people, from time immemorial, believe so much in the existence of smaller gods and their influences on the human person. Thus, what happens to one's life, good or bad depends so much on his/her 'chi' (god). Some people go as far as pouring libations, offering kolanuts, sacrificing chicken etc to the shrine of their personal gods on a daily basis. They evoke them for assistance and good luck. Thus, it will be out of place for one to say yes to anything he/she wants to do and his 'chi' (god) rejects since the 'chi' (god) also acts as a messenger to the person. The proverb also illustrate that one's success depends largely on ones hard work, and determination to succeed, as the Englishman holds you are the architect of your own fortune or misfortune in life closely related to that is another proverb that sees life and survival as a race.

Proverb: *Oso ndu anaghi agwu ike*

Literal translation: Race life not tiring strength

Translation: Race for life survival is never tiring

The proverb can be interpreted to mean that there is no sacrifice for survival that is too much. In the event that things are not working out for the person as expected, he/she can be encouraged using the proverb below which contains another motif.

Proverb: *E jighi ututu ama njo ahia*

Literal translation: Not use morning know bad market

Translation: Unfavourable trade cannot be determined early in the morning. This reminds the person that failure in life

cannot be determined by initial setbacks. The struggle for survival irrespective of the odds of life is a prominent philosophy of life of the Igbo people is clearly revealed in these proverbs, Nwadike (2009).

2.20.4 Statement of universal truth

Some Igbo proverbs are cultural statements which contain universal truth. For instance, Jesus' statement, "No man can serve two masters" (Mt 6:24) is to mean one cannot follow the way of God while continuing to pour libations on the ancestral shrines. Different cultures express this idea in their own distinctive ways. For instance, the kipsigis of Tanzania has it as 'two walking sticks cannot be burned together', the Bukusu of Kenya, will say "He who wants to start a new home, must destroy the old' and certain Zairians, 'can a woman marry two husbands'. The Igbo also capture this in the proverb that says:

Proverb: *Mkpi naabo anaghi anu mmiri n'otu oku ghara ikukota isi*

Literal translation: He goat two cannot drink in one pot

Translation: Two he-goats cannot drink water at the same time in a water trough. Each of these proverbs from different cultures conveys the same universal truth by using different analogies. This trait is one of the key characteristic of proverbs which this study supports.

2.20.5 Director of social and moral life

Igbo Proverb functions as a vehicle that directs and redirects people's social and moral life because they express the moral as well as the ethics of the society, the behaviours of others in respect to their age and dignity (Obiefuna, 1978:20) They are the convenient standards for appreciating behaviours in terms of the approved norms; and because they are pungently and wittily stated, they are ideally situated for

commenting on and correcting the behaviour of people. Igbo the people's some of the proverbs console those in problems like sickness, pain and even those who are bereaved. Some of the proverbs provide solace to aching hearts and panting souls. They are balms to a suffering humanity and their usage show the solidarity and compassion that exist in the world of the living. Despite the acute problems befuddling humanity, in general and ndigbo in particular, the proverbs encourage the people to have hope even in desolation. The Igbo people philosophize using proverbs as they meditate upon life and also struggle with their material existence (Ibid). For instance, moments of bereavement, the Igbo proverb below is used to address the bereaved family towards consoling and comporting them:

Proverb: *Ebezina, igwe nile gaje n'uzu*

Literal translation: Stop cry all iron go to the block smith

Translation: The blacksmiths melts all iron for smithing just as everyone must die.

The proverb emphasizes the fact that death is an inevitable end for everybody as such the mourners should take solace in that and stop crying. The metaphorical blacksmith is death and it respects no one. Closely related to this fact is the proverb below which is uttered to re-echo a dogged belief that among the people in consoling someone:

Proverb: *O nweghi ihe anya huru gbaa mmee*

Literal translation: Nothing that eyes saw brings blood

Translation: There is nothing that will make the eyes to shed blood.

This proverb consoles the victim that the worst has not yet happened, so he/she should take heart. For instance, in consoling the bereaved, they are meant to

know that death is something that happens once to a person and to everybody. This belief is also captured in Shakespeare's Julius Caesar (1959: 32-37)

> "Cowards die many times before their death, the valiant never taste death but once. Of all the wonders that I yet have heard, it seems to me most strange that men should fear seeing that death, a necessary end will come when it will come"

This philosophical truth about life and death is used to instill courage into the people which requests them to be firm and lion-hearted. In traditional oral society such as the Igbo the a people's epistemology was often embedded in their narrative forms, most especially in proverbs (Finnegan, 1976:409). The Igbos use proverbs to deduce some basic principles that govern their life. Thus, they formulate proverbs (ilu) using their own world view. Their social experience enables them to meditate, to ponder, to make comments that often pass into generalizations on the state of humanity. Thus Igbo proverb that states:

Proverb:	*Ma ndi luru ogu ma ndi gbara oso ha niile bu agha*
Literal translation:	Both they fought war both they ran race, all of them is war.
Translation:	Both those who fought and those who ran participated in the war.

This proverb encourages contribution to the total welfare of the land; no matter how little one many see it. This proverb originated after the Nigerian/Biafran war, Obiefuna, (1978).

2.20.6 Embellishment of speech

Igbo proverbs are employed in communication for the embellishment of speech and reinforcing the power of argument (Egudu, 1977). People respect the wisdom embodied in proverbs because they strike like arrows into the earth (Obiefuna, 1978). They have ornamental value and through them, people speak more

emphatically, Ugonna, (1974). The proverbs are effective and cogent means of communication as through the use of concrete imageries the abilities of making speech very explicit and memorable. proverb enlivens discourse, as listeners pay attention to speech not just for content but also for its beauty of expression Nwachukwu, (1990). Writing on Zulu proverbs (Nyembez, 1954:54) cited in Finnegan (1976) has this to say:

> In proverbs, we not only have the wisdom of the zulu people, their observation and their reflections, but we also have the very juice of the language itself. Without them (proverb), the language would be a skeleton without flesh, a body without soul.

Igbo proverbs share similar sentiment with the Zulus. This attests to the fact that the proverbs add decorum and dignity to their speech. Igbo people are adept users of proverbs to colour their speeches (Achebe, 1984). According to him a person who uses proverbs in his speech captivates the attention of his listeners, as they become enraptured with the various thoughtful and insightful images with which the proverbs are enclosed. Hence, most Igbo proverbs create aesthetic effects as well as fulfilling other functions (Op.cit). The figurative and gnomic nature of Igbo proverbs add colour to the expressiveness of discourse in Igbo culture. Obiefuna, (1978), instead of saying that something terrible has happened, the Igbo will prefer using the proverb which says:

Proverb:	*Ewu amuola n'obu*
Literal translation:	Goat delivered on rope
Translation:	A goat has delivered with a rope tied on its neck. (a terrible event)

In Igbo land, it is an abomination not to untie a female goat in labour and allows it to give birth while tied down because of the pains involved. When this happens, people will request to know who was around then. If an elder was present,

he/she is scolded for allowing such a terrible thing to happen. Someone will add, 'mana okenye anaghi ano, n'ulo ewu amuo n'obu'. This means that, but an elder is not supposed to be at home and allowed the goat to deliver while tied down. By implication, the elder should have used his/her wisdom to save the terrible situation from occurring, this explain the high regards given to elders in Igbo society (Ibid) in expressing a hopeless situation, the Igbo uses the proverb which states.

a. Proverb: *Eke na ihe o loro a togborola*

Literal translation: Python and what it swallowed is lying down

Translation: The boar constrictor/python and what it swallowed now lie (helpless)

The variant form of it is:

b. Proverb: *O gbajuola, doro*

Literal translation: It is now filled to the brim

Translation: A helpless situation, has occurred

The helpless situation illustrated in using the proverbs in "a" and "b" above indicate that there is nothing else the victim can do except external intervention comes in. Proverbs therefore help ndigbo to convey some message in more effective manner other than using junk works. People become more attentive to a speech that is coloured with proverbs because, like all aesthetic devices, proverbs often call attention to themselves. Okumba (1994:77) corroborates this fact and asserts that

> Because of the figurative nature of proverbs, they leave an indelible mark on the mind. The figures last longer in the mind than the accompanying junk words. This is because the listener may himself want to use them another time in a similar or different context, though the theme of the proverb remains the same.

As well as conveying linguistic reality, proverbs can become artistic devices for giving complexity to narrative, unity of form, coherence and pattern to action and

direction to moral and social insight (Nwachukwu, 2000). They can also indicate force and resourcefulness of character, the strong mind can manipulate the repertoire of proverbs to its advantage (Nwadike, 2009:29). Igbo proverbs can transcend the embellishment of speech to being the full content of the speech. An excerpt is taken from Achebe's Arrow of God (1976:283);

> When a handshake passes the elbow, it becomes another thing. The sleep that lasts from one market day to another has become death. The man who likes the meat of the funeral ram, why does he recover when sickness visits him? The mighty tree falls and the little birds scatter in the bush, the little bird which hops off the ground and lands on an anthill may not know it but is still on the ground. A common snake which a man sees alone may become a python in his eyes. The very thing which kills Mother Rat is always there to make sure that its young ones never open their eyes. The boy who persists in asking what happened to his father before he has enough strength to avenge him is asking for his father's fate. The man who belittles the sickness which monkey has suffered should ask to see the eyes which his nurse got from blowing the sick-fire. When death wants to take a little dog it prevents it from smelling even excrement.

Finally, Igbo proverbs serve as a subtle way to exclude others from conversations or topics in which they are not wanted. In this case, no matter how versed one is in proverbs, a proverb cited in place of ordinary language can very easily displace one from gaining an insight into what had passed before or during the cause of the conversation (Nwadike, 2009:32).

The functions that Igbo proverbs perform in the lives of the Igbos are numerous, but only these few have been picked for our description. Proverbs seem to be very significant in the communicative and overall humanistic effect of helping to make man a better and a happy being (Obiejuna, 1978).

2.21 Formal and Functional Approaches to Language

Linguistics is the scientific study of human natural languages. As a scientific field of study, linguistics strives for objectivity by examining the structure of human languages through a critical and enquiring attitude, developments and forming hypothesis, making generalizations, Macgregor (2009) which accounts for the structures as well as the functions of human languages (Akmajin, Demers, Fermer and Harnish, 2001:48). This shows that linguistics is empirically grounded and based on actual language data including observations of languages used by speakers and their intuition about language (Macgregor, 2009:2).

According to Macgregor (2009), linguistics extends to the boundaries of humanities and sciences and has established mutual interest with language history, philosophy, culture, literacy criticism (humanities), anthropology, sociology, archaeology (social sciences), biology, physics, mathematics etc. This link and interrelationship with other disciplines has created several sub-disciplines of linguistics like anthropological linguistics, stylo-linguistics, sociolinguistics psycho linguistic, neuro linguistics, mathematical linguistics etc. which have constitute the major areas of linguistic research. Modern linguistic research mainly involves the description and interpretation of how languages are used in spoken or written discourses. It attempt to explain what people actually say and not what they could say. This notion stresses the view that the pure view of linguistics is descriptive rather than prescriptive.

2.21.1 Formal linguistics

Formal linguistics is concerned with the forms of language and how they operate within the overall system of grammar. Formal linguistics also known as generative grammar or transformational generative grammar was the most influential

grammatical theory developed in the latter half of the twentieth century by Noam, (Chomsky, 1957, 1965). Its central assumption is that language is presented as a speaker's mental grammar, a set of abstract rules for generating grammatical sentences. In other words, the theory holds that language is governed by cognitive factors and a set of abstract which are assumed to be innate. The formatists post that children are born with innate of the language which allows them to understand the way language works and how to produce infinite number of possible sentences. In addition, Chomsky's competence and performance theory points, focuses on the speaker's competence. The theory does not give concerns for the appropriate use of language in context particularly the social context of linguistic utterance (Freeman, 2002). This is because the same linguistics utterance can yield several interpretations when said or rendered in different contexts. In addition, participants' roles, or status of the interlocutors, their cultural background and ideological stance etc. which produce and yield varieties of meaning are not given adequate attention and coverage by the theory. Lyons (1981) that Chomsky's view says nothing about the communicative functions of language, the symbolic nature of linguistic elements or sequences. Thus the theory will be grossly inadequate to be adopted in the analysis of Igbo proverbs presented in this study.

2.21.2 Functional/linguistics

Functional linguistics is an approach to language studies that orients in the Prague school of structural linguistics. Functionalism, as characterized by Allen, (2007:254) "holds that linguistic structures can only be understood and explained with reference to the semantic and communicative functions of language, whose primary function is to be a vehicle for social interaction among human beings." Since the 1970s, Functionalism has been attached to a variety of movements and models

making major contributions to the linguistic theory and to the various subfields within linguistics; such as syntax, discourse, language acquisition, cognitive linguistics, typology, and documentary linguistics. Further, functional approaches have had a major impact outside linguistics in fields such as psychology and education, both in terms of theory and application. The main goal of functionalist approaches is to clarify the dynamic relationship between form and function (Thompson, 2003:53). Functionalist perspectives have gained more ground over the past decades with more linguists resorting to functional explanations to account for linguistic structure.

Functional theories of language propose that since language is fundamentally a tool, it is reasonable to assume that its structures are best analyzed and understood with reference to the functions they carry out. Functional theories of grammar differ from formal theories of grammar, in that the latter seeks to define the different elements of language and describe the way they relate to each other as systems of formal rules or operations, whereas the former defines the functions performed by language and then relates these functions to the linguistic elements that carry them out. This means that functional theories of grammar tend to pay attention to the way language is actually used in communicative context, and not just to the formal relations between linguistic elements. There are several distinct grammatical theories that employ the functional approach they are:

- The structuralist functionalism of the Prague school was the earliest functionalist framework developed in the 1920s.
- Simon Dijk's Functional Grammar, originally developed in the 1970s and 80s, has been influential and has inspired many other functional theories (Dijk, 1981). It has been developed into Functional Discourse Grammar by the linguist Kees Hengeveld.

- Role And Reference Grammar, developed by Robert Van Valin employs functional analytical framework with a somewhat formal mode of description. In RRG, the description of a sentence in a particular language is formulated in terms of its semantic structure and communicative functions, as well as the grammatical procedures used to express these meanings.

In the functional paradigm, language is in the first place conceptualized as an instrument of social interaction among human beings, used with the intention of establishing communicative relationships. Within this paradigm, one attempts to reveal the instrumentality of language with respect to what people do and achieve with it in social interaction. A natural language, in other words, is seen as an integrated part of the communicative competence of the natural language user. Because of its emphasis on usage, communicative function, and the social context of language, functional grammar differs significantly from other linguistic theories which stress purely formal approaches to grammar, notably Chomskyan generative grammar.

Halliday's systemic functional grammar argues that the explanation of how language works "needed to be grounded in a functional analysis, since language had evolved in the process of carrying out certain critical functions as human beings interacted with their ... 'eco-social' environment". Halliday draws from the work of Bühler and Malinowski. Halliday (1978) sees language from the prism of social semiotic perspective; the one that focuses upon the social functions that determine what language is like and that it has evolved to do something with other people, an instrument of cultural transmission socialization of the child and social interactions.

Systemic functional linguistics is also "functional" because it considers language to have evolved under the pressure of the particular function that the language system has to serve. Functions are therefore taken to have left their mark on the structure and organization of language at all levels, which is said to be achieved via metafunctions. The term metafunction is particular to systemic functional linguistics. The organization of the functional framework around systems, i.e., choices, is a significant difference from other "functional" approaches, such as, for example, Dijk's functional grammar (FG, or as now often termed, functional discourse grammar) and lexical functional grammar. Thus, it is important to use the full designation-systemic functional linguistics-rather than just functional grammar or functional linguistics.

The label systemic is related to the system networks used in the description of human languages. System networks capture the dimension of choice at each stratum of the linguistic system to which they are applied. The system networks of the lexico grammar make up systemic functional grammar. A system network is a theoretical tool to describe the sets of options available in a language variety; it represents abstract choice and does not correspond to a notion of actual choice or make psychological claims.

In these two terms, systemic refers to the view of language as "a network of systems, or interrelated sets of options for making meaning". Functional refers to Halliday's view that language is as it is because of what it has evolved to do. Thus, what he refers to as the multidimensional architecture of language, "reflects the multidimensional nature of human experience and interpersonal relations" (Halliday, 2004:29).

Cohesion is analyzed in the context of lexical, grammatical as well as intonational aspects with reference to lexical chains and, in the speech register, tonality, tonicity, and tone. The lexical aspect focuses on sense relations and lexical repetitions, while the grammatical aspect looks at repetition of meaning shown through reference, substitution and ellipsis, as well as the role of linking adverbials.

Systemic functional grammar deals with all of these areas of meaning equally within the grammatical system itself. Since the principal aim of systemic functional grammar is to represent the grammatical system as a resource for making meaning, it addresses different concerns. Halliday's theory encourages a more open approach to the definition of language as a resource; rather than focus on grammaticality as such, a systemic functional grammatical treatment focuses instead on the relative frequencies of choices made in the uses of language and assumes that these relative frequencies reflect the probability that particular paths through the available resources will be chosen rather than others. Unlike the form-based of Chomsky's transformational grammar, systemic functional linguistic approach is meaning based, where the meaning of a word is revealed in its orientation, that is, language is treated as a system of meaning in which people create meaning by exchanging symbols in shared context of situation Halliday (2009). He posits that language is a system of meaning or set of systems which offer the speakers or writers an unlimited choice of ways of creating meaning.

2.21.3 Systemic functional linguistic approach

Systemic Functional Linguistics Approach marks a shift in emphasis from the study of syntax to semantics (Frank, 2000). This shift marked the emergence of general semanticists who emphasize the study of meaning parse and logical semanticists who hold that logic and philosophy are important for the interpretation of

meaning. Halliday and Hassan (1985) assert that function is not just the use of language but a fundamental property of language itself. They identify four functions which are interwoven- the experiential, interpersonal logical and textual meanings.

Systemic Functional Linguistics as a theory of language centers on the notion of language functions. It is particularly associated with the work of Halliday (1978) and itself built on the ideas of Firth (Wales, 2001:383). Steiner (2000) posits that, the view is oriented toward anthropology and the social sciences as in Malinowski (1923). It displays influences from Chinese linguistics, reflected in Halliday's work and aspects of Prague school which combine structuralism with functionalism. Atolagbe (1999:46) remarks that it involves an appreciation of the diversity of functions fulfilled by language, and a theoretical recognition that the structure of language is determined by the characteristics functions of its diverse forms.

It places the function of language as central (what language does and how it does it) unlike structural approaches, which emphasize the elements of language and their combinations. It looks at how language both acts and is constrained by social context. Systemic Functional Linguistic Approach has shed more light on the fact that the interpretation of meaning can be derived from philosophical, sociological, pragmatic semiotic as well as linguistic considerations. The growing emphasis is on the functions of language and the conclusion that the main task of a linguistic theory is the description of "how language works". Analysis of language is done in terms of context, semantics, lexico-grammar and phonology-graphology. The concern of context includes Field, Tenor and Mode while systemic semantics covers pragmatics and divides semantics into ideational, interpersonal and textual. Syntactic organization of words into utterances is what lexico-grammar uses to analyze utterances in terms of roles such as Actor, Agent, Medium Theme, Mood, etc

(Halliday, 1994). SFL examines a text as multifunctional; meanings are woven together and each perspective contributing towards the total interpretation. For its usefulness in and applicability to the analysis of text (either written or spoken) (Halliday, 1994) and for being highly suitable in stylistic analysis (Alabi 1997:48), (Butler, 1985:38); this study adopts the model in the analysis of Igbo proverbs.

In Systemic Functional Linguistics Approach, emphasis is placed on contextual interpretation of utterances (Surakat, 2000). The choice of words and/or syntactic structures, which a speaker makes from the various options provided by the language, is determined by a number of factors, which include: the speaker's intentions, his relationship with interlocutor(s), the topic or field of discourse, the mode of discourse (e.g spoken versus written language) and so on. In this approach, language can be analyzed at the levels of substance, form and context depending on the scope and objective of analysis (Surakat, 2000). The diagram below, adapted from Surakat (2000) illustrates these levels:

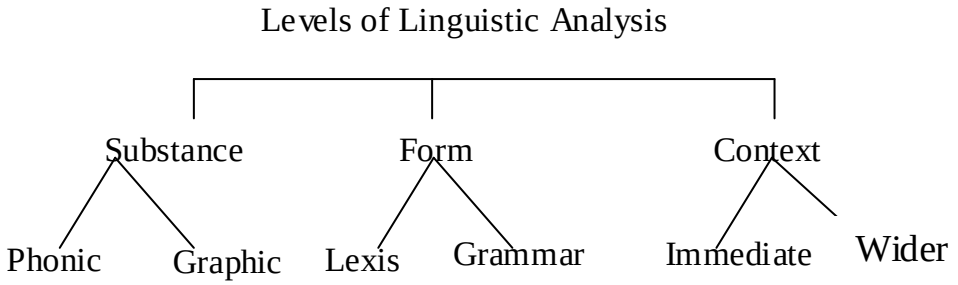


Figure 2.0: Levels of Linguistic Analysis

Substance refers to the raw material with which utterances are constructed, such as the sounds used in speech, and letters of the alphabet used in writing. Form refers to the vocabulary or words in a language and how they are used in sentence formation. Each of these linguistic units, (speech sound, letter, word, phrase, clause etc) has its independent meaning when considered in isolation, which may or may

not change when used in conjunction with other units in any given situation. Context is the communicative environment in which in utterance is used. The immediate context of an utterance is the micro context in which it is uttered. In addition, there is the wider context which points to the socio cultural or ideological nuances underlying language use. Wider context includes anything in the past experience of the speaker/writer, which leads him to a particular choice of expression, also or leads him to interpret the utterance the way he does (Berry, 1975:10). It is the relationship between lexico grammar or syntax and the non-linguistic (immediate) context which generates the semantic or meaning of the utterance. The concern of the study lies in the third level of analysis, which is context. This means that, the immediate and wider context of use will be dealt with in the analysis of the selected Igbo proverbs.

The levels of substance and form are discussed only to the extent that they have bearing on the treatment of contextual issues. Halliday and Fawcett (1987) highlighted the importance of levels and system networks. Systemic linguistics are committed to making models of language that are fully explicit (i.e generative) and do not just provide a descriptive tool whose value might not be verified informally through its usefulness in the analysis of text (Halliday and Fawcett, 1987:8). It revived interest in phonology other than intonation (Prakson, 1985). In the words of Winograde, (1972), Fawcett (1974) and Prasad (2008), Systemic Functional Linguistics is a promising candidate for a cognitive model. Based on the view that a Functional Theory must show how language works in social interaction, many studies have been carried out to investigate the use of language in different context. Bloor and Bloor (1985) observe that many people fear that we subtract from the richness of the beauty of language when we study the structure of language and explain how communication takes place. They are of the view that a functional theory of language

must be able to show how language works in social interaction for the teacher, writer, politician, the translator, the literary critic, the therapist and so on (Frank, 2000). Halliday and Matheson (2004) describes the theory as "a means of action" whereby the theory and its hypotheses are used not only to understand the nature and function of language, but to practically help people to learn foreign languages, improve writing skills or train interpreters among the many more applications of SFL.

Fasanmi in Ubahakwe and Sogbesan (2002) while agreeing with Halliday and Hassan (1989) that systemic grammar is a network of systems working in consonance with one another for effective communication holds that "System includes the coming together of different parts, especially of a language during the communication act; different parts of speech like nouns, verbs, adverbs, preposition" etc. He maintains that the meaning of one part of the system depends on the meaning of the other and that the English clause operates as a system in the sense that the subordinate clause depends on the main clause for its meaning and the subordinate clause gives additional information and more clarification to the main for example:

i. Clinton threatened to sack me, if I refused to do his wish

ii. Unknown to George, Clinton was secretly planning to kill him.

In example "I" above, the subordinate clause is the second but in "2", it takes the initial position. Ubahakwe and Sogbesan (op cit) shed light on the basic issues that relate to systemic grammar as follows:

> Systemic grammar has the ideals of coherence, consistency and explicitness. It often demonstrates how the forms of a human language or variety of a language can be related to its social functions…. Deals with the description of varieties of language which depend on social situation, registers and social dialects… it is so much concerned with the functions of language that are relevant to stylistics and text linguistics. Systemic linguists want to be able to use systemic grammar to handle literary works effectively, the truly creative uses

> of language, within the framework of systemic grammar.

They see language principally as a social phenomenon or sociological construct by means of which communication amongst a human group or community is facilitated. This implies that in analyzing a human language, one is to take cognizance of the people's culture, and analysis is done using a text.

According to Systemic Functional Linguists, a text is a piece of language in use, that is 'language that is functional', it can be either spoken or written. Halliday and Maitthiessen (2004) refer to text as any instance of language in any medium that makes sense to someone who knows the language. Butt, Fahey, Spinks and Yallop (1999:11) see a text as a harmonious collection of meanings appropriate to its context. This unity of purpose gives a text both texture and structure. Texture refers to the way the various meanings in the text are linked and blended together to form a harmonious whole, while structure has to do with the way pieces of language in use will contain some obligatory structural elements, which are appropriate to their purpose and context. A text occurs in two contexts, one within the other. This is represented in figure 30 adapted from Butt *et al.,* (1999).

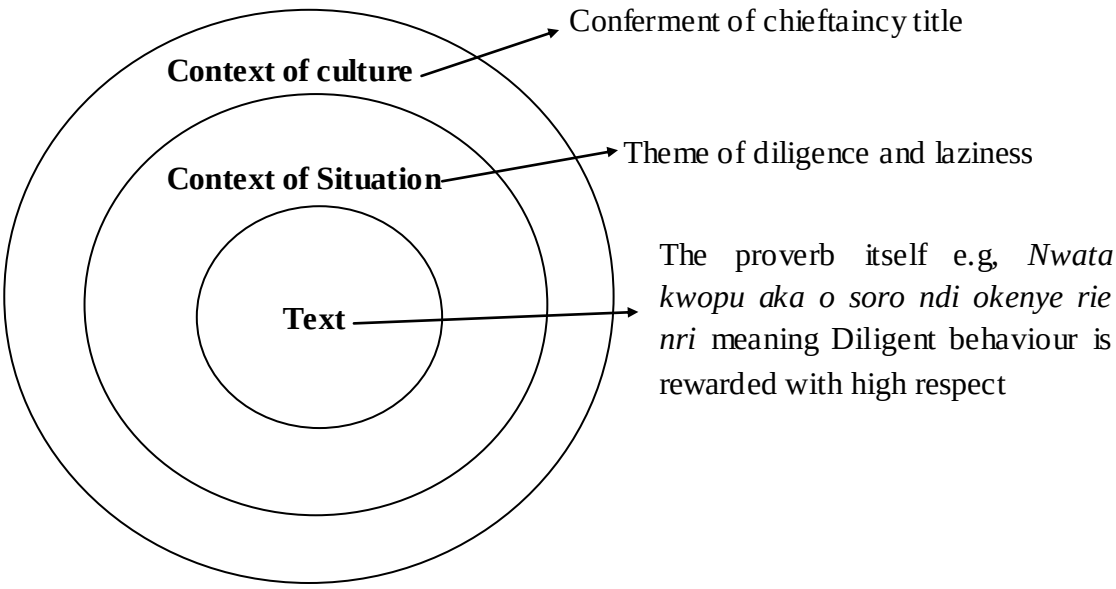


Fig 3.0: Text in context

The outer context around a text is known as the context of culture or wider context. This includes the difference in forms of address, in ceremonies, in politeness and significant activities between one culture and another. The ideas generated here are vital in shaping meanings. The context of culture is the sum of all the meanings a text is possible to mean in its particular culture. Within the context of culture, speakers and writers use language in many more specific contexts of situations. Each of these is in an inner context, which Functional Linguists call context of situation.

The combination of context of culture and context of situation results in the differences and similarities between one piece of language and another. The spoken texts during a celebration or feasting for instance would be quite different from those spoken during a funeral and both contexts of culture and context of situation would be implicated in the differences. This fact is true of most Igbo proverbs Igbo Proverbs relating to diligence and praise for instance simply can't be used within the context of culture of a funeral or in a mourning house. This is because this cultural difference will influence aspects of the funeral context of situation.

Context of situation is used to cover the things going on in the world outside the text which make the text what it is. These are the extra linguistic features of a text which are given substance in the words and grammatical patterns that speakers and writers use consciously or subconsciously to construct text of different varieties and which their audience use to classify and interpret (Butt *et al.*, 1999). Three aspects of contexts are used to account for situational differences between texts. Systemic Functional Linguists refer to these three aspects or parameters of the context of situation as field, tenor and mode of discourse. This is represented in figure 4.0 (Ibid).

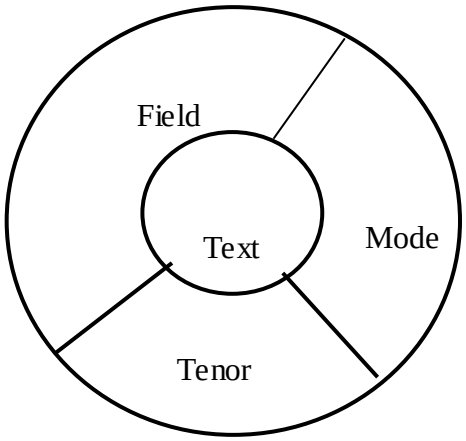


Fig 4.0: Parameters of context of situation

2.21.3.1 The Field of Discourse

This involves what is to be talked or written about, the long and short term goals of the text. The present study refers to it as theme. The theme is the subject or concern of the message. In the nineteenth century, when there was a renewal of interest in grammatical theory, a debate came up which gave rise to: psychological theme, grammatical theme and logical theme. The psychological theme means that which is the concern of the message. It is what the speaker had in his mind to start with, when embarking on the production of the message. The grammatical theme refers to that of which something is predicated. It is a purely formal grammatical relationship that determines various other grammatical features such as the case of

noun, pronoun, its concord of person and number with the verb. It was not thought to express any meaning. Logical theme on the other hand means the doer of the action. It shows the relationship between things as opposed to grammatical relations which are between symbols (Halliday and Maitthiessen, 2004:56). The concern of this study would be the psychological and logical theme since they show the element the speaker selects for "grounding" what he is going to say. Maitthiessen and Bateman (1999:58) state that "the theme functions in the structure of the clause as a message, it also serves as the point of departure for the message". The field of discourse covers the scope of human experience and activity. It highlights the long and short term goal of a text. Short term refers to the immediate purposes of the utterance's production while long term goal is more abstract and refers to the utterance's place in the larger scheme of things.

2.21.3.2 The tenor of discourse

The tenor of discourse refers to the relationship between the speaker and hearer (or of course writer and reader). It refers to the set of relevant social relations, permanent and temporary among participants (Halliday and Hassan, 1989:22). It is referred to as agentive or societal roles i.e roles of the speaker and addressee, e.g mother/child, king/subject etc. According to Wales (2001:388), 'the relationships that hold among participants affect the kind of language chosen, particularly in respect of the degree of formality'.

Joos (1962) cited in Adedimeji, (2010) categorizes social relations in terms of five variables viz; frozen, formal, consultative, causal and intimate. This study conceives tenor as basically "formal" and "informal" in tandem with the characterization of Frow, (1980). This is because "with a low degree of formality, relations will be personal, intimate, while with a high degree of formality, they will be

impersonal, official or "Frozen" (Leckie, 1995:40-41). The statues may be equal or unequal and this is ascertained by mood choices by the speakers-that is who gives the order, who asks the questions, who makes the offers to give the information. Tenor of discourse involves the social distance or how well the interactants know each other: whether they speak familiarly or distantly. Maximal social distance is used for speakers who have never met before and minimal for those who interact on familiar and frequent basis (Halliday, 2004).

2.21.3.3 Mode of discourse

Mode refers to the kind of text that is made. It can be seen as the function of the text/ discourse in the speech event. This includes the channel taken by the language user which could be spoken or written (Halliday and Hassan, 1989). Eggins, (2000) proposes that these two channels-spoken and written involve two simultaneous continua that describe two kinds of distance in the relationship between language and situation. The first is the spatial/interpersonal distance. This involves immediate feedback between interactants since they have to sit/stand and chat. It also involves visual and aural contact and thus feedback is immediate. The second involves writing a book, in situation, there is no visual or aural contact between the writer and reader and thus immediate feedback is not possible. The former is the concern of this present research since we are discussing speech.

The mode of discourse also covers the role of language in the text. The role may be constitutive or ancillary (Halliday, 2004). If the language is ancillary to the text, it also helps some other activity. On the other hand, if language constitutes the text, it is the whole activity. It involves the type of interaction that is going on in the text. If it is spoken by one person, it is monologic while when others participate, it is dialogic. The channel is whether the text was originally spoken, written or even

signed. Since our analysis is based on spoken utterance, medium is not considered as a factor as it has been fore-grounded in the work. There is also the rhetorical mode of discourse which refers to the overall feeling of the text-for example instructional, persuasive, literary, expository and didactic.

2.22 Authorial Review

Igbo language belongs to the African "Kwa" group of languages. English is an Anglo-Saxon European language that is why translation, we encounter leaks in transmission. Therefore, in attempting to translate these ancestral sayings, knowledge of these two languages is necessary, but they will be as reliable as one wants them Igbo because proverbs are not designed to be explained.

Igbo proverbs as stated by one of Igbo prominent sons, Chinua Achebe (1984) is the "salt with which words are eaten" and in another context, he refers to them as "the palm oil with which Igbo words are eaten". In Igbo land, proverbs are not only central to the propagation of Igbo culture in all its ramifications, but are in fact, the foremost factor in formal and familiar speeches and in other forms of popular communication. No wonder Achebe's fiction has abundant features of African traditional orature, folklores, songs, anecdotes proverbs, idiomatic expressions, etc.

Onyemelukwe's (2004) study attests to this unique style of writing in Achebe's TFA (1958). One of the examples given is "and every man whose arm was strong as the Igbo people say was expected to invite large numbers of guests far and wide". "Whose arm was strong" that is "onye aka ya siri ike" is chosen in place of the English equivalent "who is well to do". Onyemelukwe's work is an attempt at a systemic functional linguistic analysis of the use of proverbial language in TFA. She tries to establish how users of proverbial text create meanings and achieve intended

effects. Inputs from her presentation will be utilized in this study. She posits that, in analyzing a human language, one is to take cognizance of the people's culture. Onyemelukwe's paper debunks Ezirim (2001) claims that women and children are restricted from using proverbs. This also corroborates an earlier finding by Noah (1996) who adds that "proverbs are also uttered by women and children". Her study reveals that the user of a proverbial text has a specific motive (function) he wants to achieve and the proverb is only a strategy. This fact has been highlighted in the discussion on functions of Igbo proverbs. Writing on the importance of Igbo proverbs, Ogbalu (1965: 4-5) maintains that Igbo proverbs form the language of diplomacy, settling disputes, bride, price, commerce and oratory.

Ogbalu recognizes dialectal differences inherent in Igbo proverbs which result in different ways of expressing a particular proverb in Igboland. However, their meanings remain the same. His opinion that women and children should not use proverbs in the gathering of men, and elders is not a popular one and has not been widely accepted by Igbo scholars. The researcher sees such opinion as what Onyemelukwe (2004) calls "a reinforcement of excessive chauvinistic, misogynic and gerontocratic world portrayed in most African societies". The researcher posits that men and elders use proverbs more frequently than women, but this does not mean that any restriction of the use of proverbs was placed on Igbo women.

Okonkwo (1974) agrees with Ogbalu (1965) that Igbo proverbs reveal a lot about the Igbo. He posits that "in Igbo proverbs, the totality of the Igbo is revealed". Nzimiro (1974) agrees with the duo-Okonkwo and Ogbalu. He sees Igbo proverbs as revealing many things about the lives and experience of people who lived before us. He believes that Igbo proverbs teach morals and the collective wisdom which constitute the culture of Igbo people.

Davids, (1980:6) is of the opinion that proverbs emphasize, modify, nullify and finalize topics. She believes that intelligent people are known by the apt way they use proverbs and are respected as such. She maintains further that he who speaks in proverbs speaks in force and does retain the attention of his listeners. An affirmation to this is an Igbo man's assertion: "mgbe ilu gwuru, ka uka m gwuru" meaning "when my proverb ends, my talk ends as well". Amodiume (1994: 45) shares a similar view with David's when he posits that "Igbo people of Nigeria use proverbs so frequently that it has become part of their day-to-day speech". He concludes by saying that, when a proverb refers to a particular situation in which one is involved, one is expected to understand such a proverb. Listeners are expected to figure out the meaning of Igbo proverbs themselves, draw inferences and conclusions and follow the gist of the talk. The researcher attests to this claim and adds that a listener could utilize the potentials of the three levels of meaning in interpreting Igbo proverbs or use the aesthetic devices embedded in the proverbs which aid their understanding and interpretation.

Basden (1966: 273) appreciates the functions of Igbo proverbs in speech. He notes that, most Igbo proverbs conclude discussion, answer question etc. According to him, the work a proverb does depends on the user, his mastery of the language and art of using proverbs. He gives an example where an Igbo proverb is used to conclude a discussion "ka o di n'ofu" which means let it be so", or "that is enough". He sees this short proverb as useful and a convenient expression in bringing an argument to a halt. Isichie (1976:147) cites a case where a proverb was used to answer a question. In the early 1960s, a former warrant chief from Okigwe was asked how the warrant chiefs grew so rich. He replied, "ma ukpara erighi ibe ya, o naghi ebu". Meaning: "to grow

fat, an insect must feed on other insects" and would not say anything more. This is a potent nature of Igbo proverbs as a communication tool in Igboland.

Equdu (1977) discusses briefly the importance of Igbo proverbs with copious examples. His work centered on literary analysis and aesthetic forms of proverbs in Igbo land. He sees proverbs as mirroring the Igbo culture and world view. Insights from his work will be utilized in this study. Nwachukwu (2004) discusses the content of Igbo proverbs. According to him, the content of any Igbo proverb loses its meaning when used in an inappropriate context. The researcher agrees with his submission, but will quickly add that the theme and context of use of Igbo proverbs go hand-in-hand. One cannot be explicated from the other. The philosophical and literal meaning also aid understanding because content alone cannot ascertain the full meaning of Igbo proverbs.

Ene (2007) in his long essay observes that most Igbo proverbs are coined around some poor animals both domestic and wild. He opines that this was in an attempt by the ancestors to be polite and diplomatic, though the main target of any proverb is humans and not animals. He cites an example of Igbo proverb that illustrates this fact: as "Ukwu jie agu mgbada abia ya ugwo". This means that when a leopard is paralysed, an antelope enters his tent to recover his debt. The two animals illustrated in the proverb above – leopard and antelope are two opposites in terms of their strengths. While the leopard represents the strong, rich and well-to-do people in the society, the antelope stands for the poor, weak, suffering and have nots who do not have a say in the affairs of the society. So, the only situation that permits a poor man to ask for a debt owed him by a rich man is when the rich man is paralyzed, wounded or in a helpless condition. Thus, this Igbo proverb showcases the real picture of human life in a subtle way using animals. He concludes that, Igbo proverbs

is a living art of popular communication; it will always remain an art that must be lived to be understood, experienced to be applied and continuously nurtured to follow the evolution of allusions and aphorisms.

Onwuneme's (1981) long essay examines Igbo proverbs from linguistic and philosophical interests in Semantics. Like Okonkwo (1977), he discusses the three levels of meaning of Igbo proverbs and brings out what he calls "the unique structures of proverbs". These are inversion, invariable structure, co-ordinate structure in collocation relation and parallelism. He did not however attempt a thematic study or functions of Igbo proverbs. Boadi (1972) did not quite agree with the traditional belief that proverbs in traditional societies were store house of native wisdom and philosophical ideas. He emphasizes on the creative aspect associated with the use of proverbs and argues that some proverbs have greater importance of value than others, by virtue of their being stylistically innovative. Though the creative aspect of proverbs is one of the areas of concern for this present study, the researcher disagrees with Boadi's latter view. The researcher maintains that every proverb has an important function to play in the community at the level of usage. As such, none is greater than the other.

Penfield (1983) believes that proverbs belong to a group of speech acts which may be put under the group of quotes. He sees proverbs as serving a lot of purposes like depersonalization, fore-grounding, authoritativeness, prestige and allusion to social norms, and values. The researcher disagrees with Penfield's assertion in that proverbs differ from quotes as they have no known authors like quotations. Nwoga (1975:4-13) in his contribution to the definition of proverbs sees them as "the wisdom of many and not of one the experience and wisdom of several ages gathered and summed up in one expression and as the edged tools of speech". The theme of his

paper, discusses a syntactical analysis of proverbs in terms of structural relations. He recognizes the importance of form and content and discusses the roles of proverbs in Igbo society. He however disagrees with Boadi (1972) that the aesthetic unique use of language in proverbs is what distinguished it from other genres. He did not attempt a linguistic analysis of the themes, functions and aesthetic devices of Igbo proverbs. The researcher posits that the functions, themes and aesthetic qualities of proverbs make them stand out in the midst of other forms of language.

Onwubuariri (1978) cited in Ezirim (2001) tries to distinguish between idioms (akpaalaokwu) and proverbs (ilu). He sees idioms as expressions used in special sense distinct from their usual meaning (literal meaning) while proverbs are usually in sentences expressing facts of daily observation or experience. His example: "Nwata akwu n'azu amaghi n'ije di anya" is a proverb which records the fact of experience in that proverb, which means that people who have others to care for them do not know the sufferings they go through providing for them. "Nwata akwo n'azu" he asserts is an idiom meaning, a child that has no problem". He sums it up by saying that students who use unsuitable idioms and proverbs in a context show their ignorance concerning the Igbo proverbs. The researcher agrees with Onwubuariri and asserts that idioms represent an unfamiliar expression to the non-native speaker. It must therefore be analyzed within the context in which it was used. Any attempt to apply an idiom used in one context to a supposedly related situation may backfire on the user. Some of the nuances one may notice when something like that happens are; audience shifting uncomfortably, scratching heads or exhale with a background bass which says a million words.

Ezirim's (2001) study on Igbo proverbs centres on the context of situation in the use of Igbo proverbs. He sees contextual features as being necessary for the

understanding and interpretation of Igbo proverbs. He used one hundred and thirty proverbs to analyze and support his claims. His work though relevant to this study did not however look at the import of aesthetic devices in interpreting meaning, a gap this present study seeks to full. Yusuf (1997a) examines the definition of proverbs as wisdom and truth. He argues that wisdom and truth should be disregarded as an essential characteristic of proverbs. He supports his claims by examining how forty-six English and Yoruba proverbs compare women to animals, plants, poverty and trouble. He argues that all proverbs de-personify or dehumanize women. He goes ahead to note Shugart's (1994:18) cited in Ezirim (2001) assertion that, "That which constitutes the female has suffered quite possibly the worst universal ideological abuse ever to be perpetuated on an abstract category". Yusuf also cited the example of Miss Kimbell who was able to break that dogma in Canada by winning her party's intra prime ministerial slot against public opinion. He uses Miss Kimbell's speeches contained in the "Economist" (a London weekly magazine) to show that it is not everything contained in English proverbs that are true of women. English proverbs paint the speeches of women as loquacious, undependable, aggressive and ominous. Yusuf believes that the magazine respects what he calls a "traditional suppression admonition" that women should be seen not heard.

To him, such claims are "misogynistic assumptions". Onyemelukwe (2004) and the researcher share the same view with Yusuf. The researcher asserts that language is dynamic and flexible and as a property of the language, Igbo proverbs grow with her language. Thus, such traditional beliefs about women have faded away. Noah (1996) cited in Onyemelukwe (1999) assert this too. Ezirim (2001:32) captures this new orientation in these words "Girls that whistle and hens that crow make their way wherever they go".

Ene (2007) expresses a similar view with Noah (1996) and Ezirim (2001). He believes that the fact that many languages are male based does not mean the original authors of Igbo necessarily designed them to exclude women. However, some sayings are aimed at a male audience because of the patrilineal emphasis in Igbo society. Skinner (1980) commends the Hausa proverbs for being a dynamic genre in Hausa society. He points out variations inherent in Hausa proverbs just as they exist in Igbo proverbs and observes that Hausa proverbs contain a great deal of repetitions, rhymes, assonance, alliteration and other figures of speech. All these also exist in Igbo proverbs. On the definition of proverbs, he says "what makes a proverb is when people agree it is a proverb". This definition is shallow and lacks an in-depth ingredient of what a proverb is. A proverb according to Fergusson (1983:3) is a succinct and memorable statement that contains advice a warning or prediction or an analytical observation which is buried deep in antiquity.

Maiyanga (1998) looks at lgala proverbs from a semantic and pragmatic point of view. He uses a blend of semantic/pragmatic models in his analysis of some selected Igala proverbs. He sees proverbs as garments of the use of illocutionary acts of declaratives, directives, assertive and though the work is heavily on speech acts, warnings but not co-missives. insights from his work will be utilized in this study. Amali (1998) in his paper, "Proverbs as concept of Idoma dispensation of justice" upholds that in the dispensation of justice in Idoma land of Nigeria, proverbs play significant roles as a stamp of authority of some sort. According to him:

> The appropriate and apt utilization or citation of the right legal proverbs at any given situation acts as a powerful intervening force which not only edifies the language of the presiding judge, clarifies the issue at stake, but cushions the minds of the convicted, indicating that justice has not been miscarried.

He believes that the Idoma people's system of justice provides a thriving ground for a stable society. This derives from his belief that the laws are essentially based on the collective will of the people. These laws are codified and reinforced in proverbial expressions of the people. He posits that modern day judges should use proverbs to back up their legal pronouncements so as to attract applause and commendation.

Amali's illustration is one of the strongest footings of this study which emphasize the functions of Igbo proverbs to the growth of the language and culture. The researcher however posits that proverbs should be used with caution. Worton (1998) cited in Ezirim (2001) advocates that proverbs should be taught in foreign language classrooms by language teachers in Spain. He sees proverbs as an integral part of the culture which should be incorporated into language courses. This will boost the cultural understanding of the people who speak the language. Agu, (2010) study agrees with Worton's view, by asserting that the non adherence to Worton's view, will lead to a threat to linguistic resource which she identifies as a global crisis. According to her, Kraus (2001) estimates that 6,000 languages spoken around the globe are moribund, that is only adult speakers who no longer teach or speak them to the next generation. This made UNESCO in 2004 to declare February 21st as the International Mother Language Day. The researcher agrees with Worton and Agu's view that language endangerment is on the increase and posits that the knowledge and use of proverbs in appropriate themes can salvage the situation she notes that in most schools in the country, Nigerian languages are taught as third or fourth languages while English, French and Arabic are given more attention. As panacea to language endangerment, the teaching of indigenous, Nigerian languages and proverbs in particular should be introduced and in emphasized the school curricula.

Brown and Yule (1983) cite propositions which are relevant to this study. They classify language according to the various functions which it is called upon to perform. According to them, the conversational function of language is message oriented. This is when language is used basically for the transference of factual and propositional information. A fundamental condition for the effective performance of conversation is therefore clarity. The speaker should make what he says as clear as possible because failure to do so will result in unpleasant consequences in the real world.

This is not true of Igbo proverbs in that no matter how obscure the proverb may look, the listener has to figure out its meaning using the context, intuition or the background knowledge he has about the theme. This is because Igbo proverbs are not designed to be explained (Op.cit). Brown and Yule (1983) pay particular attention to the context in which conversation takes place. This is true of Igbo proverbs though the theme influences the context and the meaning of the proverbs. Anyanwu (2006) identifies the importance of contextualization in the interpretation of coined words and expressions, though proverbs are more than that as they mirror the culture and belief of a particular people. She outlines the semantic implications that arise as a result of using coined words and expressions in different contexts. Though the work is heavily on neologisms in Christian Religious Affairs, insights from it will be utilized in this present study; because contextualization is an important factor in determining the meaning of Igbo proverbs.

Ibileye (1999) adopts a pragmatic approach to the study of the language of courtroom conversation. The study attempts to combine the Austnian speech acts model with the Gricean model of cooperative principle. The work examines the hierarchical structure of language and how it affects the outcome of verbal

interaction. Insights from his work shall be utilized in this present study, because his assertion in the work corroborates with one of the views of our study that the relationship between participants in a discourse affects the theme of their discourse.

Tadi (2005) "Sam Kwi Bolji" is a collection, translation and analysis of Tangale proverbs. He looks at the dynamics of the utterances without analyzing the immediate social context of the utterance. The result of his study reveals the polythematic, polyfunctional and polystructural nature of Tangale proverbs. The present study however explores the key issues of theme, functions and aesthetic devices and how they engender the meaning facilitate and encourage the use of Igbo proverbs in communication this will to a great degree save the language from going into extinction.

Agu (2010); Pragmatic Analysis of Igbo proverbs examines how pragmatic mappings – kinds of illocutionary acts can be used to interpret Igbo proverbs. The study posits that Igbo proverbs play direct assertive e.g claiming and informing, indirect directives e.g warning advising etc using textual data analysis. Though the work is relevant to this present study, there are some shifts. The present study does not lay emphasis on the structure and texture of the proverb, nor is it concerned with the pragmatic cues. Rather, emphasis is on the context and by implication the immediate and wider context. It also delved into the area of the aesthetics as a sure way to facilitate the interpretation and understanding of Igbo proverbs.

Ezirim (2001) looks at what happens when people use Igbo proverbs in different social settings such as market, meetings etc. The researcher was able to notice some loopholes in his work especially his literal translation and translation which were poorly done. In addition, he devoted time to the collection and interpretation of different settings in which proverbs are used without saying anything

on the aesthetic imports of the proverbs, a research vacuum which the present work seeks to fill.

Adedimeji (2010) describes the interface between stylistics and pragmatics. He used ten proverbs each from two novels written by three Nigerian novelists. Form, content, speech act, style, etc of these proverbs in those works were examined. He believes that the proverbs are expressed in simple and complex forms, and the speech acts are mostly assertive and expressive. Though the proverbs he used are restricted to six literary works mentioned, insights from his study which are relevant to this study would be utilized.

Ullmann (1997) observes that both linguistic knowledge and non linguistic knowledge are required to establish reference. He therefore posits that the true conditions of a sentence are determined by the outcome of pragmatic processes and not just by linguistic processes. Wilson and Speber (1999), Gruneberg and Keysar (1996), are all at home with Ullmann's observation. Ullmann (1997) following Grice (1975) observes that the general knowledge is concerned with the nature of social interactions and the importance of the intentions of the participants in a conversation. These aspects of general knowledge form the traditional subject matter of pragmatics.

Grice (1975) tries to account for what people mean as opposed to what they say. For Grice, what people mean is governed by pragmatic principle, while what they say conform to true conditional semantics. He outlines four conversational maxims that participants in a conversation adhere to, which enable the speaker to make conversational implicatures. The researcher is at home with Grice's views and posits that the Igbo people in different contexts and under the discussion of different themes adhere to conversational maxims in order to implicate a proverb over and above the literal meaning of the words and sentences in the proverb. This work shall however

introduce a slight modification as seen by Wilson and Sperber (1999: 137) which replaces Grice's four conversational Maxims by a single principle of relevance that states. "The speaker tries to express the proposition which is the most relevant one possible to the hearer". According to Wilson and Sperber (1999), the search for relevance is a fundamental cognitive activity. On hearing an utterance therefore, inferences are made to yield a unique interpretation that is consistent with the requirements of relevance.

The principle of relevance operates in conjunction with the principle of minimal effort Weinreich (1993) which asserts that people make as little effort as possible that is consistent with maintaining relevance. If the utterance is not sufficiently relevant in the initial context, it is unlikely that its relevance will be increased by further extension of the context. For instance, the proverb "Aka aja na-ebute onu mmanu mmanu" meaning "A hand soiled with sand gives rise/lead to an oil laden mouth" (Op.cit) uttered in the social context of a feast, reminds the listener that the hand soiled with sand is the hand of the diligent farmer or labourer and that such hand provides food (tasty sauces cooked in oil) which human mouth delights so much in partaking. The interpretation of this proverb reveals a kind of relationship between "hand and sand" that requires hardwork. For an individual to have such an understanding he/she must rely on the principle of relevance and contextual features which are some of the concerns of this study.

Moving further, Wilson and Sperber (1999), posit that, what ensures the listener to make the intended implication and not some others is the notion of "mutual manifestness". A fact is manifest to a person if he or she is capable of representing it mentally. The implicatures are selected because the speaker intends that the listener derives them or some of them, given the fact that an utterance is intended to be

manifestly relevant to the hearer. Thus, implicated premises and implicated conclusions are both identifiable, as parts of the first inferable interpretation that is consistent with the principle of relevance. This observation is very relevant to this study because the principle of relevance is central to using Igbo proverbs in communication.

2.23 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework adopted for this study is the Systemic Functional Linguistic approach. We endorse the systemic Functional Linguistic Approach because the school is able to give us the various uses, functions or purposes of language and by extension orature in the society. These among others are to narrate entertain, inform, present factual information, state opinion, give explanation, advance arguments or justify a point of view. Systemic Functional Linguists like Halliday (1985), Malmkjaer (1991) and Butt *et. al.* (1999), Halliday and Maithiessen (2004) place emphasis on meaning potentials of language which they believe to be functionally organized. Systemic Functional Linguistics is equally interested in examining the internal organization of language, the various patterning a language exhibits, the functions of the language, the social situation of the language use, and how the patterning varies in different social settings, (Berry, 1975:1). He therefore posits that by system, we mean a set of options, contrasting choices available in the grammar of the language. These systems and choices (the lexico grammar) permits people to use words and sentences to consciously depict suitable social situations through language acts that produce or construct meaning.

Osisanwo (2008:10) in agreeing with Berry (1975) maintains that:

> Systemic Functional Linguistics is a generative non transformational grammar that operates at surface

> and deep planes. At the surface plane, the grammar deals with how any given system is ultimately realized in grammatical structures and their elements. At the deep plane, it accounts for how semantic features are organized into networks with the entry conditions into any given network explicitly stated.

In the same vein, Bloor and Bloor (2013) posits that SFG is a study of how meanings are built up through the choices of words and grammatical resources while recognizing meaning and use as central features of language. Since linguistics in social situations, immediate and wider contextual factors (society and culture) are given utmost priority in the process of inferring appropriate meaning via lexico grammatical options.

As stated earlier in the work p.127, the concern of the study lies on the level of context, i.e the immediate and wider context of use. Leech and Short (1981) note that, understanding the: invisible meaning:, the purview of pragmatics is impossible without reference to context. According to them, text only makes sense when situated within the relevant context.

Crystal, (1987:48) sees context generally as the place in which a communicative event occurs while Yule (1996:128) refers to it as the physical environment in which a word is used or a term used to provide links between linguistic items and the social and situational factors of communication (Adegbite, 2000:64). Context is technically construed by Lyons (1977:572) as:

> a theoretical construct in the postulation of which the linguist abstracts from the actual situation and establishes as contextual all the factors which, by virtue of their influence upon the participants in the language events, systematically determine the form and the appropriateness of the meaning of utterance.

Proverbs, like language in general, often depends on context to mean. Lemke (1988:165) submits that "all meaning is made by contextualization". Halliday and Hassan (1985) acknowledge five periods in the cycle of text and context, thus:

i. The text, as a metafunctional construct: a complex of ideational, interpersonal and textual meanings.

ii. The context of situation: the configuration of field, tenor and mode features that specify the register of the text.

iii. The context of culture: the institutional and ideological background that gives value to the text and constrains its interpretation.

iv. The intertextual context: relations with other texts and assumptions that are carried over there from.

v. The 'intertextual' context: coherence within the text, including the linguistic cohesion that embodies that internal semantic relationship. The analysis of proverbs in this study however focuses on cycle i – iii. This is because textual metafunction was not considered. The study also examines the metalanguage of the proverbs used in different context or situational fields referred to as themes in order to identify their unique properties. These properties are the aesthetic devices contained in them. It is the contention of the study that this device facilitates the understanding and interpretation of the proverbs. Based on Halliday's (1978) work, Leckie – Tarry (1995) classifies contexts under the rubrics of context of culture (knowledge system of a particular culture, consisting of sets of knowledge such as institutional and ideological) and context of situation (realised by means of the three Hallidayan metafunctions ideational, interpersonal and textural. though textual was not considered.

Since linguistics in social situations (immediate and wider contextual factors; society and culture) are given utmost priority in the process of inferring appropriate meaning via lexico grammatical options, the study adopts it as its theoretical framework. The Systemic Functional Linguistics model is thus adopted, on one hand, in this study for its relevance and on the other hand for being accommodating towards pragmatics (Osisianwo, 2008:117).

CHAPTER THREE

REASEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

The research design used in this study is the qualitative type because the study is ethnographic in nature. Sambo (2005) describes ethnography as a portrait of a people and a methodology for the descriptive studies of cultures and peoples. It also means an in depth study of a naturally occurring behaviour within the culture of a social group .The author observes behaviour as it occurs naturally without any simulations or imposed structure. It has to do with how proverbs are used by Igbo people, to portray their culture and language. Edward (1976) cited in Agu (2010) posits that proverbs are classified as ethnographic statements because they are knowledge that were available to members of a speech community which are used to categorize them, their place and activities.

Qualitative research design seeks to understand a phenomenon by focusing on the totality of the research rather than breaking it down into variables Razavieh (2002) cited in Agu (2010). The study is concerned with the examination of Igbo proverbs by looking at their themes, functions and the aesthetic devices embedded in them which can facilitate their understanding and interpretation .It looks at the research as a whole in order to have an in-depth understanding of the issues at stake. The method in this research has an interpretative character aimed at discovering the meaning events have for the individual who experiences the interpretation of the language by other users of lgbo proverbs. Honeck (1998) summarizes the nature of qualitative research thus; it is subjective, holistic, phenomenological, anti-positivist, descriptive, naturalistic and inductive.

The study in addition to the analysis of live situations where Ndigbo use proverbs also looks at Igbo proverbs that are documented in books. Observation and focused interviews were also employed .The latter asks questions designed to elicit responses from subjects concerning the issue of proverb use by Ndigbo while the former is the most basic method for obtaining data in qualitative research ,hence its use in this work. The researcher and the attendants are native speakers of Igbo language as such they relied on their intuitive knowledge of the language in the process.

3.2 Method of Data Collection

The major methods of data collection in a qualitative research are observation, face to face interview and focus groups and the sample for a qualitative research is not expected to be very large. The following are the methods utilized:

A. Live observation and recording of events

Occasions or ceremonies where proverbs are used include traditional Igbo marriages, new yam festivals, funeral ceremonies, initiation into manhood ceremonies conferment of chieftaincy titles, etc. Since most of these ceremonies and festivals occur at different times in Igbo land except the new yam festival which is celebrated on August 8th every year, the researcher visited different communities in Igbo land when some of the festivals/ceremonies were on. The ones visited are, the initiation into manhood ceremony (Iwa akwa) in Umulogho Obowo Local Government Area of Imo State traditional marriage (Igba nkwu) at Uruagu Village in Nnewi South Local Government Area of Anambra State, funeral ceremony (ikwa mmadu) at Ukwuani, Udi Local Government Area of Enugu State ,conferment of chieftaincy title (ichi ozo)

at Abiriba in Abia State and kolanut ceremony (Ita oji) at Afikpo in Ebonyi State. These occasions are fertile grounds for the free use of Igbo proverbs.

Other occasions where proverbs were sourced are family, clan, and state meetings of Ndigbo at Zaria, Kaduna and Kano states. The gregarious nature of Ndigbo facilitated this. Igbo people are found everywhere in the world and they organize themselves into different meetings and social organizations for easy identification especially when any one of them dies or needed any form of assistance .The eldest or the organizer of such meetings usually address people in proverbs. Discussions during such meetings, are expected to be proverbially handled depending on whether the elder or convener is "nwafo" real son or "ofeke" (a fool).The use of proverbs during such meetings reignite nostalgic feelings and unity in them, especially during the presentation, blessing and breaking of kola nuts, Nwosu, (2003). Culturally motivated meetings are the hallmark of a typical Igbo community (Agu 2010), as such they afford the researcher opportunities to collect data.

B. Interviews:

Qualitative research interviews were usually informal in nature .Focused interviews that were based on open-ended questions were used. Some interviews were carried out within the time when some of the ceremonies earlier mentioned were held. The Umunna i.e patrilineal who are made up of elders in Igbo communities are the custodian of cultural experience, identity and motif. It then means that this work appears incomplete without interviewing them. Subsequently five elders made up of i.e three men and two women were interviewed. Their names are;

i. Eze Vitus Unogu; aged 71 years, Ezeigbo II of Zaria. The interview took place in his 'obi' parlour where the presence of his cabinet members who

are drawn from all the five south eastern states of Nigeria and Delta state were present. It took place on (August 14th 2014).

ii. Elder Livinus Obani Kaforcha; aged 88, of Umulogho Obowo LGA and the interview took place during the 'Iwa akwa' festival of (January 5th 2013).

iii. Lolo Agatha Nnorom; aged 75, of Uruagu village Nnewi LGA, Anambra State. It took place during a traditional marriage on 28th December, 2014.

iv. Ichie Nkemdilim Onwukwe of Asaga village Ohafia; aged 65.

v. Oyiridiya Nneka Ojukwu of Udi LGA of Enugu state; aged 68 years.

vi. Elder Uzoma Onuigbo of Ihitte Uboma L.G.A, Imo state; aged 70 years old.

Four youths between 25-40 years were also interviewed. This is in a bid to corroborate the facts from the elders and also validify some of the claims made by the study. The researcher established a good rapport with the respondents and assured them that the information was basically for academic research. If the respondents misinterpreted any question, the researcher followed it up with clarifying questions or statements. Such questions elicited more detailed answers which were written down by the researcher.

The questions are structured in two sections, A and B. Section A requests respondent to supply their biodata, while section B contains questions relating to the main issues raised in the research themes, functions and aesthetic devices of Igbo proverbs, and how they engender interpretation and understanding.

C. **Igbo home videos and songs**

Documentary works of selected Igbo home videos and songs were sources of data collection. Taped documents where proverbs were used form part of the data

collection process. Musicians such as Oliver de Coque, Perry Komo, Late Osita Osadebe, Talk show promoter Kalu, Oriental Brothers and others who used Igbo proverbs freely in their works were effectively utilized.

D. **Books**

Many scholarly books written by native Igbo speaker, are usually laden with pungent Igbo proverbs some of them were part of the sources of data for the study. Those that were used include: Ofomata (2001), Ndubuisi. (2009), Onwudufor (2008), Nwadike (2009) and Nwachukwu (2002). The three cardinal features that characterize proverbs, according to Finnegan (1976) and Trench (2003:7), shortness, sense and salt are captured in the instances of Igbo proverbs contained in these books. According to Trench (2003), shortness is linguistic, relating to size, or structure (form) which is sense is pragmatic as it concerns the meaning or the speech act being performed or the function, while salt is the totality of the aesthetic devices employed to achieve the intended sense or function.

The internet was very valuable in the sourcing of data. This shows that this aspect of language use (proverbs) is indeed getting worldwide coverage and acceptance. This also provides the fact that orature in general and proverbs in particular are still functional in many ways (Op.cit). A single proverb is capable of being used in various contexts and hence, lending itself to a multiplicity of themes.

Some informants were also used to provide the history or origin of some proverbs in Igbo. When a proverb originates from a parable (Ukabiulu), a short story telling session precedes the proverb. This helps one to relate the proverb to the parable and also facilitates the understanding of the meaning of the proverb. Apart from the use of tradition bearers in data collection, some middle aged men and women who are educated were also interviewed. They assisted in creating necessary

rapport between the researcher and the informants. These assistants like the main informants are native speakers who possess both the cultural and historical knowledge of the Igbo people.

3.3 Method of Data Transcription

The data collected have to be properly transcribed, thus, a linguistic moulding has to be carried out. The study adopts Arewa (1970) cited in Agu (2010) method. The method presents the proverbs in the vernacular language, using the standard language orthography. This is followed by the transliteration and the translation in English. In doing these time, space and finance have been considered. Consequently, two hundred proverbs spreading across the different aspects of the topic are presented, followed by the discussion. In all, attempts are made to provide real, historical and hypothetical contexts in which most Igbo proverbs are used.

3.4 Sampling Procedure

Three hundred and fifty proverbs were elicited from the sources mentioned earlier on, but two hundred of them were presented. This is because, there exists homogeneity in the themes of some of the proverbs. From the two hundred proverbs, forty were randomly selected for the analysis. The systematic random sampling technique was used to arrive at the forty proverbs. This involves dividing the number of proverbs presented with the number of states that make up the south eastern geo-political zone of Nigeria which is known as Alaigbo. For instance: 200/5=40.

3.5 Analytical Procedure

. In this study, the Igbo proverbs are arranged according to their themes and were described.

Lacey and Luff (2001:3) cited in Agu (2010) present thirteen steps that could be used in the qualitative data analysis procedure:

(i) Familiarization with the data through review, reading and listening.

(ii) Transcription of recorded materials

(iii) Organization and indexing of data for easy retrieval and identification

(iv) Anonym zing sensitive data

(v) Coding (or indexing)

(vi) Identification of themes

(vii) Re –coding

(viii) Development of provisional categories

(ix) Exploration of relationships between categories

(x) Refinement of themes and categories

(xi) Development of theory and incorporating of pre-existing knowledge

(xii) Testing the theory against the data

(xiii) Report writing including excerpts from original data if appropriate e.g quotes from interviews

The researcher does not intend to discuss these thirteen methods of data analysis as presented by Lacey and Luff (2001) but point out that only such items that are relevant to the research were applied. The data were categorized according to themes due to the descriptive nature of the data collected. Coding was used for data organisation and analysis. Each unit of data was examined and the theme identified. The proverbs were grouped under the common themes identified, and this grouping

was used in the extrapolation of other categories. This is to ensure credibility, dependability and neutrality of findings. Data obtained from different sources were also corroborated. The proverbs were thematically grouped and they covered the following:

1. Truth versus falsehood
2. Conflict versus diplomacy
3. Diligence versus laziness
4. Praise versus lampoon
5. Unity versus disunity
6. Hope versus despair
7. Obedience versus disobedience
8. Time management

The functions, meanings and aesthetic devices of the proverbs are presented alongside the discussion of the themes. This is in a bid to illustrate the fact that when Igbo proverbs are thematically suited, the understanding of their meanings and their functions are less problematic. Secondly, that various aesthetic devices are employed in Igbo proverbial formation to achieve the three features that characterize proverbs – shortness, sense and salt (SSS); and that these devices can facilitate the understanding and interpretation of the proverbs in any communicative enterprise.

The present study highlights contextual interpretation of interlocutor's proverbial utterances in selected Igbo proverbs with a view to showcasing the Igbos world view and language in general. By implication, our interest lies in interpreting the immediate context which pertains to semantics and the wider context which refers to the metalinguistics. In the course of our analysis, we shall find answers to the following questions which the study regards as the six analytical elements.

Immediate context (semantics)

1. What is the theme of the proverb (Field?)
2. Who uses the proverb and to whom? (Tenor)
3. What is the mode of discourse?
4. What is the function of the proverb?
5. What is the meaning of the proverb?

Wider Context (Metalinguitsics)

6. What is the aesthetic device in the proverb?

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.0 Preamble

This chapter contains the presentation and analysis of the data. As stated earlier, the data are presented in the Igbo orthography followed by the literal translation and then the translation into the target language which is English.

4.1 Data Presentation

Three hundred and fifty (350) proverbs were elicited; Two hundred (200) of them were presented for analysis. This is because in the course of the presentation, the study discovered that there are homogeneity in the themes, meanings and functions of these proverbs. However, most proverbs are commonly used under the following themes identified by the study. They are:

1. Truth versus falsehood
2. Conflict versus diplomacy
3. Diligence versus laziness
4. Praise versus lampoon
5. Unity versus disunity
6. Hope versus despair
7. Obedience versus disobedience
8. Time management

4.2 Analysis of Data

The analysis of the proverb is based on the framework which consists of the examination of the six analytical elements. These elements are:

i. Field

ii. Tenor

iii. Mode

iv. Meaning

v. Function

vi. Aesthetic device

The analyzed data are presented in a table diagram while the discussions are illustrated using different charts for easy reference. The proverbs from the themes or situational usage are analyzed using the six analytical elements stated above. Here forty proverbs were randomly picked for analysis from the two hundred (200) proverbs presented. It is our belief that the result will reflect the postulations put forward for the study. The other one hundred and sixty proverbs are presented in the appendix. The proverbs selected for analysis depict the eight situational usage/fields or themes identified by the study. The proverbs according to themes are:

Truth versus falsehood 1, 196, 170 124	Conflict versus diplomacy 53, 166, 120	Diligence versus laziness 37, 115, 163, 110, 58, 5, 20, 150, 180, 64	Praise versus lampoon 106, 200, 159, 189, 99
Unity versus disunity 43, 47, 93, 131	Hope versus despair 10, 140, 69, 175, 146	Obedience versus disobedience 15, 154, 73	Time management 136, 32, 185, 88, 80, 28

(1) Proverb: "*Enwe si na ya agaghi agoro nwa ya kwo n'azu".*

Literal translation: monkey says she not speak for a child she carry on her back.

Translation: One can only speak/attest of what one is certain.

i. **Field:** The topic is on truth

ii. **Tenor:** Unequal relationship, parent/child with minimal distance because they interact on familiar basis.

iii. **Mode:** Ancillary, it helps other activity in the discourse. The picture of the monkey backing her child comes to mind to illustrate the closeness between mother and child. It is monologic that is spoken by one person; didactic; used to teach morals.

iv. **Meaning:** One can only attest to what one is certain of.

v. **Function:** Ideational, Igbo culture cherishes and promotes truth and certainty. The young ones are thought the undeniable fact that everyone is accountable for his/her actions, such that as close as a mother is to her child, she cannot vouch for her child. The proverb rebukes parents who conceal the bad attitude of their children.

vi. **Aesthetic device:** Assonance is present in "na ya agahi agoro nwa ya kwo n'azu" the vowel "a" is repeated in the words to create expressive effect, cohesion, pneumonic equality and lexical linkages, which can be assessed to decipher the meaning of the proverb.

(196) Proverb: "*Eziokwu bu ndu"*

Literal translation: Good talk is life

Translation: Truth is life

i. **Field:** Truth

ii. **Tenor:** Unequal, traditional judges/defendants with maximal distance

iii. **Mode:** Constitutive that is the event is defined by the speech. It is dialogic as the participants can utter other proverbs to authenticate the theme. The rhetorical mode is persuasive and instructional because it provides sound reasoning.

iv. **Meaning:** Saying the truth in your relationship with others promotes healthy living and not just physical life.

v. **Function:** Ideational, as in other cultures, Igbo culture cherishes life both physical and spiritual. Nothing can be compared to it. So, for the proverb to regard truth as life shows how the virtue is used to direct morality. Consequently, people who tell lies are alive physically but dead spiritually and morally.

vi. **Aesthetic device:** Metaphor is implicitly used to create force which may persuade the parties involved to say the truth and also drives home the meaning of the proverb. The simile variant would be "truth is like life".

(170) Proverb: *Eziokwu di ka okporo akpu anaghi aroji ya aroji*

Literal translation: Good talk is like cassava stem it is not bent it bent

Translation: Truth is like a cassava stem that cannot be bent.

i. **Field:** Truth

ii. **Tenor:** Unequal; judges or elders/defendants to youths. The distance is minimal, because of the familiar that exist.

iii. **Mode:** The utterance is constitutive, dialogic and instructional

iv. **Meaning:** Truth stands out always no matter the odds

v. **Function:** Ideational; in Igbo culture, strong evidence or witness is required in the settlement of disputes and judgement delivery by the "ndiichie" (traditional judges).

vi. **Aesthetic device:** Simile, using the words "di ka" (like) to compare the impossibilities of bending a cassava stem without breaking it to what happens when truth is compromised. There is also assonance in the repetition of the vowel "a". This creates a rhythmic effect in the clause "anaghi aroji ya aroji".

The repetition of the word "aroji" underscores the impossibility of bending the cassava stem and truth as well.

(124) Proverb: *A tuo omimiri rie ogede, mgbirigbo ya ga-ese n'elu*

Literal translation: If you dive into a well and eat banana, the peel will rise to the surface.

Translation: He who steals fire cannot hide the smoke.

i. Field: Truth versus falsehood

ii. Tenor: Unequal; elders/judges/parents excess space to youths/defendants/children with minimal/maximal distance.

iii. Mode: Ancillary, monologic and persuasive. The picture of how banana/plantain peeling floats on water comes to mind.

iv. Meaning: It is impossible to conceal the truth. "Omimiri" in Igbo land is a deep well (shaft sunk into the ground) which is dug near homesteads so that when rain falls, water can gather there in. People fetch this water for domestic uses such as cooking palm fruits, washing plates, etc. The import of culture is very important, in understanding this proverb, in that it may not be obtainable in other cultures. The listener is reminded that truth cannot be hidden no matter how deep it is buried, just as the person who dived into "omimiri" to eat banana cannot prevent the peelings from rising to the surface.

v. Function: Ideational; the positive saying brings to bear the symbolic value of truth in Igbo community as an understanding of the proverb permits the listener to have a better insight into the theme of truth and falsehood.

vi. Aesthetic device: The main aesthetic device in force is irony. It is ironic that the peelings of the banana eaten underneath the water will rise to the surface that is to expose the evil deeds. This portrays the importance of the virtue "truth" as it relates to human actions and inactions.

(53) Proverb: *Ire na eze na-alukwa ogu ma kpeziekwa*

Literal translation: Tongue and teeth also fight fight but that also settle

Translation: The closeness of the tongue and the teeth does not stop them from fighting/quarreling.

(I) Field: Conflict resolution

(II) Tenor: Equal relationship, husband/wife, brother/brother, friend/friend with minimal distance because they interact on familiar basis.

(III) Mode: Ancillary, it helps other activity in the discourse, it is monologic and didactic.

(IV) Meaning: Conflict is an inevitable aspect of human life just as peace is needed to resolve it.

(V) Function: Interpersonal, it instructs people in how they should relate to one another even when there is a conflict – a necessary aspect of human relationship. The proverb draws the listener's attention to what happens in the mouth – the abode of both the tongue and the teeth. When the teeth are chewing something, they may mistakenly bite the tongue, quarrel will ensue but after sometime, the wound is healed and the tongue still tastes the food for the teeth to chew. This is analogous to what happens in human relationship.

(VI) Aesthetic device: Apart from figures of sound – repetition of "kwa" in "alukwa" and "kpeziekwa" which creates musicality and achieve emphatic function, two other aesthetic devices in the proverb are metaphor and imagery. Human relationship is represented by the imagery of the tongue and the teeth as such peace is metaphorically stated as being inevitable in resolving it.

(166) Proverb: *O bu naani onye amaghi ihe e jiri mee enyi na-asi ka ya bupuo ya n'ezi.*

Literal translation: It is only a person not knowing what is used to do friendship that say let him carry it outside the house

Translation: It is only the one who does not know what it has taken to build a friendship that easily volunteers to forcefully throw it outside.

(I) Field: Conflict resolution

(II) Tenor: Equal relationship; husband/wife, brother/brother, friend/friend with minimal distance.

(III) Mode: Constitutive, dialogic, and persuasive as it provides sound reasoning.

(IV) Meaning: To build is always difficult, but to destroy is easy.

(V) Function: Ideational; In the Igbo world view, good friendship ties are highly regarded even at times better than one's kiths and kins. So, it is only the person who does not know what it takes to build such ties that would want it destroyed it. Also, such ties should be kept in the house and not thrown outside. This proverb is mostly used during the settlement of cases between friends, brothers, husbands and wives e.t.c to persuade them to consider what it took them to build such relationships before throwing

them away. Another proverb that aligns to this is "e nwere enyi ka nwanne" meaning "there is a friend that is better than a brother/sister". The proverb serves the function of advocating for mutual love and tolerance in any relationship.

(VI) Aesthetic device: The proverb employs metonymy "enyi" friendship and "ezi" outside. Destruction is associated with the word "outside", while building is represented by the word "friendship". The two words are used metonymically to represent building and destroying a relationship.

(120) Proverb: *O bu etinye nzuzu n'amamaihe o wee zuo oke.*

Literal translation: It is to put foolishness into wisdom that makes it complete.

Translation: One is considered wise if he knows when to give concession and make sacrifice for peace.

(I) Field: Conflict resolution and diplomacy

(II) Tenor: Equal; friend/friend, husband/wife, brother/brother on minimal distance.

(III) Mode: Constitutive, monologic and instructional.

(IV) Meaning: Concession for peace is wisdom and not foolishness.

(V) Function: Ideational, the proverb instructs people on the essential ingredients in peace making, which is concession and sacrifice. It reveals a cultural ideology which holds in Igbo land as represented in the proverb "nkwucha abughi ujo" meaning "concession is not cowardice". So in the settlement of conflicts, diplomacy is used to appeal to the warring parties to make sacrifices for peace. This was indeed demonstrated by the immediate past President of Nigeria Dr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan who

sacrificed his political ambition of retaining the presidency of Nigeria by conceding defeat to his opponent which was a rare practice in Nigeria and Africa as continent so that there would be peace and stability in the country. The moral lesson from the proverb is that people should be read, to make concession for peace and unity to reign in the society and in relationship. The wars being fought in different parts of the world today happen because people are not ready to sacrifice something for peace to reign.

(VI) Aesthetic device: The device present in this proverb is paradox. The addition of foolishness to complete wisdom contradicts the popular belief that two of them have nothing in common. Where as in effect, there is an aspect of foolishness in wisdom. The listener tries to think deeper to figure out the absurdity.

(37) Proverb: *Aka aja aja na-ebute onu mmanu mmanu*

Literal translation: Hand sand sand is cause mouth oil oil.

Translation: The hand soiled with earth gives rise to an oil laden mouth.

(I) Field: Diligence versus laziness

(II) Tenor: Unequal; father/son mother/daughter, elder/youth on minimal distance.

(III) Mode: Constitutive, monologic, persuasive and instructional

(IV) Meaning: There is always a reward for diligence.

(V) Function: Ideational; this positive saying brings to bear the symbolic value of diligence in Igbo community. As a capitalistic nation, every Igbo man or woman believes that there is no food for a lazy person and one should not be afraid of engaging himself gainfully no matter how little it may be

to earn one's living. An understanding of the proverb permits the listener to have a better insight into the theme. This Igbo cultural ideology is a driving force for the quest for exploits in the life of an Igbo person.

(VI) Aesthetic device: Prominent devices used are imagery. "aja aja" – sand sand, and "mmanu mmanu" – oily oily, which create mental pictures but also appeal to the sense of touch and taste, "Aka aja aja" represents diligence while "onu mmanu mmanu" stands for reward and feasting. The repetition of the words "aja" "aja" and "mmanu" "mmanu" in the first and second clause emphasize the dependency of one on the other.

(115) Proverb: *"Nwata kwopu aka, o soro agaranya rie nri".*

Literal translation: If a child washes his hand clean she follows noble men to eat food.

Translation: Diligent behaviour is rewarded with high respect.

(I) Field: Diligence versus laziness

(II) Tenor: Unequal; father/son, elder/youth, titled men/uninitiated with minimal social distance.

(III) Mode: Constitutive; the event is defined by the utterance. It is monologic and the rhetorical mode is expository.

(IV) Meaning: Hard work is always rewarded and respected as or success in life depends on ones diligence and personal achievements.

(V) Functional: Ideational; the proverb purviews the cultural values of self survival and social mobility. Contrary to what obtains in a caste system or an aristocratic social set-up, Igbo people believe in ruthless determination to success. Onyemelukwe (2004:40) affirms this.

This positive proverbial text is used to uphold laudable virtues of intrinsically motivated industry, high achievement, motivation and attainment of great height in the society. A man is judged according to his worth and not the worth of his father. She goes further to add that Igbo society makes allowance for social mobility. Even if an individual is born of wretched parents, he can through hard work become one of the richest, famous and respected people in the land. The proverb advocates the Igbo philosophy that recognises and rewards patriotism and acts of heroism by members of the society. It is also advocating the Igbo ideology of selfhood which is observed by Mbefo (1996) cited in Onyemelukwe (2004) as geared towards being the master of his chosen activity or profession. This manifests in the quest for mastery of one's trade, occupation or talent. In Igbo culture, age was respected, but achievement was revered. The culture is a male hegemony dominated by elderly men; a young man who works very hard, succeeds in life and takes a title can gain automatic admission into the ruling class; that is Igbo traditional gerontocracy or government by patriarchs.

(VI) Aesthetic device: The proverb employs imagery and metaphor. The phrase "ikwupo aka" creates the mental picture of hard work and determination to eat with successful people "ogaranya". Similarly "rie nri" – eat food, associate with or recognised as, is a referent to becoming "ogaranya" that is rich. Affluent, wealthy or successful person in the society are those that have metaphorically 'washed their hands clean enough'.

(163) Proverb: *"O buru onu ka eji aba ogaranya, onye ara ga-akacha umunna ya".*

Literal translation: If it is mouth that is used to a walthy person a mad person would have surpassed his kinsmen.

Translation: A man of many words often achieves very little in life.

(I) Field: Diligence versus laziness.

(II) Tenor: Unequal, parent/child, elder/youth, titled man/uninitiated with minimal distance.

(III) Mode: Ancillary; the utterance is accompanied by non verbal activity of touching the mouth. It is monologic and the rhetorical mode is persuasive.

(IV) Meaning: A man of many words often achieves very little in life.

(V) Function: Interpersonal; the proverb encourages and motivates one to work hard, since mere talking that is not backed up by diligent actions cannot guarantee success in life. It also discourages slothfulness which is usually caused by idle talks. "Onye ara" meaning "a mad person" usually talks to himself or herself all the time. It is a common sight to see him or her talking for hours without stopping. At times, he or she may talk to objects around which are lifeless. Thus, the proverb uses this common behaviour of mad people to state a universal fact of life that success in life depends on diligence and not idle talk. If it were to be the opposite, mad people would have been the richest people in the community because they talk endlessly. The proverb uses a common scenario of everyday life to elucidate an obvious fact.

(VI) Aesthetic device: Prominent aesthetic devices used are metaphor and assonance. Slothfulness or laziness is likened to a mad person's behaviour while success or diligence work is seen as the behaviour of the wealthy person in the society. Assonance i.e. repetition of same vowel is evident as the vowel /o/ is repeated in "onu" – mouth, and "ogaranya" – wealthy person. Similarly /a/ sound is repeated in the words "aba" – to become rich, "ara" – madness and "akacha" – better. While assonance is mainly for sound and rhythmic effect, metaphor is used for rhetorical purposes.

This in effect aids the listener to decode the meaning and function of the proverb.

(110) Proverb: *"Aka weta aka weta onu eju"*

Literal translation: Hand bring hand bring mouth full.

Translation: Diligence or industry drives away lack.

(I) Field: Diligence

(II) Tenor: Unequal, father/child, elder/youth with minimal distance.

(III) Mode: Constitutive, monologic and expository

(IV) Meaning: An industrious person can never lack what to eat.

(V) Function: Ideational; the proverb serves the function of praising the virtue of diligence and industry. This wise saying contains a universal truth. It encourages one to always engage oneself in on anything worthwhile so as to make a living. The proverb therefore reveals a philosophical truth about the Igbo people's ideology which respects diligence and personal achievement. The proverb permeates further what it takes for the mouth to be filled up i.e. literarily put, "this hand bring, that hand bring, the mouth fills up". Note that the bringing comes from different hands. The Igbo cultural ideology about diligence becomes a determinant factor for personal achievement and success. An understanding of the proverb permits the listener to have a better insight into the theme of diligence, and what it takes for one to be industrious in life. The proverb elucidates an important factor in life that diversification is the soul of business. An average Igbo person stops at nothing when it comes to being industrious. Hence he engages himself in different trades for him to make a living.

(VI) Aesthetic Device: The prominent aesthetic device in force this proverb is repetition. The lexical items "aka" (hand) and "weta" (bring) are repeated in different clauses of the proverb. This gives it aesthetic phonological quality and emphasis of the content words for easy understanding interpretation and memorability.

(**58) Proverb**: *"Nwata na-atu egwu ida ada adighi aga ije n'oge"*.

Literal translation: A child that fears fear of falling down does not walk walk on time.

Translation: A person who is afraid of failure does not achieve early success in life.

(I) Field: Diligence

(II) Tenor: Unequal; parent/child, elder/youth with minimal distance.

(III) Mode: Constitutive, monologic and persuasive.

(IV) Meaning: The fear of failure should not deter one from work.

(V) Function: Interpersonal; people who defy all odds for the purpose of survival usually make it in life. Life is full of ups and downs, rising and falling, etc; these are also necessary ingredients for survival. A wise saying that corroborates this proverb in English is "winners never quit and quitters never win". A toddler, who is learning to stand and walk, falls at will before smooth walking and even running can be achieved. Consequently, a child who is afraid to try his\her legs on the ground or who enjoys being carried about by his\her mother/siblings is always delayed in walking. The proverbial text serves the function of educating and instructing the young ones on the virtues of making diligent efforts in life so as to succeed. The proverb purviews the Igbo people's ideology that

wealth, success and achievement in life are not restricted to grey haired men and women. That is why there are titles given to young men who achieve success and greatness very early in life; such as: "aku nwata na ekwu" - wealth of a child speaks or makes way for him, "ozo nta" – the small ozo title. The proverb encourages people not to be afraid of embarking on any venture because it is in trial and error that one becomes an expert at something. Other proverbs that discourage fear and encourage enterprise are: "anaghi aso mgbagbu ghara iga-ogu" – the fear of death does not deter a soldier from going to war, "agaghi eji na mmadu dabara n'Imo kwusi inu Imo" – one cannot stop drinking water from Imo river simply because someone drown in it.

(VI) Aesthetic device: The main aesthetic devices used are metaphor and assonance, the vowel /a/ is repeated in the words, 'atu-egwu'-fear, 'aga'-to walk, 'ada'-fall, 'adighi'-not. The metaphorical use of language confers succinctness on the proverb while the figures of sound, assonance give it a phonic device; create rhythm, cohesion and lexical linkages.

(106) Proverb: *"Ngwere si n'elu daa, gbanahu ndi no n'ala eche ya si na, onye ajaghi ya ike ya ajaa onwe ya".*

Literal translation: The lizard that jumped down and escaped from people on the land waiting to it said 'if person praise it not it will praise itself'.

Translation: A courageous effort deserves a token of praise.

(I) Field: The proverb is uttered under the field of praise versus lampoon.

(II) Tenor: Equal/unequal relationship, youth/elder, friend/friend, husband/wife with minimal distance.

(III) Mode: Ancillary; It helps other activities in the discourse. The picture of a lizard that jumped down from a tree and nods its head quickly comes to mind on why praise and encouragement should be given to an achiever. It is dialogic as the interlocutors can utter other proverbs to reinforce the theme in the discourse event. The rhetorical mode is persuasive in that sound reasoning is evoked.

(IV) Meaning: Courageous efforts and enterprise should be praised or commended.

(V) Function: Interpersonal; This Weller (proverb)b serves the function of praising the virtue of boldness in the life of an individual. It contains the truth in Igbo society that has high respect for bold achievements it also emphasizes the need for one to appreciate ones effort instead of waiting for the approval of others. A person that achieves a lot of success in his/her career can utter the proverb to sensitize his/her listeners who may not have recognised that. The exemplary propensity for industry is geared towards the attainment of success and progress in the society. Onyemelukwe (2004:7) posits that the ideology of appreciation of self effort and industry enables the individual to have good self-esteem, assert his personality and affirm his industry. It is the basis for intrinsic motivation.

(VI) Aesthetic Device: Metonymy abounds in the proverb. The action of the lizard in nodding its head for self appraisal represents a person who praises himself/herself for his/her personal achievements.

(200) Proverb: *"Mberede ka eji ama dike"*

Literal translation: Sudden to use know (the) strong.

Translation: A strongman is known by his ability to withstand a sudden occurrence.

(I) Field: Praise versus lampoon.

(II) Mode: Constitutive, dialogic and expository

(III) Tenor: Unequal, elder/youth, parents/children, with minimal social distance.

(IV) Meaning: Strength is defined by one's ability to withstand sudden occurrence (good/bad) misfortune.

(V) Function: Ideational; the import of this proverb is to condole, sympathise or rejoice with someone over some ill-luck or good luck. In the Igbo world view, it is believed that the gods have a hand in the affairs of men and in destinies the proverb. It reveals a cultural philosophy that there is hope of survival no matter what has happened. The elders may also quote this proverb to induce strength into the minds of the youths, especially when they are faced with difficult challenging moments. The Nigerian-Biafran civil that lasted for these and half years war was a case in point. The Igbo nation never planned to go to war with the Nigerian forces, but when it because evident, they had no option than to face it squarely and damn the consequences. A variant form of the proverb says "mberede nyiri dike" that is sudden misfortune overpowers a strong man. But when this is uttered, an elder/someone who is versed in the art of proverbs will immediately add as a sort of reminder that "mberede ka eji ama dike". Looking at the two proverbs, one would simply be saying "even though sudden misfortune overpowers or weighs a strong man down, his ability to withstand it makes him a great or strong man. This is because greatness

connotes both good and bad. It is also used to boost a person's morale to face any impending challenge.

(VI) Aesthetic device: The main aesthetic device is metaphor. An attribute of a strong man is metaphorically condensed in the word "mberede"-sudden misfortune.

(159) Proverb: *"Ma ndi gbara oso ma ndi luru ogu ha niile bu agha".*

Literal translation: Both those who ran race and those who fought are all war.

Translation: Everybody's contribution counts in the development of the community.

(I) Field: The situational use is praise.

(II) Tenor: Unequal, elder/youth, father/son with minimal distance.

(III) Mode: Constitutive, monologic and expository.

(IV) Meaning: Everybody's contribution counts whenever any success is made in any venture.

(V) Function: Interpersonal. It reveals a cultural philosophy which recognizes the contribution of everybody in the community, no matter how small it may be. Hence, the saying that, "all fingers are not equal". The proverb became popular after the Nigeria/Biafran Ibid war (1967-1970). During the war, some people fought as soldiers while others only ran from one place to the other in search of safety and food. At the end of the war, both those who fought and those who ran were seen discussing about the war. For the stories about the war to be complete then, the accounts of these two groups of people are required. The proverb is relevant in the Nigerian situation where some people feel that the min resources of the nation are

located in their geographical space and as such they must control its usage or where some feel that they have the numerical strength as such they will determine the political landscape of the country. This proverb reminds such people that no matter what you have ahead of others Nigerian cannot function well without the others.

(VI) Aesthetic device: Metaphor is employed in this proverb. War is described as those who fought and those who ran. Repetition is also in force; 'ma ndi'-both those is repeated in the first and second clauses of the sentence to create emphasis and sound technique.

(189) Proverb: *"Onye kwe, chi ya ekwe"*

Literal translation: If person say yes, his personal god says yes also.

Translation: Self belief/determination is inevitable as one aspire to achieve set goals.

(I) Field: Praise

(II) Tenor: Equal/unequal, elder/youth, father/son, brother/brother, friend/friend with minimal distance.

(III) Mode: Constitutive, monologic and expository

(IV) Meaning: Success starts with self determination,

(V) Function: Ideational; It purviews the culture and belief that the destinies of people are tied to their 'chi' i.e personal gods which protect, defend and provide for them. The fortune or misfortune that happens to a person is therefore attributed to his personal god Opata, (1998). However, when one is determined to succeed, the 'chi' will have no choice than to agree with him/her. In the Igbo cosmology, the gods align with humans in their day-to-day existence. So, whatever happens to an individual is designed by the

gods. This proverb however states the opposite; that it is not the gods, but the individual who determines what happens to him/her. This explains the ruthless determination to succeed that is seen in the life of an average Igbo man or woman Ezirim, (2001). The proverb also connotes an attribute of hope that keeps a person going even in difficulties.

(VI) Aesthetic device: Metaphor and assonance abound in this proverb. 'onye', 'kwe' and 'ekwe' that is (person, says, yes). The vowel /e/ is repeated in the three words to achieve observable phonic quality that creates cohesion. The gods saying yes is metaphorically condensed in the person's determination.

(99) Proverb: *"O bu naani udele kara aka na-amapuwu ozu afo".*

Literal translation: It is only a strong vulture strong that can pierce the stomach/belly of a corpse.

Translation: Difficult tasks are better handled by an experienced and skilled person.

(I) Field: Praising someone that has attained a feat.

(II) Tenor: Unequal: elder/youth, with minimal distance.

(III) Mode: Constitutive; the proverb portrays the difficult task the person has undertaken. It is monologic and expository in nature.

(IV) Meaning: A difficult task has been carried out successfully by an experienced or skilled person and he/she deserved to be praised.

(V) Function: Ideational; the proverb explain that credit should be given to someone who has done something great. It gives self assurance of superiority on the person who has carried out such task. It recognizes the fact that strength and boldness should be celebrated. In Igbo land and

elsewhere, the vulture is a bird of prey that feeds on the carcass of dead animals and humans. As a result of this, people abhor it. The vulture that can pierce the stomach/belly of a dead person must therefore be strong bold and courageous. This analogy explains why the proverb is quoted to praise someone that has undertaken a herculean task.

(VI) Aesthetic Device: Prominent aesthetic devices in force are imagery (i.e use of words or phrases that appeal to the listener's/reader's senses and imagination such that they create mental pictures). The words 'udele'-vulture, 'ozu'-corpse and 'afo'-stomach appeal to the senses of sight. These pictures create clarity and vividness of thought. Assonance, (the partial or half rhyme in the same vowel sounds is also present). The words 'kara-aka'-strong 'na-amapuwu'-could pierce, and 'afo'-stomach/belly create rhythm, cohesion and lexical linkages that aid the understanding of the meaning and interpretation of the proverb.

(43) Proverb: *"A nyakoo amiri onu o gbaa ufufu"*

Literal translation: If urinate urine on one spot, it brings much foam

Translation: When people do things in unison, it brings overwhelming results (unity is strength).

(I) Field: The situational use is unity.

(II) Tenor: Equal; friend/friend, husband/wife, brother/brother with minimal distance.

(III) Mode: Constitutive, monologic, instructional and expository.

(IV) Meaning: Unity brings progress and development.

(V) Function: Ideational; the proverb provides instruction by explaining that progress and development flourish when there is unity and understanding.

It succinctly illustrates this through the act of urinating at a spot by many people. When compared to what happens when one person urinates, the former foams higher than the latter. This is metaphorically the bedrock on which the Nigerian nation is designed; thus, unity, peace and progress. The proverb is relevant today in addressing the security, tribal, and religious biases that tend to disintegrate the country. The proverb re-echoes this universal truth that there can be no meaningful progress and development without unity.

(VI) Aesthetic device: The main aesthetic device in force is metaphor; the implicit or indirect comparison of one thing with another through a descriptive application of qualities from one thing to another. Just as the urine of many people foams higher when done in a spot, progress is also achieved when there is unity.

(47) Proverb: *"Aka nri kwoo aka ekpe, aka ekpe akwoo aka nri ha abuo adi ocha".*

Literal translation: Hand food wash hand left hand left wash hand food, two of them will become clean.

Translation: mutual cooperation and understanding bring unity and progress in human relationship.

(I) Field: Unity.

(II) Tenor: Equal; friend/friend, husband/wife, elder/elder, brother/brother with minimal social distance.

(III) Mode: Constitutive, dialogic, instructional and expository.

(IV) Meaning: When people unite in helping one another, faster development and progress is achieved.

(V) Function: Interpersonal; the proverb teaches good behaviour, how one needs to relate with people around him/her so that progress can be achieved. It illustrates the universal truth that "no man is an island" – the interdependency of human beings on one another. In the traditional Igbo society, people eat food mostly 'fufu' with two hands. The right hand is used to cut the fufu while it is moulded on the left hand before dipping it into the soup to swallow. After the meal, both hands will be washed and each of them is expected to rub the other for proper cleansing to be achieved. Washing each hand separately wastes time and will not guarantee proper washing. Thus, this idea is transferred to the relationship that exists between people at any level. The proverb succinctly analyses the logic of interpersonal relationship and reciprocity in the attainment of desired progress and development. It is akin to the English proverb, 'one good turn deserves another'.

(VI) Aesthetic Device: The aesthetic elements employed are lexical repetition and rhythm. The words 'aka nri' (right hand) and 'aka ekpe' (left hand) are repeated to achieve prosodic and rhythmic effect. The repetition creates rhythmic effect which not only attracts the listener, but pushes him/her to plunge into action so as to decipher the meaning of the proverbs and even make contributions by citing other proverbs that are relevant to the theme or situation, such as "o bu mgbasa mere agwo agwo enweghi umunne" meaning it is because of disunity and separatism that the snake does not have relations while another person may add a proverb to authenticate it saying if all snakes lived together in one place, who could attack them? But they live every one unto himself and fall easy prey to man.

(93) Proverb: *"Nnunu ogologo onu anaghi atupu ihe di ya n'isi".*

Literal translation: A bird with long beak does not peck out something on its head

Translation: We are all inter-dependent (No man is an island)

(I) Field: Unity versus disunity

(II) Tenor: Equal/unequal, friend/friend, brother/brother, elder/child etc with minimal distance.

(III) Mode: Constitutive, monologic, and expository.

(IV) Meaning: We need one another for survival.

(V) Functional: Ideational; the proverb explains a philosophical truth about human relationship and survival. It projects this teaching, through the imagery of the bird with a long beak. In the Igbo cultural setting, the beak of the bird depicts protection and provision for the animal. As such, one would expect the bird with a long beak not to lack anything unlike the one with a short beak that is limited. Since human beings depend on one another for survival, the bird with a long beak cannot peck out something that is on its head no matter how hard it tries. This means that it still needs the help of another bird to do just that. The proverb is relevant in the present day Nigeria where different sections of the country are clamouring for resource control. The fact is that no section of the country can exist solely on the resource they claimed they have in their area. The south with its oil needs the grains of the north for survival.

(VI) Aesthetic Device: The main aesthetic elements employed are assonance. The vowel /o/ is repeated in 'ogologo' (long) and 'onu' (mouth) while the vowel /a/ is repeated in 'anaghi' (does not) and 'atupu' (peck out).

Likewise the vowel /i/ is repeated in 'ihe' (thing) and 'isi' (head). These create pneumonic quality which enhances sound patterning and cohesion. Imagery or the creation of mental picture is achieved through 'ogologo onu' (long beak) which depicts protection and provision.

(131) Proverb: *"egbe bere ugo bere nke si ibe ya ebele nku akwala ya kama ya zi ibe ya ebe o ga ebe".*

Literal translation: Kite perch eagle perch anyone say the other should not perch let the wings not break instead let it show that one where to perch

Translation: Live and let live brings love and unity.

(I) Field: Unity versus disunity

(II) Tenor: Equal/unequal, brother/brother, friend/friend, uncle/nephew on minimal distance.

(III) Mode: Constitutive, dialogic and didactic.

(IV) Meaning: Live and let live.

(V) Function: Interpersonal; the proverb functions to teach moral lessons on the need for peaceful co-existence and tolerance. It analyses an aspect of interpersonal relationship in the society. Specifically, the proverb discourages the practice whereby the rich or the influential in the society trample upon the poor and the vulnerable ones. The kite/hawk and the eagle should learn to perch on the same branch peacefully.

(VI) Aesthetic Device: The aesthetic devices are lexical repetition 'bere' 'bere' i.e perch, assonance where the /e/ sound is repeated in, 'egbe', 'ebele', 'ebe', 'ebere' i.e (kite, not perch, where, perched). There is alliteration also where the syllabic nasal /n/ is repeated in 'nke'-one, and 'nku'-

feather. These create semantic and aesthetic effects, which help interpretation and understanding of the proverb.

(136) Proverb: *"Oge adighi eche mmadu, mmadu na-eche oge".*

Literal translation: Time does not wait person, person is wait time

Translation: Time waits for no one.

(I) Field: Time management

(II) Tenor: Unequal, parent/child, elder/youth with minimal distance.

(III) Mode: Constitutive, monologic and instructional.

(IV) Meaning: Time waits for no one.

(V) Function: Interpersonal; the proverb counsels against laxity as it also encourages proper time management. In a capitalist society like the Igbo Nwadike, (2009) where money counts a lot, proper time management is always emphasized when advising youths or children who want to embark on any project. The person is reminded to be wary of time wastage using the tick of the clock.

(VI) Aesthetic Device: The aesthetic devices in force are lexical repetition and personification. The words 'oge'-time, 'eche'-waits, and 'mmadu'-person are repeated. The lexical repetitions in the first and second clauses of the proverb serve to give the proverb a mnemonic quality and its underlining memorability and musicality. Time is also personified as one who cannot wait for another person and this is used to create a rhetorical effect.

(32) Proverb: *"E me ngwa ngwa e meghara odachi".*

Literal translation: If done fastly fastly it prevents misfortune

Translation: A stitch in time saves nine.

(I) Field: Time management

(II) Tenor: Unequal; elder/youth, parent/child with minimal distance.

(III) Mode: Constitutive, dialogic and instructional.

(IV) Meaning: A stitch in time saves nine.

(V) Function: Ideational; to instruct one on the need to be punctual in anything one is engaged in, because punctuality is the soul of business. It discourages procrastination and lateness which are an enemies of time.

(VI) Aesthetic Device: There is a lexical repetition where 'ngwa'-quick is repeated and alliteration in the repetition of the consonant /m/ in'mee'-done, and 'meghara'-avoids. They create emphasis and phonological foregrounding.

(185)Proverb: *"ka abia, ka abia mere awo epughi odu".*

Literal translation: Later later made the toad not to grow tail

Translation: Procrastination is dangerous.

(I) Field: Time management

(II) Tenor: Unequal; father/son, elder/youth, with minimal distance.

(III) Mode: Constitutive, monologic and didactic.

(IV) Meaning: Procrastination is dangerous.

(V) Function: Ideational; it reiterates or buttresses what happens to a person that procrastinates. In the Igbo cosmology, there is an anecdote that when God was fixing tails to different animals, the toad was not always ready. Whenever God calls it to come for its tail, it will say 'later'. After sometime, God stopped the giving of tails and started giving other parts. Till today, the toad was not given a tail. This proverb reminds people who are fond of procrastinating events, that what happened to the toad may as well happen to them.

(VI) Aesthetic Device: There is lexical repetition of the phrase 'ka abia'-later. There is also a rhythmic effect created by the vowel /o/ in the words 'awo'-toad and 'odu'-tail. These create emphasis, phonological foregrounding and memorability of the proverb.

(88) Proverb: *"O bu onye a huru isi ya ka na-ekenye mmanya ngwo".*

Literal translation: It is the person whose head is seen that collects the raffia wine

Translation: First come first served.

(I) Field: Proper time management (punctuality).

(II) Tenor: Equal/unequal, elder/elder, friend/friend, elder/youth, father/son with minimal social distance.

(III) Mode: Constitutive, dialogic and persuasive.

(IV) Meaning: First come, first served (the early bird catches the worm).

(V) Function: Ideational; it encourages one to be punctual to activities as well as discourages lateness and laxity. In the Igbo socio-cultural society, palm wine is regularly shared and drank together at the village square after the day's activities. It serves as a relaxation joint for most men. The palm wine is distributed to only those present as at the time the distribution was made. None is kept for those absent as the palm wines are freely donated by the tappers. Similarly, those who come to the square on time, stand the chance of drinking the best palm wine. The import of this proverb is usually felt when one remembers what happens to someone who is late or absent at the village square, during the distribution it then means that the person won't get any palm wine to drink that day. The only option for

chronic drinkers is to buy with their money what they could have been given for free.

(VI) Aesthetic Device: There is the use of metaphor in 'onye a huru isi ya' i.e (first come) and 'a na-ekenye...' i.e (first serve). There is also paradox in the proverb. All this create rhetorical effect, musicality and balance.

(80) Proverb: *"Onye bido n'ututu tutuwa tupu chi ejie nkata ya eju"*

Literal translation: If one start in the morning to pick something, before night falls his basket will full

Translation: Clumsy birds have need for early flight.

(I) Field: Time management

(II) Tenor: Unequal, parent/child, elder/youth, with minimal distance.

(III) Mode: Constitutive, monologic and expository

(IV) Meaning: Clumsy birds have need for early flight

(V) Function: Ideational; it emphasizes the need for one to be conscious of one's peculiar nature when it comes to preparation for anything bearing in mind the time at ones disposal. Those that are naturally clumsy slow at work should start on time so that they will catch up with others who are fast. In the Igbo traditional society, people go to the forest to pick different fruits like 'udara'-wild apple, 'achi'-roots for soup, 'ugba'-oil bean, etc. It is therefore expected that people who are slow at sighting and picking these fruits should wake up on time and go to the forest far ahead of those that are fast, and quick. The idea of this proverb is for one not to be left behind in the scheme of things, no matter the odds against the person.

(VI) Aesthetic Device: Prominent aesthetic devices in force are ellipsis, there is an omission after 'tutuwa'. This shows that what is picked is diverse so,

the speaker is at liberty to select the appropriate word to fix in there. There is also assonance in 'ututu', 'tutuwa' and 'tupu' i.e morning, picking and before. The repetition of the /u/ sound in those words makes the proverb euphonious. The repetition of the consonant /t/ in 'tutuwa' and 'tupu' also create an alliterative effect. Thus, phonological foregrounding helps to create sense or meaning.

(15) Proverb: *"Ukpara okpoko gburu nti chiri ya".*

Literal translation: Insect bird (okpoko) kill ear block it

Translation: An insect that is killed by okpoko (bird) is deaf

(I) Field: The proverb is uttered under the field of obedience/disobedience.

(II) Tenor: Unequal relationship; father/son, elder/youth with minimal distance.

(III) Mode: Ancillary: The proverb is accompanied by non verbal activity of drawing the ear which is commonly used as a means of warning someone to abstain from danger in Igbo culture. It is monologic as the speaker emphasizes more on the proverb. The proverb instructs one to be obedient while elaborating the consequences of disobedience.

(IV) Meaning: Stubbornness/disobedience leads to ruin, danger or even death; as such should be eschewed.

(V) Function: Ideational; the proverb serves to educate and instruct people through a picture of reality using the resource of the culture. It warns one of an impending danger that can consume the person a result of disobedience. In Igbo land, 'ukpara' means an insect or fly while 'okpoko' is the name of a wild bird that flies about in the bush making loud sound/noise. This sound serves as a warning note to insects around which

'okpoko' feed on. It then means that, any insect that hears the noise/sound of okpoko should hide itself. Failure to do this, will result in 'okpoko' eating it up, hence, the proverb; the English rendition of it will be 'to before warned is to before armed'. Another variant of the proverb is 'onye ugbo gburu nti chiri ya' meaning, anyone killed by a train is hard of hearing. This is commonly used by people living along rail tracks. The loud noise/sound of the train is designed to warn people to keep off when a train is approaching. Thus anyone who hears this sound/noise and refuses to leave the track will be smashed by the train.

(VI) Aesthetic device: The main devices employed in this proverb are metaphor and imagery. The end of a disobedient person is metaphorically captured in the action of 'okpoko', the wild bird (death or misfortune). Imagery is also in force. 'ukpara'-insect represents a disobedient person while 'okpoko'-wild bird represents the consequence of disobedience.

(154) Proverb: *"Nwata bulie nna ya elu ogodo awuchie ya anya".*

Literal translation: Ifa child carries father up his cloth, will cover his eye

Translation: A person who disregards his father is always overtaken by misfortune.

(I) Field: Obedience versus disobedience.

(II) Tenor: Unequal; father/son, elder/youth with minimal social distance

(III) Mode: Constitutive, monologic and instructional

(IV) Meaning: A child who disregards his father's advice is always overtaken by misfortune.

(V) Function: Ideational; the perverb educates and instructs children or youths to obey their parents or elders. It places high premium on respect for

parents and elders. Disrespect or disobedience for one's parents leads to a metaphorical blindness known as doom or misfortune. In Igbo culture and other African cultures, it is a taboo for a child to beat up his/her parents or even lifts them up in contempt. Such a child will suffer great misfortunes in life, hence the father's scrotum blind folding him as contained literally in the proverb. Disobedience to parents is therefore seen as a grave offence in Igbo ideology as it attracts curses rather than blessings.

(VI) Aesthetic device: Prominent aesthetic device in force in this proverb is allusion. The proverb is a biblical allusion from St. Luke's gospel, chapter 15:11-18. It alludes to the parable of the prodigal son who disregarded his father's advice and was overtaken by misfortune and doom. The allusion achieves brevity as meaning is associated with another context and transferred to the present theme.

(73) Proverb: *"O buru na ngwere sobe nkakwu o buru anu isi"*

Literal translation: If a lizard follows the company of a shrew, it becomes a smelly animal

Translation: Bad Company corrupts good morals.

(I) Field: Obedience versus disobedience

(II) Tenor: Unequal, parent/child, elder/youth with minimal social distance

(III) Mode: Constitutive, monologic and didactic

(IV) Meaning: Bad Company corrupts good morals

(V) Function: Ideational; in the Igbo world view, the two animals mentioned in the proverb symbolized two different characters, people or behaviours. They also illustrate obedience act/disobedience act or good and bad "nkakwu". The lizard-'ngwere' is a reptile, lays eggs and does not have

body odour while the shrew rat or mole is a mammal known for its awful odour. It is assumed that any animal that keeps company with the shrew rat will start smelling because anywhere the mole enters, the odour is felt immediately. In the same vein, when an obedient child starts keeping company with a disobedient child, he/she is bound to emulate the bad habits. Hence parents and elders use the proverb to advice obedient children not to allow their good morals to be corrupted by any bad company they may wish to keep.

(VI) Aesthetic device: The two aesthetic devices employed in the proverb are repetition and contrast. The words 'o buru' is conditional i.e 'if' it is repeated in the two clauses of the proverb as a resource of interpersonal involvement. It is used for emphasis and phonological foregrounding. The contrast in the two animals emphasizes unlike characters to show their opposites and this is a fact that is glaring.

(10) Proverb: *"Chi kere nwa agu agaghi ekwe ka o taa ahihia"*

Literal translation: The God that made young tiger will not allow it to eat grass.

Translation: Suffering can hardly crush or overwhelm anyone who enjoys the favour of providence.

(I) Field: Hope versus despair.

(II) Tenor: Equal; friend/friend, brother/brother with minimal social distance

(III) Mode: Constitutive, dialogic and persuasive

(IV) Meaning: Suffering can hardly crush and one who enjoys the favour of providence.

(V) Function: Ideational; the picture of reality is illustrated using the animal mentioned in the proverb. 'Nwa agu'-tiger's cub, even though young, is a carnivorous animal (as dangerous as the mother) that feeds on flesh and not on leaves. The proverb rekindles this hope in the cub that its creator knows its peculiarities and as such will not abandon it in its moment of limitation. The proverb is relevant today as it is used to encourage our one facing difficulties and challenges in life not to lose hope, because God, his creator knows about his situation and will something to help soon.

(VI) Aesthetic device: The devices present in the proverb are assonance and metonymy. The /a/ sound is repeated in 'agu'-tiger, 'agaghi'-will not and 'ahihia'-grass. These create rhythm and cohesion in the proverb. Suffering is metonymically represented by the word 'ahihia'-grass. The device serves to underscore it as a non-literal expression meant to embellish speech.

(140) Proverb: *"Ma nwaanyi amughi nwa ya akpara ahu oma ya n'aka"*

Literal translation: If a woman does not have a child, (barren) let her have her good body in her hand.

Translation: There is always a consolation to fall back on.

(I) Field: Hope versus despair

(II) Tenor: Unequal; mother/daughter, elder/youth on minimal distance

(III) Mode: Constitutive, monologic and expository

(IV) Meaning: There is always a consolation to fall back on in any unpleasant situation.

(V) Function: Ideational; it explains a popular belief in Igbo land that barren women supposed to look healthier and happier because they are free from

the troubles associated with child birth and raising up children. So, even in the midst of their predicament (barrenness), there is something to fall back on (consolation of good health). Specifically, it is used to encourage people facing hopeless/difficult situations in life to know that there is still something in them/life that they should be grateful for. It is also used to console oneself in the event of any misfortune falling on the person.

(VI) Aesthetic device: The devices in force in this proverb are assonance, alliteration and irony. There is repetition of the consonant /nw/ in 'nwaanyi'-woman, and 'nwa'-child. The vowel /a/ is also repeated in 'amughi'-barren, 'akparaa'-posses, and 'ahu'-body. All these are designed to have special effects on the hearers so as to draw attention to the concepts illustrated-barrenness and consolation/hope. It is ironical in that barrenness which is supposed to evoke a feeling of sadness is seen as a consolation for good health.

(69) Proverb: *"Iyi a riri enyi, gini ka mbe ga-eme?"*

Literal translation: This river that ate elephant, what can a tortoise do?

Translation: How can a tortoise gear up beside a river where an elephant was drowned?

(I) Field: Hope versus despair

(II) Tenor: Equal; brother/brother, friend/friend with minimal distance.

(III) Mode: Constitutive, dialogic and expository.

(IV) Meaning: It is impossible for a weak man to gear up before a task that overwhelmed a strong man.

(V) Function: Ideational; the proverb explains a popular belief about life where strength is viewed as a necessary tool for surmounting difficulties a

situation where strength is characterized by size and attributes. The elephant 'enyi' in Igbo land and in most cultures is known for its gigantic size and strength. It symbolizes strength in most motifs, logos etc. The tortoise 'mbe' on the other hand is small in size and is usually seen as a weak and slow animal. The context of the proverb presents someone who is facing a hopeless situation because of the loss of his/her main source of living. It could be a fire disaster, flood, etc where billionaires and millionaires lost their valuables too and were overwhelmed by their losses. A poor man who was also affected in the same circumstance sees his condition as hopeless. The feeling of despair is brought out by the comparison using two animals, elephant and tortoise which have nothing in common when it comes to strength. It presents succinctly a fact of life based on two animals or group of people.

(VI) Aesthetic device: Apart from the hyperbolic nature of the proverb, two aesthetic devices present are personification and rhetorical question. 'Iyi'- river is given a human attribute of eating an elephant while the question asked by the proverb is rhetorical. These serve as forcible ways of stating a fact. The devices in the proverb therefore emphasize the fact through humour, and appeal to the reader/listener emotionally.

(175) Proverb: *"Aguu nwere olile anya anaghi egbu mmadu".*

Literal translation: Hunger that has hope eye does not kill a person.

Translation: Hope for the future lessens the problems of the moment.

(I) Field: Hope versus despair.

(II) Tenor: Unequal; parent/child, elder/youth with minimal distance.

(III) Mode: Constitutive, monologic and didactic. It teaches patience and endurance.

(IV) Meaning: Where there is a way, there is a will. The hope of a bright future lessens someone's present predicament.

(V) Function: Interpersonal; the proverb gives an assurance that no situation is permanent in people's lives. It extols the virtue of patience, and endurance with the hope that things will improve later. This hope keeps one going even in the face of difficulties and challenges. The proverb is relevant in our society today bearing in mind the difficulties the nation is facing as a result of corruption, insurgency scourge, kidnapping, robbery, etc that have bedeviled our society. The proverb is highly philosophical as it is a study and examination of life and its challenges.

(VI) Aesthetic device: Prominent devices in the proverb are metaphor, assonance and personification. Hunger-'aguu' is metaphorically presented as an animate object while hope, a human attribute is ascribed to it. The metaphorical hunger ravaging the nation is poverty, corruption, unemployment, etc. Assonance is clearly seen in the repetition of the vowel /a/ in 'aguu'-hunger, 'anya'-eye and 'anaghi'-will not. These create sound or rhythmic effect, cohesion and lexical linkages.

(146) Proverb: *"Eke na ihe o loro a togboorrola"*

Literal translation: Python and the thing it swallowed now lie helpless.

Translation: This is a helpless and hopeless situation.

(I) Field: Hope versus despair.

(II) Tenor: Unequal; parent/child, elder/youth with minimal social distance.

(III) Mode: Constitutive, monologic, persuasive and instructional.

(IV) Meaning: A hopeless and helpless situation in which nothing can be done to save the victim.

(V) Function: Ideational; a picture of reality is conveyed using the helpless python and its victim. The proverb presents a picture in which the subject and the object are helpless. The end result may be death or a disastrous situation. The python is a big, dreaded reptile that swallows its victims without mercy. The hope of survival of an animal like goat, rat, etc or a human being swallowed by a python is futile. The python on its own will be helpless, unable to run away until the prey digests in its abdomen. Hence, the hopeless situation illustrated by uttering this proverb evokes pity, shedding of tears, etc as it depicts that all hope is lost.

(VI) Aesthetic device: Prominent aesthetic devices in the proverb are imagery and assonance. 'Eke'-python, portrays the image of wealth and strength; a person who has enormous wealth and strength is now helpless as no one can come to his/her aid. The repetition of the vowels /o/ in 'o'-it, 'loro'-swallowed and 'togboorola'-lie helpless create musicality. The successive appearance and arrangement of the vowel in those words create a phonic device and rhythmic effect, which facilitates interpretation.

(5) Proverb: *"okwa e nyere onye efurefu ka a na-enye onye ume ngwu"*

Literal translation: The address given to a stupid person is also given to person that is idle.

Translation: An idle person is addressed the same way as a stupid person.

(I) Field: Laziness

(II) Tenor: Unequal; parent/child, elder/youth with minimal social distance.

(III) Mode: Constitutive, monologic, instructional and didactic.

(IV) Meaning: Laziness is related to stupidity.

(V) Function: Ideational; the proverb sets to instruct a person on the implication of laziness. In Igbo traditional society, a stupid person is regarded as "ofeke" meaning worthless because he/she does not make any meaningful contribution to the growth of the society. A lazy person is also likened to such, so the two are seen as the same. Since people detest being addressed as such, the proverb is normally used when discouraging someone from being lazy.

(VI) Aesthetic device: Prominent devices in force are metaphor and assonance. There is the rhyming of the vowels /o/ and /e/ in the words 'okwa'-address, 'e'-it, 'onye'-person, 'efurefu'-stupid and 'enye'-to give. The repetition of the similar vowel sound creates expressive effects through sound patterning. It is metaphorical also to see laziness as stupidity. The simile variant of it would be: 'laziness is like stupidity.

(20) Proverb: *"Ojije na olila adighi ekwe okporo uzo taa ahu"*

Literal translation: Going and coming does not allow pathway slim body.

Translation: One who is diligent does not lack what to eat.

(I) Field: Diligence

(II) Tenor: Unequal/equal, parents/child, elder/youth, friend/friend, brother/brother on minimal distance.

(III) Mode: Constituive, dialogic, persuasive and expository.

(IV) Meaning: A diligent person does not lack what to eat.

(V) Function: Ideational; the saying explains a fundamental principle in Igbo ideology using the word 'okporo uzo'-pathway. In Igbo land, as in most African settlements, there are pathways that people pass when going to the

farms, markets, streams etc. Once these pathways are created, they will continue to widen because people use them frequently, unlike the bush paths that are used once in a while which can be easily closed up by weeds. The import of this proverb is in comparing what happens to a busy pathway with a hard-working person. The pathway continues to widen and not over grown by weeds, leading to its sliming down. So also a diligent person will not lack what to eat. In essence, hard-work never kills anyone.

(VI) Aesthetic device: Prominent devices in force are assonance and personification. The repetition of the vowels /o/ and /a/ in 'ojije'-coming, 'olila'-going, 'okporo'-pathway, 'adighi'-will not, 'ahu'-body create a rhythmic effect which leads to musicality and memorability of the proverb. Pathway is given an animate attribute of not sliming down.

(150) Proverb: *"Okuku siri aboo aboo erie erie".*

Literal translation: Fowl said it, one cultivates, one will eat.

Translation: The fowl said that, "if one cultivates, he finds something to eat".

(I) Field: Diligence

(II) Tenor: Unequal; parent/child, elder/youth on minimal social distance.

(III) Mode: Constitutive, monologic and expository.

(IV) Meaning: One can only boast with what he/she has

(V) Function: Ideational; this welter proverb explains a simple fact of life using the activity of a fowl. In Igbo land and in most African cultures, the local hen goes about scratching the ground or refuse heaps to look for worms, insects, pebbles or grains for food. This activity is done always because that is her only means of survival. Failure to scratch the ground means hunger for the hen and probably her chicks. The comparison using

the hen represents what an average human being should be doing to make ends meet. People are called upon to emulate the hen in their struggle for survival, and thus work hard.

(VI) Aesthetic device: The aesthetic device in force is repetition. The content words 'aboo'-scratch and 'erie'-eat are repeated. This creates a phonological and rhythmic effect on the hearers for emphasis, memorability and understanding.

(180) Proverb: "Ngana kpuchie ute, aguu ekpughee ya"

Literal translation: Pride cover mat hunger uncovers it.

Translation: If laziness as a result of Pride stops one from working, hunger will surely expose the person.

(I) Field: Laziness

(II) Tenor: Unequal; parent/child, elder/youth on minimal social distance.

(III) Mode: Constitutive, monologic and expository

(IV) Meaning: Laziness exposes one to ridicule.

(V) Function: Ideational; the proverb illustrates an aspect of laziness which is pride. This is pictured using hunger and the local mat-'ute'. While laziness may stop/cover someone from working hard to earn a living, hunger comes to uncover the mat. What is interesting in the proverb is how the uncovering is done (shamefully). Thus, the proverb is used to discourage laziness in Igbo society, more so that it is an egalitarian one.

(VI) Aesthetic device: Prominent aesthetic devices employed in the proverb are contrast and personification. What laziness-'ume ngwu' does to a lazy person constrasts with what hunger does. This contrast is captured using

'kpuchie'-cover and 'ekpughee'-uncover. 'Laziness' and 'hunger' are also given animate quality of covering and uncovering.

(64) Proverb: *"A dighi ano n'ulo ebute ozu odum"*

Literal translation: Nobody stays at home pick the carcass of a lion.

Translation: A lazy person rarely actualizes his life's ambition.

(I) Field: Diligence versus laziness

(II) Tenor: Unequal; parent/child, uncle/nephew, elder/youth on minimal distance.

(III) Mode: Constitutive, monologic, persuasive and expository.

(IV) Meaning: A hard-working person actualizes his life's ambition while a lazy person rarely does.

(V) Function: Ideational; the proverb brings to bear the symbolic attribute of diligence which is the actualization of one's goal in life. This is represented by the killing of a lion which is the biggest exploit any Igbo man can attempt in the traditional setting where hunting is seen as a noble enterprise. That is why Igbo people bear names and titles such as 'ogbuagu'-killer of lion, 'nwagu'-son of a lion, 'odumegwu'-prowess of a lion, etc. The proverb explains that a lazy man who stays at home always cannot kill or get the dead body of a lion. For such a dream to be actualized, the person must work hard.

(VI) Aesthetic device: Assonance and metaphor are in force in the proverb. The repetition of the vowel /o/ in 'ozu' and 'odum' creates a rhyming effect. Hard-work and success are metaphorically stated using the idea of killing a lion.

(28) Proverb: *Were ehihie chowa ewu oji*

Literal translation: Use afternoon to look for the black goat

Translation: Make hay while the sun shines.

(I) Field – Time management

(II) Tenor – Unequal relationship; parent/child, elder/youth with minimal social distance as participants interact on familiar basis.

(III) Mode – Constitutive, monologic, persuasive and instructional

(IV) Meaning – Utilize your time well while there is an opportunity to do so.

(V) Function – Ideational; as an egalitarian and capitalist society, the Igbo nation cherishes proper utilization of time in realizing set goals in life. In the traditional Igbo society, people take their goats, sheep and cows outside the house or in the field for grazing before bringing them home at dusk. In the event that the rope is loose and any of the goats is missing, the owner is advised to look for the goat while it is still day light because it will be difficult to find when darkness falls. This is because most goats reared in that part of the country is black in colour hence the association of black to night period. This idea has been transferred and thus now used when cautioning someone who has a viable opportunity to achieve greatness, but chooses to waste it away. The proverb is also used to remind the person of the possible consequences when night falls - opportunity is lost. The proverb is relevant in the Nigerian society of today where many of the youths who have well to do parents to cater for their education waste their time in nefarious activities such as drug addiction, armed robbery, prostitution, etc. All these have damaging consequences to their lives and the nation in general because they constitute the greater

percentage of the workforce. By night fall (opportunity is lost) and if they are alive, they (youth) become nuisance to themselves, their families and the society at large.

(VI) Aesthetic device – Prominent devices present in this proverb are ellipsis and imagery. The second clause of the proverb has been omitted though this does not affect the understanding of the proverb by the reader or listener. This omission is used to achieve implicit cohesion and maintain shortness which is a notable feature of proverbs. The full text reads: "Were ehihe chowa ewu oji, n'ihi na chi jie, ya na-abali agakoo, ihu ya ga-ara ahu"; meaning: search for the black goat while it is still day, because if night falls, it will mix with the darkness and seeing it again will be difficult. Imagery is in force in this proverb in the lexical items 'ehihe' – afternoon and 'ewu-ojii' – black goat. These create mental pictures in the mind of the listener or reader which helps to achieve clarity of thought, vividness and consciousness of form.

4.3 Interpretation and Discussion of Findings

4.3.1 Themes/fields of Igbo proverbs

Proverbs generally and Igbo proverbs in particular appear in different themes/fields or situational usage in discourse. Igbo proverbs can refer to anything under the sun. However, eight major themes have been identified as housing most Igbo proverbs. Some themes attract proverbs more than the others as represented in the following table.

Table 1: Distribution of proverbs according to themes

S/N	Themes	No. of proverbs	Percentage
1	Truth versus falsehood	4	10
2	Conflict versus diplomacy	3	7.5
3	Diligence versus laziness	10	25
4	Praise versus lampoon	5	12.5
5	Unity versus disunity	4	10
6	Obedience versus disobedience	3	7.5
7	Time management	6	15
8	Hopeful versus despair	5	12.5

Total = 40

The table above reveals that proverbs with the theme of diligence versus laziness are very high in Igbo culture with 25% on the table. The implication of the above result is that Igbo people place more premiums on diligence while laziness is eschewed. This explains the entrepreneurial nature of an Igbo person. Lazy people are rebuked and seen as disgrace and embarrassment to the community. In fact, in the words of one of the Igbo elders interviewed (Elder Livinus Obani) 'such people were sold as slaves' in the past. However, in the present era, lazy people are encouraged to gear up to the challenges of life by working hard. The theme of time management followed closely with 15% while praise versus lampoon, hope versus despair have 12.5% each on the table. There is a link between diligence and time management in that an Igbo man believes that 'time is money'. The 'get-rich quick' syndrome where some people go to the extent of committing ritual killings and other heinous crimes in the society just to make money are also linked together. However, the accumulation of wealth through genuine enterprise is always praised and encouraged. Initial set-backs are seen as challenges one may face which should not deter the person or make

him/her loose hope. An average Igbo person never looses hope of survival; this has also inspired their proverbial wisdom. The other themes also reflect their degrees of prominence in the Igbo proverbial discourse as represented in the pie chart below:

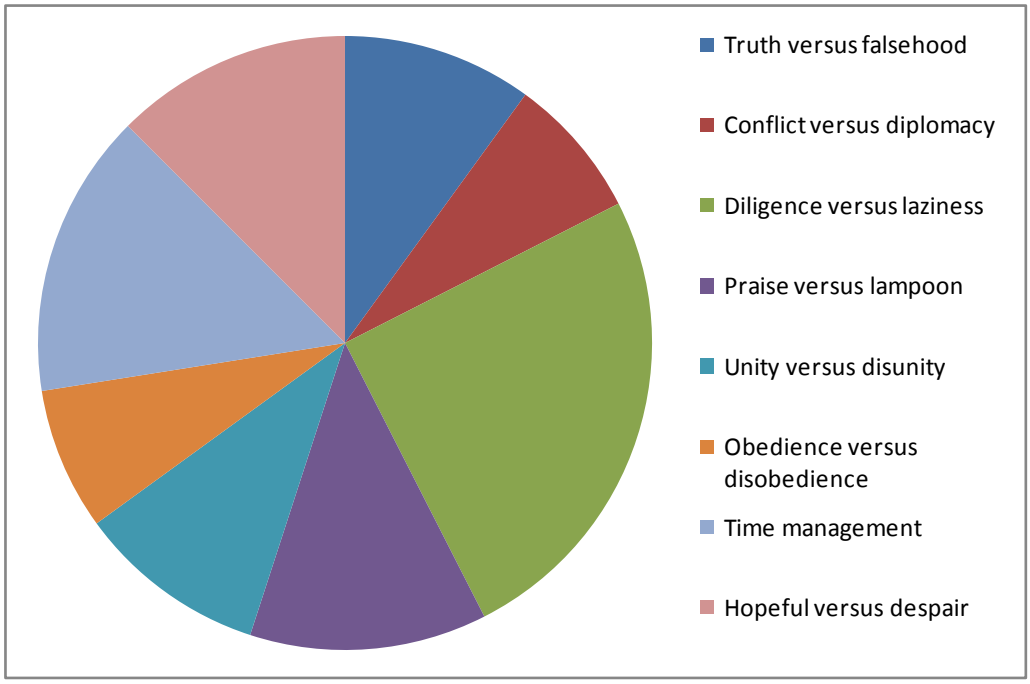


Figure 5.0: Themes of Igbo proverbs pie chart

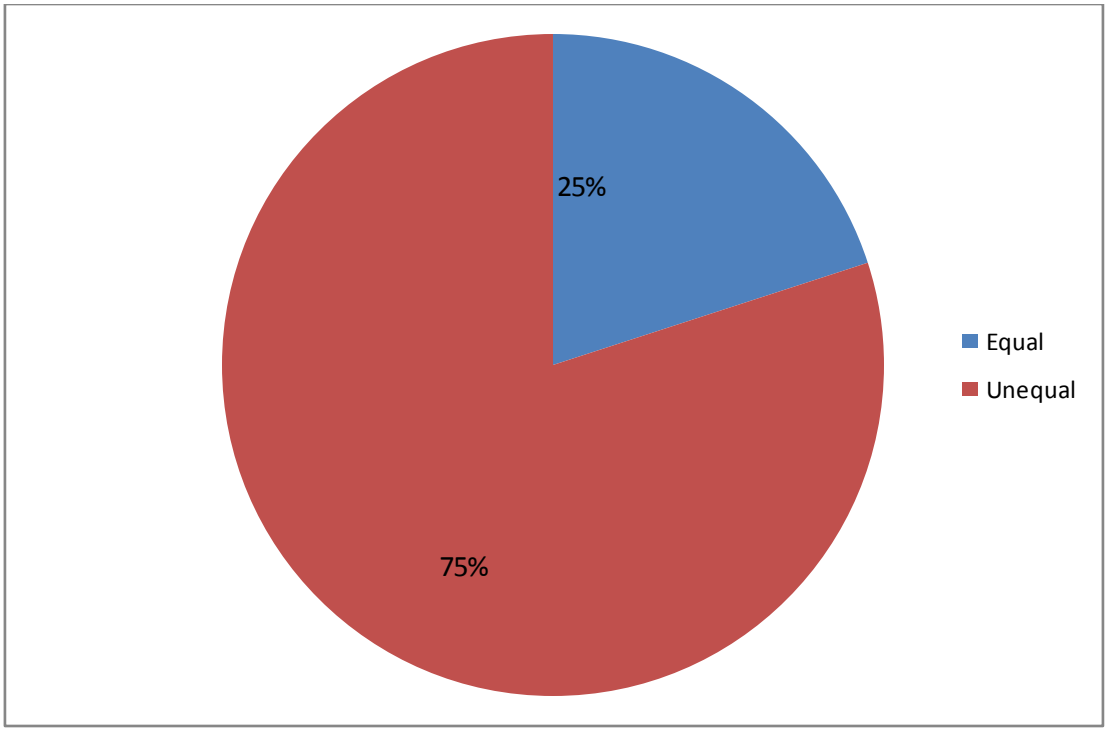
4.3.2 Tenor of Igbo proverbs

Tenor in this study accounts for the relationship between the speaker and listener which could be between king/subject, elder/young, husband/wife child/parent brother/brother, friend/friend etc. The relationship may be equal or unequal and is ascertained by the mood choices of the speaker and the social distance of the participants i.e familiar/minimal or distant /maximal; minimal for those who interact on a familiar basis and maximal for speakers who have never met before. As participants in a discourse maintain role relations which are part of the context, the tenor of the proverb is evaluated on the basis of the themes underlining its use and the participants involved. Table II represents the summary of the tenor.

Teable 2: Distribution of proverb according to tenor

		Tenor A		Tenor B	
S/No	**Themes**	**Equal**	**Unequal**	**Minimal**	**Maximal**
1.	Diligence versus laziness	1	9	10	-
2.	Truth versus falsehood	1	3	3	1
3.	Conflict versus Diplomacy	3	-	3	-
4.	Praise versus lampoon	1	4	5	-
5.	Obedience versus disobedience	-	3	3	-
6.	Time management	1	5	6	-
7.	Hopeful versus despair	2	3	5	-
8.	Unity versus disunity	1	3	4	-
	Total	10	30	39	01
	Percentage	**25%**	**75%**	**97.5%**	**2.5**

The table shows that the tenor of most Igbo proverbs are unequal and with minimal social distance. Out of the forty proverbs analyzed across the eight themes shown in the table, thirty indicated unequal. This may explain the fact that proverbs in Igbo land are used mostly by elders and parents. It is uncommon for a child to speak to an elder in proverbs. Few proverbs are used however by people having equal social status in the society, they are only ten. The minimal social distance is indicative of the fact that most users of Igbo proverbs use them when addressing people who are familiar to them, than with people they have not met before, thirty-nine out of the forty proverbs indicated minimal social distance. The charts 5.0a and 5.0b illustrate further.



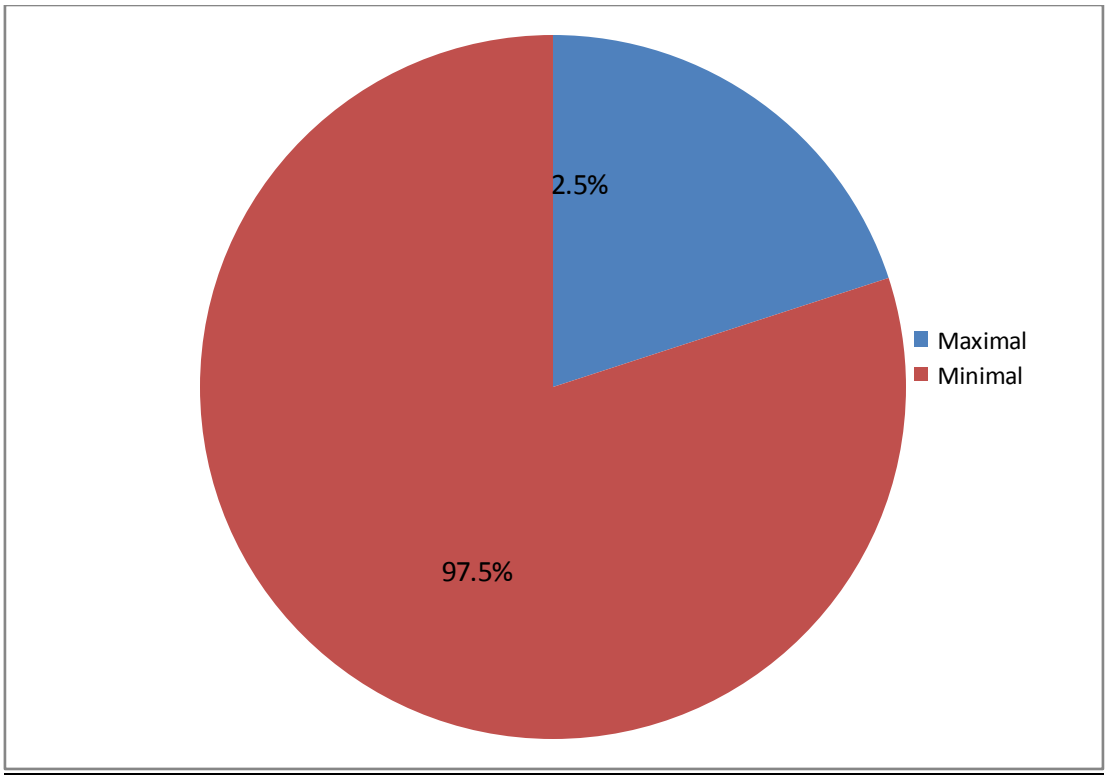


Figure 6.0: Tenor of Igbo proverbs pie chart A and B

The two charts 5.0a and 5.0b illustrate the tenor of Igbo proverbs. 5.0a shows the type of relationship between the speaker and listener. The blue indicates equal status while the pink shows when it is unequal; the percentage difference shows that Igbo proverbs are mostly used by parents, elders and leaders. 5.0b illustrates the social distance of the participants; minimal for people who interact on familiar basis and maximal for unfamiliar. The percentage difference between the two shows that most users of Igbo proverbs use them when addressing people they know (familiar) than with people they have not met before (unfamiliar).

4.4 Mode of Igbo Proverbs

Mode in this study accounts for the kind of text being made and its role in the speech event. It also includes the channel or medium though as stated in the previous chapter has been fore-grounded as such channel was not considered as a factor. The role is ancillary when it is accompanied by non verbal activity, such as pointing, touching, pulling etc but constitutive when the whole event is defined by the speech. The mode also accounts for the type of interaction going on in the text whether monologic or dialogic. There is also the rhetorical mode which accounts for the overall feeling of the text or message evoked by it when it is used. The roles of the proverbs used under the different themes are explained in the table below:

Table 3: Distribution of mode

Roles Themes	Constitutive	Ancillary	Monologic	Dialogic	Instructional	Persuasive	Expository	Didactic
Truth vs falsehood	02	02	02	02	01	02	-	01
Conflict vs diplomacy	02	01	02	01	01	01	-	01
Diligence vs laziness	09	01	09	01	01	03	06	-
Hope vs despair	05	-	03	02	-	02	02	01
Praise vs lampoon	04	01	03	02	-	01	04	-
Unity vs disunity	04	-	03	01	-	-	03	01
Time management	06	-	04	02	02	02	01	01
Obedience vs disobedience	02	01	03	-	02	-	-	01
Total	34	06	28	12	07	11	16	06
Percentage	85%	15%	70%	30%	17.5%	27.5%	40%	15%

The table shows that most Igbo proverbs play constitutive and monologic roles. 34 out of the 40 proverbs used for analysis display constitutive roles which accounts for 85% as against 15% of those that play ancillary roles. This revelation is true of Igbo proverbs as a discourse may begin and end with proverbs. Non-verbal activities such as pointing, touching, laughing, clapping of the hands etc may be initiated when the proverbs are uttered but very rare. On the type of interaction going on in the text, the table reveals that Igbo proverbs that play monologic roles are higher than those that play dialogic roles. The reason for this may not be farfetched; Igbo proverbs are usually used by elders, parents or traditional judges. It is unusual for a child or youth to interact with an elder or his parents in proverbs. However, friends or brothers may have an interaction where proverbs may be used intermittently. The table also illustrates that Igbo proverbs evoke one rhetorical feeling or the other whenever they are uttered in discourse. As represented in the table proverbs that explain (expository) are high with 16 out of the 40 displayed, represent which represent 40% evoking this feeling. This is followed by those that persuade which occupy 27.5% i.e 11 out of the 40 proverbs. In the table it is also pertinent to note that Igbo proverbs play instructional as well as didactic roles; they are used to teach moral instructions the percentages are 17.5% and 15% respectively. The distribution is represented in the chart below:

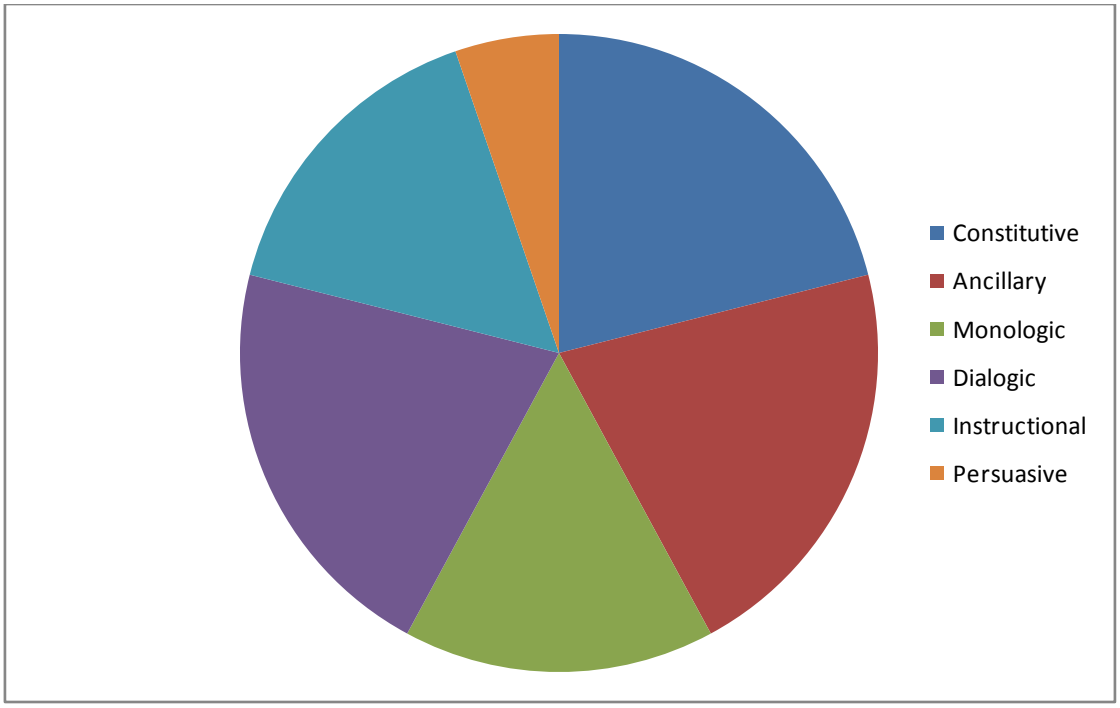


Figure 7.0: Mode of Igbo proverbs pie chart

4.5 Functions of Igbo Proverbs

The functions of proverbs generally and Igbo proverbs in particular are wide and a single proverb can generate multiple functions, but the different context of situation determines the function of a proverb. For the purpose of this study, function is realized using the three Hallidayan metafunctions of language that is ideational, interpersonal and textual (Halliday and Malttaissen, 2004:13). This is because they contain the three parameters of context of situation which affect our language choices in interaction. They posit that language evolved for three major purposes which they call the metafunctions of language. It is also found that the appreciation of the full functionality of a proverb is a property of the context of use (Adedimeji, 2010). The present study maintains that the theme of the proverb influences the context of use.

Table 4: Distribution of functions

Themes	Ideational	Interpersonal	Textual
Truth versus falsehood	04	-	-
Conflict versus diplomacy	02	01	-
Diligence versus laziness	08	02	-
Praise versus lampoon	03	02	-
Unity versus disunity	02	02	-
Obedience versus disobedience	03	-	-
Time management	06	-	-
Hope versus despair	04	01	-
Total	32	08	Nil
Percentage	80%	20%	Nil

Based on this result, it can be adequately concluded that Igbo proverbs mostly serve ideational functions this is because 32 out of the 40 proverbs analyzed showed this representing (80%). In ideational metafunction, language is used to encode one's experience of the world and to convey a picture of reality or knowledge resources of a culture. This may explain why most Igbo proverbs function as purveyors of Igbo culture, carriers of cultural motifs and director of moral life etc. The totality of the Igbo culture is coded in their proverbs as such linguistic fluency in Igbo proverbs guarantees one the access to knowing the language and the way of life of the Igbo people. Only 20% of the proverbs serve interpersonal function that is emphasize interaction and how people behave in particular situations. The proverbs here are for speech embellishment and the reinforcement of the power of argument. The analysis however reveals that textual function is nil. This is because, in our analysis, the

structures of the proverbs were not considered. The chart below represents the distribution.

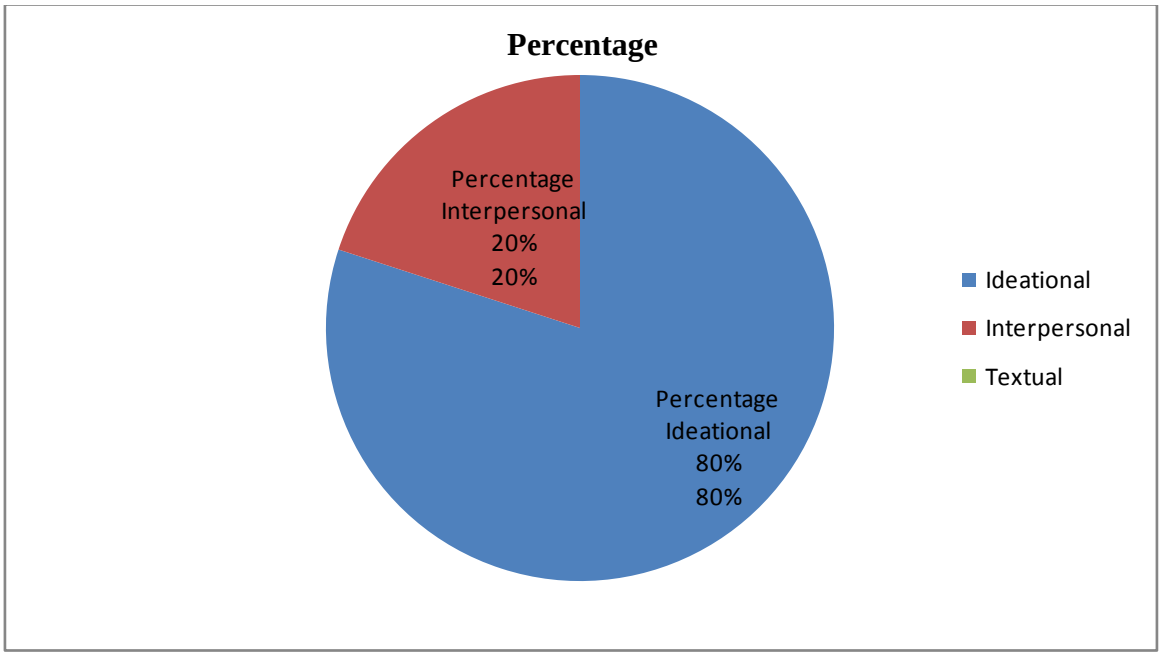


Figure 8.0: Function of Igbo proverb pie chart

4.6 Aesthetic Devices of Igbo Proverbs

The study has found that Igbo proverbs are marked by aesthetic devices, and they add to the beauty of the language in unique ways, thus justifying their Trenchian conception as salt-based. The study also discovered that these devices can facilitate the understanding and interpretation of the proverbs when used in communication. There is a wide range of aesthetic devices but the ones that occurred in the proverbs analyzed were picked to see their phonological and lexical effects on the meaning and understanding of the proverb, towards the realization of the themes

Table 5: Distribution of aesthetic devices

S/N	Aesthetic device	Total	Percentage
1	Assonance	06	15%
2	Metaphor	11	27.5%
3	Simile	01	2.5%
4	Irony	01	2.5%
5	Repetition	08	20%
6	Imagery	02	5%
7	Metonymy	01	2.5%
8	Paradox	01	2.5%
9	Alliteration	01	2.5%
10	Contrast	01	2.5%
11	Ellipsis	01	2.5%
12	Allusion	01	2.5%
13	Hyperbole	01	2.5%
14	Personification	03	17.5%
15	Rhetorical question	01	2.5%
	Total	**40**	**100%**

The table reveals that Igbo proverbs are marked by several aesthetic devices which create ornamental effects in the language. These effects can be phonological, lexical or syntactic as the case may be. The analysis however illustrates that phonological/sound devices dominate the aesthetic devices of Igbo proverbs. Assonance, repetition and alliteration feature prominently here. The three devices put

together show that a total of 15 out of the 40 proverbs used in the analysis and representing 37.5% are phonological devices. What this implies is that Igbo proverbs are mostly used in oral speech by people to fulfil different functions such as lampoon, praise, instruct, garnish speech etc. The meaning and import of the proverbs are derived largely from their sound patterning, which create phonic effects that make them memorable.

This is followed by metaphor which occupies 27.5% on the table. This corroborates Babatunde and Sobomehin (2007) assertions that Nigerian proverbs are "a matter of mind". Ugonna (1984) also maintains that Igbo proverbs appeal to our various senses while Finnegan (1976) relates them to poetry. Igbo language relies so much on metaphor as a tool of its proverbial artistry. Notable scholars like Achebe conceive Igbo proverbs metaphorically as the "palm oil" with which words are eaten and the "salt that adds taste to food". This feeling is also captured metaphorically in the Igbo proverb "a tuora o manu, o mara, a tuora ofeke o fegie olu" meaning when a proverb refers to the wise, he understands, but when it refers to a fool, he plunges into greater foolishness.

Other prominent aesthetic devices revealed in the study are personification 7.5% followed by imagery 5%. Personification is a form of metaphor and idiom which are highly utilized in Igbo proverbial artistry. Imagery on the other hand, creates mental pictures in the mind of the listener, the reader, and also appeals to the sense of imagination. This is indicative of the fact that the users of Igbo proverbs always try to add life and concreteness into their words in order to achieve various communicative effects that would assist listener or reader to decode the meaning of the proverb. Other devices discovered and their number of occurrences and

percentage frequencies are displayed on the table. All these are further illustrated in the pie chart below;

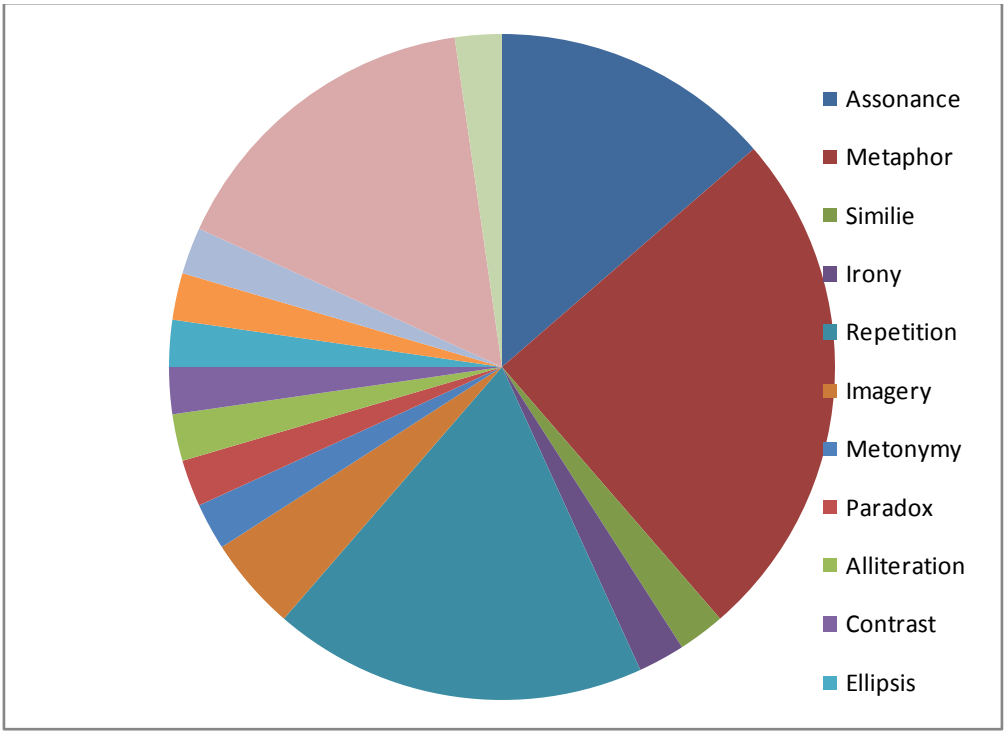


Figure 9.0: Aesthetic devices of Igbo proverbs pie chart

CHAPTER FIVE

5.0 SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATION AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Preamble

Human existence has been shaped by a number of related and conflicting phenomena, part of which are the language, culture and lit-oratory of the society. To a large extent, who we are and where we belong are by products of our linguistic, cultural and lit-oratory backgrounds, through which we develop peculiar identities (Trask, 1995) Proverbs, defined by Lau Tokofsky *et al.*, (2004) as, 'the message passed between and among people… brief and pithy wise and witty, rhetorically forceful, but discretely indirect' is also conceived as linguistic and cultural elements. However the advent of writing and telecommunication gadgets such as novels, television, videos, radios etc have made their usage moribund and unpopular, leading to a linguistic/culture threats and proverbs dearth in most African and Nigeria societies. That is the case of the Igbo nation of south eastern Nigeria and their proverbs. One of the ways of drawing the attention of language users towards their local languages is by studying and investigating pungent linguistic materials in that language and proverbs are one of them. In proverbs, the mores, ethos, norms, myths, legends, culture, traditions and beliefs of a people are preserved. The study of the immediate context (semantics) which hinges on meaning and wider context (pragmatics) that pertains to making what is said appropriate to the theme/context at hand with the implications for (aesthetics) designing what is said in a beautiful way are is the linguistic situation that this thesis has been devoted to.

5.2 Summary

The study has investigated three hundred and fifty Igbo proverbs. Two hundred of them were presented, but forty were analyzed. These depicted the eight commonly used themes or situational usage identified by the study. The research was informed by the need to investigate the Igbo proverbs in every day discourse: their themes, how the Igbo use them to communicate and their ornamental values to the language. The proverbs are found to be repository of several aspects of the culture, orature and linguistic habits of the Igbo people. The investigation reveals that despite the importance of proverbs to the Igbo, the majority of them do not understand their meanings, lack the in-depth knowledge of situating them thematically in their speeches, and also do not let alone identify their aesthetic colorations. These have caused misunderstandings, misinterpretations, language dearth, clan rivalries and the neglect of this ancient heritage of every human race.

The study comprises of five chapters. Chapter one gives general background knowledge of the work. Chapter two presents a general review of conceptual issues on the definition of proverbs, the origin, form, nature, structure, meanings, themes and functions. It also discusses the notion of aesthetics, and translation as they relate to proverbs generally and Igbo proverb in particular. The chapter contains topical and authorial reviews of related works. It highlights formal and functional linguistic theories of language and the theories of orature. It also contains a review of the systemic functional linguistic approach to language and the theoretic framework on which the study hinges. Chapter three presents the methodology, sources of data and analytical tools used for the work. Chapter four focuses on the presentation and analysis of data. It also discusses the forty proverbs selected for analysis which covered the eight commonly used themes identified by the study. The analyses consist

of the examination in our framework using the six analytical tools of field/theme, tenor, mode, and function, meaning and aesthetic device.

It also presents the interpretation and discussion of the findings of the study by examining the Igbo proverbs studied on the basis of theme, tenor, mode, function, and aesthetic devices. The summary of each factor is presented in a table diagram followed by a graphic chart representation for easy referencing. Chapter five provides the summary, recommendations and conclusion of the study.

In this study, the researcher has examined Igbo proverbs as a special form of language use by the Igbo people, and how they use these proverbs thematically to suit different situations they find themselves.

5.3 Findings

From the findings of the research generally, we were able to deduce the following:

1. The theme of an Igbo proverb and the context of situation determine its appropriateness in communication.
2. For any Igbo proverb to have a full meaning, it must be thematically situated.
3. Igbo proverbs used in speech possess topical and interpersonal themes in that they not only align to the subject matter, they also indicate the type of interaction between the speaker and the hearer.
4. Proverbs in Igbo land are universal, even when there are dialectal variations in their usage, the themes of such proverbs remain the same.
5. Igbo proverbs are marked as their meanings stand out anytime they are uttered in communication.

6. Eight major fields or themes stand out in Igbo proverbial usage and the theme of diligence versus laziness dominate the proverbial discourse.
7. Igbo proverbs are poly thematic and poly functional in nature.
8. The tenor of most Igbo proverbs is unequal: they can be imperative, declarative or interrogative and they are used mostly by parents or elders. The social distance of most Igbo proverbs is minimal because participations in a discourse use them for people they are familiar with.
9. Igbo proverbs can take different shapes ranging from sentences, phrases, clauses, Wellers, allusions, etc and they are apt because they can suit different situations.
10. To a large extent, aesthetic devices abound in Igbo proverbs. Phonological devices take the lead. The proverbs also play ornamental purposes and enhance the meaning and understanding of the discourse. Igbo proverbs convey mostly ideational functions because they promote the culture, world view and belief of the Igbo nation; in fact, the totality of the Igbo culture is buried in their proverbs.
11. Most Igbo proverbs play constitutive monologic as well as instructional roles, as a conversation may begin and end in proverbs.
12. Igbo proverbs serve as ends in themselves and means to some ends. When they serve as ends in themselves, they are ornamental, but when they serve as means to some ends, they are functional. The functional dimensions of proverbs complement their aesthetic dimensions.
13. Igbo proverbs are dynamic and their functions are largely theme dependent and context determined.

14. The theme and meaning of Igbo proverbs are interrelated. A listener can decode the meaning of a proverb by situating the theme appropriately. This will also aid him/her to figure out the function of the proverb and possibly identify its salt basis which pertains to aesthetics.
15. The understanding and interpretation of Igbo proverbs is for the mature minds and not for the feeble minded, that is why they are not to be explained listener. One learns them by figuring out their meanings based on the theme and the context of use, and the import of aesthetics facilities this.
16. The systemic functional linguistic approach to language provides a fuller understanding of the meaning of a proverb since it emphasizes the import of context of culture and context of situation in its approach, hence its adoption as a theoretical a framework.
17. The study of orature materials such as proverbs is relevant in appraising how words or language can practically be deployed to enhance cultural integration, growth and human-social development.
18. The proper utilization of Igbo proverbs in communication can save the Igbo language and culture from extinction dearth and cultural erosion.
19. Igbo proverbs play varied functions, but most importantly is the transmission of Igbo culture and language to the younger generation.

A proverb not only makes a point, but fixes it in our minds through the use of aesthetic devices. Most writers in Africa employ proverbs in their works, thus depicting their priceless value in the African society.

Ezirim, (2001) quoting Nwala, (1985:48), posits that: the value of the proverbs does not lie only in what it reveals of the thought of the past, for the poet today or indeed for the speaker who is some sort of an artist in the use of words, the proverb is

a mode of compressed or forceful language. In addition to drawing on it for its own words of wisdom therefore, he takes interest in its verbal techniques, the selection of words, its use of comparison as a method of statement and so on … This enables him to avoid hackneyed expression and gives a certain amount of freshness to his speech.

5.4 Contribution to Knowledge

The following implications are a result of this study

1. Igbo proverbs as an aspect of regional and national culture, orature and language should be preserved and promoted. The way forward for Igbo language users to fight and withstand linguistic threats lies in stepping backwards to harness the norms, ethics, ethos, etiquettes, mores, values, traditions and wisdom enshrined in Igbo proverbs with a view to achieving peace, unity , progress and development at individual, societal, regional and national levels.
2. The dichotomy between orature and written literature is admittedly superficial so is that between linguistic and literary artists. All are purveyors of words. They should therefore create a synergy that will promote language learning, usage and understanding
3. Aesthetics/stylistics and pragmatics are complementary components of applied linguistics. Findings of this study could be used in language policy and planning, language development, language empowerment, language choice, implementation issues, development of dictionaries, reporting, translation and transliterations, oral communication, public relations etc.
4. Human beings, regardless of where they are use language in communication (Adedimeji, 2010). A study of Igbo proverbs also reveals that every human

society uses proverbs in communication, though some use them more often than others. Proverbial wisdom as a vital aspect of Igbo value system thus holds the key to zonal peace, unity and security that have eluded the south eastern states of Nigeria.

5. Igbo language orthography has been developed to some extent but more needs to be done, because the language faces a verbal communication problem. This is largely because most Igbo speakers do not utilize proverbs in their conversation. Most of the time they code switch or code mix from English to Igbo, Igbo to pidgin or Igbo to other Nigerian languages therefore making a complete conversation in Igbo language where Igbo proverbs would be generously used almost impossible.

5.5 Recommendations

As posited by Adedimeji (2010), one of the consequences of globalization, a corollary of colonization that brought English and other foreign language to Nigeria is cultural and linguistic erosion. Nigerians and Ndilgbo in particular are fast losing their cultural and linguistic heritage to the powerful forces of globalization, leading to social contradictions. On February 21st 2016, during the celebration of the world "Mother Tongue Day" in Abuja Nigeria, it was observed that more than four hundred Nigerian languages are on the verge of extinction and Igbo despite being one of the major languages in the country is one of them. On this note, we recommend the following:

1. The proverb- a specialized form of language holds the potential for all aspects of life; economic, politics, administration, philosophy, religion, education among others. Courses on proverbs should be included in the curricula of both

secondary and tertiary institutions in the five south eastern states of Nigeria. A starting point should be the inclusion of orature and Paremiology in the general study programmes of universities, and other higher institutions in that zone so that the youths and children who are exposed to the internet and the satellite television- agents of acculturation, may be guided on Igbo/Nigerian values through proverbs.

2. Conscious efforts should be made towards the collection, investigation and popularization of Igbo proverbs. Works in this genre are scanty and more efforts should be expanded by linguists in that direction
3. An interdisciplinary journal or newspaper should be devoted to orature through which the ideas and ideals of Igbo proverbs could be further reinforced and intellectualized. It is worthy of note that at the Obafemi Awolowo University in 2006, the First International Conference on Proverbs in Nigeria was convened by a leading paremiologist. The successes of that landmark event could be borrowed and consolidated with the launch of a journal or magazine to be titled "Ogene" meaning the gong. It should be devoted to the study, propagation and use of Igbo proverbs.
4. South eastern governments, non-governmental bodies, socio-political organizations such as Ohaneze Ndi Igbo, Movement for the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB), etc should promote the study and interest in Igbo proverbs. Quizzes, debates, drama, songs etc should be organized in different Local Government Areas, schools and colleges in all the states of the region so as to advance interest in the study and use of Igbo proverbs in oral and written speeches. Such events should attract handsome rewards to outstanding individuals and groups.

5. The use of proverbs in speech is a vital aspect in knowing the language. Parents, elders and tradition bearers in Igbo land should speak Igbo language to their children and wards; and in the process, illustrate key points in the discourse using proverbs. It is becoming embarrassing that most Igbo youths cannot spell their native names accurately, let alone understand their meanings: this is because most Igbo names are proverbial in nature.
6. The threat to linguistic resources and proverb dearth should be a major concern to any Igbo person as such literatures in Igbo proverbs should be developed by Igbo scholars so that the language does not go extinct. A language dies when it is not utilized in communication, Emenanjo and Bleambo (1999).
7. This study is an aspect of the linguistic study of Igbo proverbs. Experts in other disciplines such as anthropology, philosophy, medicine, law etc should investigate the vast potentials that proverbial study offers for their various disciplines. Linguists and literary critics should take a leading role in this direction
8. Television (TV) cartoons, puzzles, jingles e.t.c which centre on proverbs should be developed with Igbo proverbial mastering in mind.

5.6 Suggestions for Further Study

The research has focused mainly on proverbs and how contextual features such as the knowledge of the themes, functions and aesthetic devices help in the interpretation and understanding of Igbo proverbs. Future researchers need to explore the proverbial discourse of other ethno-linguistic groups using appropriate analytical

or academic tools such as the textual component to project them. Other Nigerian languages that are also facing linguistic dearth can be revived through such works.

5.7 Limitations of the Study

The first limitation of this study is that the number of proverbs used for the data and for the final analysis is few and may not be comprehensive enough for any generalization. The next limitation is that no consideration was given to the prosodic features of speech in our data. This was informed by the nature of the data we gathered.

5.8 Conclusion

The study described proverbs as a special form of language that performs specific function in communication. The study delved into Igbo proverbs to study the themes, functions and aesthetic devices contained in them and examined how these elements facilitate the interpretation and understanding of their meanings. Using the systemic functional linguistic framework that attempts a synthesis of pure and applied linguistics, the study investigated these elements using the six analytical tools drawn from our framework. Two hundred proverbs were presented but forty were randomly selected for the analysis.

From the study, we were able to ascertain that the knowledge of the themes, functions and aesthetic devices of Igbo proverbs facilitate their interpretation and understanding in communication. Generally, the theme of a proverb determines the situation or context of use.

It is not enough to know proverbs, situating them thematically matters a lot in discourse. The researcher also adds that indentifying the functions of the proverbs and

the aesthetic devices embedded in them, such as the sound devices facilitate interpretation and understanding. Since one of the ways of upholding a cultural heritage is by preserving and reviving our proverbs (Ezirim, 2001), conscious efforts should be made in passing the wisdom enshrined in this linguistic enterprise in proverbs to our teeming youths whose quest for foreign things, ideas and languages suppress our indigenous languages.

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APPENDIX A

List of Proverbs Used for Data Analysis

47. **Proverb:** Enwe si na ya agaghi ogoro nwa ya kwo n'azu.

Literal translation: Monkey says she will not speak for a child he carry on her back.

Translation: One can only speak or attest of what one is certain.

196. **Proverb:** Eziokwu bu ndu

Good talk is life

Translation: Truth is life

170. **Proverb:** Eziokwu di ka okporo akpu anaghi aroji ya aroji

Good talk is like stem cassava stem it is not bent it bent

Translation: Truth is like a cassava that cannot be bent.

124. **Proverb:** A tuo omimiri rie ogede, mgbirigbo ya ga-ese n'elu

If you dive into a will and eat banana, the peelings will rise to the surface.

Translation: He who steals fire cannot hide the smoke.

53. **Proverb:** Ire na eze na-alukwa ogu ma kpeziekwa

Tongue and teeth also fight fight but they also settle.

Translation: The closeness of the tongue and the teeth does not stop them from fighting/quarreling.

166. **Proverb:** O bu naani onye amaghi ihe e jiri mee enyi na asi ka ya bupuo ya n'ezi

It is only a person not knowing what is used to do friendship that says let him carry it outside the house

Translation: It is only the one who does not know what it has taken to build a friendship that easily volunteers to forcefully throw it outside.

120. **Proverb:** O bu e tinye nzuzu n'amamihe o wee zuo oke

It is to put foolishness into wisdom that make it complete.

Translation: One is considered wise if he knows when to give concession and make sacrifice for peace.

37. **Proverb:** Aka aja aja na-ebute onu mmanu mmanu

Transliteration: Hand sand sand is cause mouth oil oil.

Translation: The hand soiled with earth gives rise an oil laden mouth.

115 **Proverb:** Okuko siri aboo aboo erie erie

Fowl said if one cultivates, one will eat.

Translation: The fowl said that if one cultivates, he finds something to eat.

180. **Proverb:** Ngala kpuchie ute, aguu ekpughee ya

pride cover mat hunger uncovers it.

Translation: If pride as a result of pride stops one from working, hunger will surely expose the person.

5. **Proverb:** Okwa enyere onye efurefu ka a na-enye onye ngana

The address given to a stupid person, is also given to a person that is idle.

Translation: An idle person is addressed the same way as a stupid person.

20. **Proverb:** Ojije na olila adighi ekwe okporo uzo taa ahu

Going and coming does not allow pathway slim body.

Translation: One who is diligent does not lack what to eat.

64. **Proverb:** A dighi ano n'ulo ebute ozu odum

Nobody stays at home to the carcass of a lion.

Translation: A lazy person rarely actualizes his life's ambition.

115. **Proverb:** Nwata kwopu aka o soro ogaranya rie nri

If **a** child washes his hand clean he follows noble men to eat food.

Translation: Diligent behaviour is rewarded with high respect.

163. **Proverb:** O buru onu ka e ji aba ogaranya, onye ara ga-akacha umunna ya

If it is mouth that is used become wealthy a mad person would have surpassed his kinsmen.

Translation: A man of many words often achieves very little, in life.

110. **Proverb:** Aka weta aka weta onu eju

Hand bring hand bring mouth full.

Translation: A diligence or industry drives away lack.

58. **Proverb:** Nwata na-atu egwu ida ada adighi aga ije n'oge

A Child that fears fear of falling down does not walk walk on time.

Translation: A person who is afraid of failure does not achieve early success in life.

106. **Proverb:** Ngwere si n'elu daa, gbanahu ndi no n'ala eche ya si na onye ajaghi ya ike ya ajaa onwe ya

The lizard that jumped down and escaped from people on the land waiting to catch it said, "if person praise it not it will praise itself".

Translation: A hardworking person deserves a token of praise as an encouragement.

200. **Proverb:** Mberede ka e ji ama dike

Sudden to use know (the) strong.

Translation: A strongman is known by his ability to withstand a sudden occurrence.

159. **Proverb:** Ma ndi gbara aso ma ndi luru ogu, ha niile by agha

Both those who ran race and those who fought fight are all war.

Translation: Everybody's contribution counts in the development of the community.

189. **Proverb:** Onye kwe chi ya ekwe

If person say yes, his personal god says yes also.

Translation: Self belief/determination is inevitable as one aspire to achieve set goals.

99. **Proverb:** O bu naani udele kara aka na-amapuwu ozu afo

It is only a strong person vulture that can pierce the stomach/badly of a corpse.

Translation: Difficult tasks are often reserved for an experienced and skilled hand.

43. **Proverb:** A nyukoo amiri onu o abaa ufufu

If urinate urine on one spot it brings much foam

Translation: When people do things in unison, it brings overwhelming results

47 **Proverb:** Aka nri kwoo aka ekpe aka ekpe akwoo aka nri ha abuo a di ocha

Hand food wash hand left, hand left wash hand food two of them will become clean.

Translation: Mutual cooperation and understanding bring unity and progress.

93. **Proverb:** Nnunu ogologo onu anaghi atupu ihe di ya n'isi

A bird with long beak does not peck out something is on its head

Translation: We are all inter-dependent (No man is an island)

131. **Proverb:** Egbe bere ugo bere nke si ibe ya ebele nku akwala ya kama ya zi ibe ya ebe o ga ebe

Transliteration: Kite perch eagle perch anyone say the other should not perch let the wings not break instead let it show that one where to perch

Translation: Live and let live brings love and unity.

15. **Proverb:** Ukpara okpoko gburu nti chiri ya

Insect, that bird (okpoko) kill ear block it

Translation: An insect, that is killed by okpoko (bird) is deaf

154. **Proverb:** Nwata bulie nna ya elu ogodo awuchie ya anya

If a child carry's his father up cloth will cover his eye

Translation: A person who disregards his father is always overtaken by misfortunes.

73. **Proverb:** O buru na ngwere sobe nkakwu o buru anu isi

If a lizard follows the company of a shrew, it becomes a smell animal

Translation: Bad Company corrupts good morals.

136. **Proverb:** Oge adighi eche mmadu, mmadu na-eche oge

Time does not wait person, person is wait time

Translation: Time waits for no one.

32. **Proverb:** E mee ngwa ngwa e meghara odachi

If done fastly fastly it prevents misfortune.

Translation: A stitch in time saves nine.

28. **Proverb:** Were ehihie chowa ewu ojii

Use afternoon to search for, the black goat

Translation: Make hay while the sun shines.

185. **Proverb:** Ka abia ka abia mere awo epughi odu

Later later made the toad not to grow tail

Translation: Procrastination is dangerous.

88. **Proverb:** O bu onye a huru isi ya ka a na-ekenye mmanya ngwo

It is the person whose head is seen that collects the raffia wine

Translation: First come first served.

80. **Proverb:** Onye bido n'ututu tutuwa tupu chie ejie nkata ya eju

If one start in the morning to pick something before night his basket will full

Translation: Clumsy birds have need for early flight.

10. **Proverb:** Chi kere nwa agu agaghi ekwe ka o taa ahihia

The God that made the young tiger will not allow it to eat grass.

Translation: Suffering can hardly crush or over whelm anyone one who enjoys the favour of providence.

140. **Proverb:** Ma nwaanyi amughi nwa ya akpara ahu oma ya n'aka

If a woman does not have a child (barren), let her have her good body in her hand.

Translation: There is always a consolation to fall back on.

69. **Proverb:** Iyi a riri enyi, gini ka mbe ga-eme?

This river that ate elephant, what can a tortoise do?

Translation: How can a tortoise gear up beside a river where an elephant was drowned?

175. **Proverb:** Aguu nwere olile anya anaghi egbu mmadu

The hunger that has hope eye does not kill a person.

Translation: Hope for the future lessens the problems of the moment.

146. **Proverb:** Eke na ihe o loro a togborola

The python and the thing it swallowed, now lie helpless.

Translation: This is a helpless hopeless situation.

APPENDIX B

List of proverbs not used for data analysis

1. **Proverb:** A dighi ahucha onu nnunnu na-aju kedu ebe o si eri nri

   Literal translation: Is not see mouth bird is asking where is it eat food

   Translation: A self-evident case does not call for any elucidation

2. **Proverb:** Onye na-ekwu na anu enyi ekweghi obubo ga-abu eziokwu ma na o kweghi agwucha agwucha bu okwuasi"

   Literal translation: One is saying that meat elephant is hard to cut pieces may be truth but say is not finish finish is false.

   Translation: That the carcass of an elephant is difficult to dismember is believable but that it cannot be finished can never be true.

3. **Proverb:** Dike matakata usu o dighi mma ka asi na o matakwaghi"

   Literal translation: Hero trapped a bat is not good to say he not trapped

   Translation: After declaring that a hero has trapped a bat, it is not good to announce that he did not catch anything.

4. **Proverb:** "O na-abu ike adighi ngwere muo nwa o si na umunna ya kere ya agbu'

   Literal translation: If strength not have lizard born child it say her kinsmen tie her rope.

   Translation: When a lizard is incapable of giving birth, it allergies that its kinsmen have put her in bondage.

5. **Proverb:** Ebee ka eziokwu gara okwuasi jiri buru ya uzo?

   Literal translation: Where did good talk went talk lie had first him door?

   Translation: Where was truth when falsehood came first?

6. **Proverb:** Agwoubi kwaa elu kwaa ala, anyi maara olu oke okpa okuko

Literal translation: Snake farm crow up crow down we knew voice male cock

Translation: The cobra can crow heaven and earth but we can still decipher the voice of a cock

7. **Proverb:** E jighi mbekwu di ndu agba afa

Literal translation: Not use tortoise is life run divination

Translation: A live-tortoise is never used for divination

8. **Proverb:** Ngiga e kobere n'oku abughi nke anu, O buru nke azu

Literal translation: Basket is hanged in fire is not for the meat is for the fish

Translation: The basket hanging over the hearth is containing either meat of fish

9. **Proverb:** Kpegbuo mmuo kpegbuo mmadu kpegbuchara, udele jupita eluigwe

Literal translation: Defend spirit defend person defend all vulture filled high sky

Translation: When a person wins a case both in the land of the living and the dead, multitude of vultures usually appear in the sky to give testimony.

10. **Proverb:** Onye na-akocha eze n'ihu umu odibo ya choro ka eze nuchaa ihe dum o kwuru

Literal translation: Person is talk bad king in front children servant him want the king hear things all he said

Translation: Anyone who is abusing the king before his servants deliberately wants the king to hear all his criticisms

11. **Proverb:** O buru na ikpe ma eziokwu maara na aka azu di ya

Literal translation: If that judgment is against truth knows that hand back is in it.

Translation: If the truth is subdued, then there must be a clear case of inducement.

12. **Proverb:** A gaghi eji n'ihi na agu na-emeri enwe were kpoba udara nwa enwe udara nwa agu

Literal translation: Not to use because of tiger is winning monkey start to call apple baby monkey apple baby tiger.

Translation: The monkey's apple should not be changed into tiger's apple simply because the tiger is stronger than the monkey.

13. **Proverb:** O di mma ka e kwere na aru bu aru kama ka a ghara ikpu ya akpu

Literal translation: It is better to accept that abomination is abomination but let it not cleanse it cleanse

Translation: It is better for an abomination to be identified and called by its name even if it is not to be cleansed/call a spade a spade.

14. **Proverb:** Iyi adighi adicha a na-anu oku

Literal translation: Oath not to be available and one swears by ordinary clay pot

Translation: Nobody swears by empty earthenware when a good fetish oath is available.

15. **Proverb:** A choba ebe nwamkpi siri bia uwa e jebe ikwunne ya

Literal translation: If to search where he goat from come to earth to go his maternal village.

Translation: Anyone who wishes to trace from where the he-goat came into the world, should go to its grandmother's place.

16. **Proverb:** Adighi ekpuchi afo ime aka

Literal translation: You cannot cover a pregnancy with your hand.

Translation: You cannot conceal the truth forever.

17. **Proverb:** A nyuo nsi ma akaghi, ya onu o buru nsi otoro

Literal translation: If one defecates and not shape it mouth it become defecate diarrhea.

Translation: Inability of a person to make his action clear leads to confusion.

18. **Proverb:** Adighi eri nshiko na nzuzo

Literal translation: One cannot eat crab in secret.

Translation: You cannot eat a crab in secret without somebody around noticing it (inability to hide the truth is compared to eating of crab).

19. **Proverb:** E were aja bachie nsi, e mechaa mmiri ekpoghee ya

Literal translation: If use sand cover faeces later water uncover it.

Translation: Even if truth is covered for a while, it must surely be uncovered.

20. **Proverb:** Ikpe mara eziokwu aka azu di ya

Literal translation: Case against truth hand back in it

Translation: If an innocent person loses a case, bribery must have been given behind closed door

21. **Proverb:** Iwe nwanne adighi eru n'okpukpu

Literal translation: Annoyance brother not reach inside the bone

Translation: Forgiving a brother who erred should not be delayed

22. **Proverb:** Elobiri echebiri bu ammaihe

Literal translation: Swallow a bit wait a bit is wisdom

Translation: It is wisdom to pause and think from time to time

23. **Proverb:** Mgbaghara na obi ebere bu umume n'ihi na obi ebere na-enweta mgbaghara

Literal translation: Forgiveness and heart pity are brothers because is heart pity is brought forgiveness

Translation: Forgiveness and compassion are related because compassion brings forgiveness.

24. **Proverb:** O buru na egbube anu niile mere aru, I maara na mkpi ga-agwu n'ulo

Literal translation: If to kill animal all did abomination you know that he goats will finish in the house.

Translation: If all animals that committed abomination were to be killed, the he goats would have been exterminated.

25. **Proverb:** Ogu nduru adighi agbaputa obara

Literal translation: Fight dove is not shed out blood

Translation: When doves fight nobody expects to see bloodshed/ those who love each other well do not insists on revenge

26. **Proverb:** O bu e lee a aghara bu ezi alumdi na nwunye

Literal translation: It is look and leave is good husband and wife

Translation: A successful marriage is achieved when couples bear with one another or lasting relationship is sustained through mutual tolerance.

27. **Proverb:** Ata siri na ihe ya jiri hapu onye ruru ya bu ka o rie nri oru, o bughi otu ahu na o gaara ibu o ruru ya na aga ya epuru na-eso ya n'azu

Literal translation: The spear grass said that why it left person who uproot it is for the person to eat food of his work or else it would be as he uproot it and go, it will grow and follow at his back

Translation: He who seeks the welfare of another often makes a lot of sacrifice without counting his losses.

28. **Proverb:** O bu mara ghara ka oku jiri hapu ite jee gbuo ihe di ya n'ime

Literal translation: It is know and leave that fire has to leave pot went kill thing is inside it.

Translation: Anybody who lives in peace with his neighbor must have been making a lot of sacrifice to achieve that.

29. **Proverb:** Ogu nkita bu I daara m mu adaara gi

Literal translation: Fight dog is you fall me I fall you.

Translation: for a relationship to last there must be mutual understanding.

30. **Proverb:** A dighi akoro akpiri na ya na utara bu nwanne

Literal translation: Is not to tell throat that it and fufu are siblings.

Translation: The throat does not need to be told that fufu is his relative.

31. **Proverb:** O buru na ele amaghi, mgbada nwnne ya ezi ya

Literal translation: In case that male antelope not know female antelope his sister is show him.

Translation: friends must learn to help one another so as to sustain their friendship.

32. **Proverb:** Onodu otu onye na-aka mma naani n'afo ime

Literal translation: To stay lonely person is good only inside stomach.

Translation: Mutual co-existence is very essential in any human and social environment.

33. **Proverb:** O na-abu ndi nchiiche abuo zute n'uzo ha ewere iberi (ihe ha ji achu ijiji) were naa aka.

Literal translation: When two people with yaw disease meet in road they use their fan for wading off flies to salute hand.

Translation: Solidarity is better obtained between two people with common understanding.

34. **Proverb:** O bu ihe oba na-emere ubi ka ubi na-emere oba

Literal translation: It is what barn is done farm that farm is done barn

Translation: It is mutual trust and cooperation that sustains a good relationship.

35. **Proverb:** O buru n'ala juo oyi, nduru ebedo na ya

Literal translation: If the ground become cool dove to perch on it.

Translation: Sustained progress is made only when there is peace.

36. **Proverb:** O bu mgasa mere na agwo enweghi umunna

Literal translation: It is separation that made snake not have kinsmen.

Translation: Disagreement breeds disunity.

37. **Proverb:** Ebiogwu siri na ya puchara ogwu ma pufo ebe umunna ya ga-ejide ya aka

Literal translation: Porcupine says that he grow thorns but left where relatives him can hold him.

Translation: One must create room for tolerance in his relationship with others.

38. **Proverb:** O bu nka ka ire na eze jiri biri

Literal translation: it is wisdom that tongue and teeth used to co-exist.

Translation: Wisdom should be applied in resolving conflicts because the later is inevitable in any relationship.

39. **Proverb:** E bute okpiri a ga-eti ubiam si tie esoghi otu uzo n'ihi o bu ya na-eweta ubiam.

Literal translation: if wishing to hit stick at poverty, first hit at distraction and indecision because it causes poverty.

Translation: Effective solution to any problem must first of all address the root of it.

40. **Proverb:** Nku mmadu kpara n'okorobia ka o na-anya n'agadi

Literal translation: Firewood person gathered in youth is what one burn in old age.

Translation: The savings one made during his youth is what he enjoys at old age.

41. **Proverb:** Nku mmadu kpara n'okochi ka o na anya n'udummiri

Literal translation: Firewood person gathered in dry season is one burn in rainy season.

Translation: The firewood one gathers during the dry season is what he uses in cooking during the rainy season.

42. **Proverb:** Onye ngana gaa kirie danda, ha amaghi ezu ike n'okochi ka afo ha ghara ire ure n'udummiri

Literal translation: Person idle go look ants they not rest strength in dry season that stomach them not smell in rainy season

Translation: An idle person should observe how the ants work tirelessly during the dry season so as to save what to eat during the rainy season.

43. **Proverb:** Onye na-ejeghi ahia n'oge na-azu ihe ahia juru

Literal translation: One not go market on time is buy thing market rejects.

Translation: One who did not go to the market early enough usually buys rejected commodities.

44. **Proverb:** O bu alo ka dinta ji agba adaka egbe

Literal translation: It is tact that hunter is shoot ape gun.

Translation: Delicate matters are better handled with great tact so as to achieve the desired result.

45. **Proverb:** Oke ga-erutugodu ndi kwu oto ma ya foduzie ndi tukwu ala

Literal translation: What is shared will reach those standing before it gets to those squatting.

Translation: Diligent workers survive better than lazy ones.

46. **Proverb:** O bu naani ukwu gbara apiti na-eri ihe guru ya

Literal translation: It is only leg soiled with mud is eat thing hungry it.

Translation: There is great reward for hard work.

47. **Proverb:** Onye a siri ya bia buru ozu o si na ya ebunubeghi ya mbu o ga-eji onye di ndu were muta?

Literal translation: One that is told to come carry a corpse and he said he has not carried a corpse before will he use person is alive to learn?

Translation: One gains the skill of doing anything by making a trial.

48. **Proverb:** O bu naani onye koro ji na egwute ebe

Literal translation: It is only person cultivate yam is dig out yam beetle.

Translation: Better things are achieved through hard work and diligence.

49. **Proverb:** O burugodu na eze nchi foduru naani otu o ga na-egbu achara

Literal translation: Even when the tooth of grass cutter remained only one it will kill grass.

Translation: Difficulty does not stop the effort that is vital for ones survival.

50. **Proverb:** Nwa dibia siri na o na-abu a na-aku okorokombe a na-ahuwanye ndi mmuo

Literal translation: The diviner said that the more he knocks on the tortoise shell, the more he sees the spirits.

Translation: It is the person who works hard diligently that achieved much success in life.

51. **Proverb:** Agwo niile dicha ogologo mana e nwere eke nwe ohia

Literal translation: Snake all is long but there is python owns bush.

Translation: Persevering determination always marks one out among his peers.

52. **Proverb:** Aku e jiri mee enyi nwaanyi agaghi eme onye choro iba aba agaghi

Literal translation: Gifts used do friend woman does not stop person desired not be rich not to become.

Translation: Money spent on friendship does not stop one from becoming rich.

53. **Proverb:** Mgbe ihe na-ara ahu ka o na-ebi

Literal translation: When thing is hard body that is to stop.

Translation: When the going gets tougher, the tough keeps going.

54. **Proverb:** O bu ike ka eji afuke opi

Literal translation: It is strength that is used in blowing a flute.

Translation: Strength is needed in surmounting difficult tasks.

55. **Proverb:** Ama obula a nuru uda egbe, mara na nwoke bi na ya

Literal translation: Any premise is heard sound gun know that man live in it.

Translation: One is always known by what he does very well in.

56. **Proverb:** E too O gburu ebunu, o hu agu o gbuo

Literal translation: if praised for kill ram he see tiger will kill

Translation: If an achiever is praised, he strives for a higher feat.

57. **Proverb:** Dimkpa taa aku a hu ichere ya

Literal translation: Strongman eats palm nut to see the kernel heap.

Translation: Great achievements are difficult to be ignored.

58. **Proverb:** Ojija a na-aja dike na-akari ogu o na-anu

Literal translation: Ovation is given hero is more fight he is fight.

Translation: Praise gives one support, strength and encouragement.

59. **Proverb:** Usu siri na ihe ya jiri were karichaa nnunnu ndi ozo ike bu na ya bechaa n'osis, ya akpudo isi n'ala

Literal translation: Bat said what he passed other birds strength is if it perched on tree it also turn head upside down.

Translation: One is always praised for what he does very well.

60. **Proverb:** Mgbe a huru onye biaranu a si ya ibiala

Literal translation: When one saw person have come one say it welcome.

Translation: Your achievements will be seen before you are praised.

61. **Proverb:** A gaghi aso mgbagbu ghara iga ogu

Literal translation: Not to dread shooting refuse go to war.

Translation: Being killed does not stop one from going to war/the fear of failure does not stop one from venturing into business-one has to pass through trials and difficulties before attaining success because suffering is prior to attaining success.

62. **Proverb:** A naghi akpa nwa agu aka n'odu ma o din du ma o nwuru anwu

Literal translation: Not to touch child tiger hand on the tail whether is alive or dead.

Translation: The wealth of a wealthy man runs through his lifetime and even after his death.

63. **Proverb:** A naghi anodu ala e nwude ele

Literal translation: Not to sit down and catch antelope.

Translation: An idle man hardly gets a title.

64. **Proverb:** E jighi abia ano egwu onwa

Literal translation: The funeral drum (abia) not used for moonlight plays.

Translation: Important personalities are not invited for trivial occasions.

65. **Proverb:** Diochi na-ari nkwu ma o kwanyaghi o di ka o bu ngwere na-ari.

Literal translation: Wine tapper who climbs palm tree and does not shake it is as if lizard is climbing.

Translation: A lazy man is never known for high productivity or people should live according to what they are known for.

66. **Proverb:** Anu tagburu nkita na-ata aru

Literal translation: Animal bite to death dog is biting good.

Translation: A man of valour must be given credit for the feat he has achieved.

67. **Proverb:** O burugodu na obogwu loo nkume o nyupu ya n'akpana

Literal translation: Even if the duck swallows stone it discharges it with faeces.

Translation: A hero is known for his ability to overcome misfortune.

68. **Proverb:** Ihu dike na-anyu mma nko

Literal translation: Face hero is blunts the matchet.

Translation: A hero's presence is always recognized and respected.

69. **Proverb:** Dike abuo zute n'uzo a mara akanwu na utaba nke na-akpolite uzere

Literal translation: When two heroes meet on road will know potash and tobacco which is causes sneezing.

Translation: The essence of fighting is to establish who is mightier than the other.

70. **Proverb:** Okuku abuke fere ngige maara na ya na ihe ike mere

Literal translation: Fowl (abuke) flies fence over know it that thing great happen.

Translation: No great feat ever comes easy.

71. **Proverb:** A hu onye nna ya bu dike, a na-eme ogo e meturu ya aka n'isi mma

Literal translation: When seen person father is a warrior if to salute it is touching the hand of head matchet.

Translation: A person is usually respected by his prowess and exploits.

72. **Proverb:** Nkita gburu ebiogwu e bunye ya isi akwu o kesia ya

Literal translation: The dog killed porcupine if given it palm bunch it dismembers it.

Translation: One can predict somebody's capability by what he has previously done.

73. **Proverb:** Akpiri o bula loro igbagwu ga-elonwukwa mmaekwu

Literal translation: Any throat can swallow wholly baked maize without chewing can swallow also kitchen knife.

Translation: A man of guts is capable of unimaginable surprise anytime.

74. **Proverb:** Adighi m ezo ezo agba atani aku n'ihi na o dighi ihe o ga-eme m

Literal translation: I do not hide hide shoot bush baby arrow because it will not do me anything.

Translation: A fearless man does not need to fear when there is no need for that.

75. **Proverb:** Ama o bula a nuru uda egbe mara na nwoke bi na ya

Literal translation: Any compound that is hard sound gunshot know that man live in it

Translation: He who is brave shows it by his exploits

76. **Proverb:** Agaghi a buru mmadu mmadu na-esi mmuo mmuo

Literal translation: Not to be human human but is smell spirit spirit

Translation: We cannot have warriors and there is no one to defend us.

77. **Proverb:** Otu mkpisi aziza di mfe mgbaji, igbaji ukwu ya adighi mfe

Literal translation: One stick broom is easy to break; to break the bunch is not easy

Translation: United we stand, divided we fall

78. **Proverb:** Udo bu isi oganiihu na idi n'otu

Literal translation: Peace is head progress and unity

Translation: Unity brings peace and progress

79. **Proverb:** O bu ihe oba na-emere ubi ka ubi na-emere oba

Literal translation: It is thing barn is doing farm that farm is doing barn

Translation: Mutual trust and cooperation sustains good relationship.

80. **Proverb:** O bu naani udele kara aka na-amapuwu ozu afo

Literal translation: It is only vulture strong that could pierce corpse stomach.

Translation: Difficult tasks are often reserved for an experienced and skilled hand.

81. **Proverb:** Onye kwuru naani ya odum atagbuo ya

Literal translation: Person stand alone he lion bite it death

Translation: Togetherness offers protection while loneliness causes death

82. **Proverb:** Anya bewe imi ebewe

Literal translation: Eyes cry nose cry also

Translation: What affects a person, also affect people around him

83. **Proverb:** Ogo bu ikwu ato

Literal translation: An in-law is a third relation

Translation: Good relatives are always useful

84. **Proverb:** Nduri si na ihe ejiri adi abuo aga n'ubi bu onye ahughi ka ibe ya hu ihe ahu

Literal translation: The dove said the reason for two to go to the farm is if one did not see something the other will see it.

Translation: Unity and togetherness is very profitable or working together in unity achieve greater result

85. **Proverb:** Gidigidi bu ugwu eze

Literal translation: Loud ovation is respect king

Translation: What gives a king respect is the number of his subjects who support him

86. **Proverb:** Mmuo enweghi okpa, ibe ya kworo ya

Literal translation: Masquerade not have leg others carry him

Translation: People should learn to help one another or mutual help is inevitable in human relationship.

87. **Proverb:** Onodu otu onye na-aka mma naani n'ime afo

Literal translation: Place one person is hand better only in the womb

Translation: Mutual co-existence is essential in any human and social environment

88. **Proverb:** A dighi akoro akpiri na ya na utara bu nwanne

Literal translation: Not to tell the throat that it is pounded foofoo relative

Translation: Certain obligations to ones relatives are seen as right and not a privilege

89. **Proverb:** O bu mgbasa mere agwo enweghi umunna

Literal translation: It is scatter made snake not have kinsmen

Translation: Disunity breeds hatred amongst brethren.

90. **Proverb:** O na-abu nwata nwere ubochi, ubochi enwerekwa nwata

Literal translation: If a child owns day, the day owns the child as well

Translation: We are all dependent on one another for survival

91. **Proverb:** O buru na okoporo achusaa ngwere ya na onye ga-ebi?

Literal translation: If a bachelor chases away lizard he and who will live?

Translation: Even the person seen as unimportant can be useful at one time or the other.

92. **Proverb:** Onye na-ako ji di mma ka o na-eru ikwume ya n'ihi oso chuba ya o gaghi agbaba n'ime oba ji ya

Literal translation: Person is farm yam good to send some to his maternal home because if he is pursued, he will not run into his yam barn

Translation: One cannot run away completely from his kinsmen.

93. **Proverb:** Eze naani ya kwu aga gba oto

Literal translation: King only him goes a journey is naked

Translation: A leader without popular support does not command sufficient dignity or respect (he is open to frequent attacks).

94. **Proverb:** Otu onye na-asu ohia o di ka o na esere eriri o ga-eji were kechie ihe

Literal translation: One person is clear forest it is like he is collecting rope to tie something

Translation: One man's effort is always limited/communal effort makes work easier and faster

95. **Proverb:** Akika siri onye kpata ya rie kama a zoo ukwu n'ala ka ekwem n'isu buru otu

Literal translation: The termite said person who acquired thing should eat but when stamping of feet reached; let the nodding of the head be one

Translation: Solidarity among brothers is stronger when there is unity

96. **Proverb:** Otu onye buo ibu o nyigbuo ya

Literal translation: One person carry load it weighs him down

Translation: When problems are shared it creates relief

97. **Proverb:** Onye otu anya ji onye isi ugwo

Literal translation: Person one eye owe person blind debt

Translation: A lone ranger falls prey easily to misfortune

98. **Proverb:** O bu naani onye enweghi nwanne na-anya akpa agba egwu

Literal translation: It is only person without relatives is carry bag is dance dance

Translation: A person with many relatives always has people to help in any circumstance of life

99. **Proverb:** A gwa nti ma o nughi e gburu isi nti esoro

Literal translation: To tell ear but it does not hear if cut head ear follows it

Translation: If the ear does not adhere to advice, when the head is cut off, it follows it

100. **Proverb:** Ijiji na-enweghi onye ndumodu na-eso ozu ala n'ime ili

Literal translation: Housefly not having person advice it is follow corpse enter inside grave

Translation: One who refuses to head useful caution often lands himself into some avoidable tragedy

101. **Proverb:** Nwaanyi lelia di ya ike akpo ya nku

Literal translation: Wife rebuffs husband her buttocks dries her wood

Translation: If a woman ridicules her husband, her buttocks will dry up

102. **Proverb:** Okuko nti ike na-anu ihe n'ime ite ofe

Literal translation: Fowl ear strong will hear something inside pot soup

Translation: A stubborn fowl listens inside a pot of soup

103. **Proverb:** Irube isi kakwa ichu aja mma

Literal translation: To obey head is better sacrifice better

Translation: Obedience is better than sacrifice

104. **Proverb:** Ekweghi ekwe na-ekwe n'ute ekwere

Literal translation: Not agree agree is agree on mat weaved

Translation: A stubborn person will surely agree when the time comes

105. **Proverb:** Ka e letachaa ka mgbo ji atu enwe n'isi

Literal translation: Curiosity that made bullet to hit monkey on the head

Translation: Uncontrollable habit exposes one to an unforeseen disaster.

106. **Proverb:** Uru o bula adighi n'ukwu ukpana

Literal translation: Flesh of no kind not in the leg of a grasshopper

Translation: There is no benefit in any disobedient behaviour

107. **Proverb:** O dighi ebe esi ime ala eje na-abughi be ndi mmuo

Literal translation: No travelling underground road than not the land of spirits

Translation: No positive dividend ever comes from bad behaviour except regrets.

108. **Proverb:** Nwaanyi adigi ama uru di ya bara ganye mgbe o ghooro ajadu

Literal translation: Woman not know the importance husband her until she becomes a widow

Translation: One may not know the value of what one has until he losses it.

109. **Proverb:** Okenye gwara nwata ya egbule agwo abughi ka agwo hapu igwu n'ohia kama ka agwo hapu itagbu ya

Literal translation: Old man told child not to kill snake is not for snake to finish in the bush but for snake not to bit him to death

Translation: Any advice from an elder to a child must be for the child's own benefit and welfare

110. **Proverb:** O buru na omara ezi m anoghi n'ulo, nkita erie ihe e debere nwata

Literal translation: If a good adviser is not in the house dog eats thing kept for a child

Translation: The presence of an experienced person forestalls a lot of danger for young people

111. **Proverb:** Oke soro ngwere maa mmiri, mmiri koo ngwere n'ahu o gaghi ako oke

Literal translation: Rat followed lizard enter water, water dry lizard in skin but not dry rat

Translation: A person who joins bad company to commit crime may not be lucky to escape in the face of danger

112. **Proverb:** Onye nwere nkakwu bechalata ya onu ka onye nwere awo zopia ya afo

Literal translation: Person who has a shrew reduce its mouth length and person has toad press down the stomach

Translation: Every parent has the responsibility of advising their children for a collective enterprise

113. **Proverb:** Onye ugbo gburu nti chiri ya

Literal translation: The person train killed ear close it

Translation: Disobedient behaviour leads one to death or misfortune

114. **Proverb:** Oke na-agaghari n'okpuru okwute e dobere n'elu ogidi na-acho ihe ga-eti ya mbadamba

Literal translation: The rat that is wandering under a suspended stone is looking thing that will pieces it

Translation: Potential sources of danger is to be avoided always

115. **Proverb:** Onye atu gburu nna ya adighi ekwe eji mpi atu anu mmanya

Literal translation: A person buffalo killed father him does not accept horn buffalo to drink wine

Translation: One who has suffered misfortune in the past does everything possible to avoid a repeat

116. **Proverb:** Agbisi gba otile ya amuru ako

Literal translation: If ant sting buttocks it learns wisdom

Translation: Once bitten twice shy

117. **Proverb:** Anaghi eji ihe a na-agba n anti agba n'anya

Literal translation: Not to use thing for wear in ear to wear in eye

Translation: Caution must be applied in life to avoid danger.

118. **Proverb:** Anu bu uzo na-anu mmiri oma

Literal translation: Animal is first is drinking water good

Translation: The early bird catches the worm

119. **Proverb:** Ihe mere n'oge ya abughi aru

Literal translation: What happened during time it is not abomination

Translation: There is an appropriate time for everything

120. **Proverb:** Ukwa ruo oge ya o daa

Literal translation: Breadfruit reached time own it fall

Translation: Events of life unfold naturally or there is a natural course in everything

121. **Proverb:** O buru na nwata erughi eru gaa igba nta ele, ele awuo ya wuo egbe ya

Literal translation: If a boy not reached age goes to hunt an antelope, antelope jumped him over with his gun

Translation: When a youth usurps the work of an elder he may be risking his life

122. **Proverb:** Nkakwu siri na o na adi mma o ruo oge isi ka e sie isi, o rukwaa oge ifu oja ka a fuo oja

Literal translation: The shrew rat said is good time reached to emit odour to smell time reached to blow flute to blow it

Translation: Anything that is done at its due time must be done well.

123. **Proverb:** Ututu bu ahia mana ehihie buzi maka ekwurekwu

Literal translation: Morning is market but afternoon is for talking talking

Translation: He who uses his time well produces more than a loafer

124. **Proverb:** Onye ara siri na-ebe ya ga-agba egwu bara uba tinyere ebe ya ga atu okwute

Literal translation: Person mad said the place he will dance dance are big including the place he will throw stones

Translation: A busy man is uncomfortable with whatever that will waste his time unnecessarily

125. **Proverb:** Onye kwubere maka ya n'oge ka a na-enye anya agu

Literal translation: Person requested for it on time that receives eye tiger

Translation: One who declared interest on time is usually considered first

126. **Proverb:** Ohia siri onye ya nyere were ngwa ngwa n'ihi ndi bu umu ya di otutu

Literal translation: The forest said one it gives collect quickly because people is children him are numerous

Translation: Delay in making use of an opportunity could result in entire loss of it.

127. **Proverb:** O baghi uru a dachaa ada e wee buba ete mmiri

Literal translation: It is useless wetting the climbing rope after one had fallen from it

Translation: Misfortune is better prevented than checking it after the damage have been done or prevention is better than cure

128. **Proverb:** Nwata ya na okenye na-eme enyi adighi eme ihe n'oge

Literal translation: A child who with old man is making friend does not do things on time

Translation: A person's behaviour is often influenced by his friends

129. **Proverb:** Mmiri dooro n'ite dooro nwa nkita

Literal translation: Water kept in the pot is waiting for child dog

Translation: The work one supposed to do is always there waiting for the person

130. **Proverb:** Nku mmadu kpara n'okorobia ka o na-anya n'agadi

Literal translation: The firewood gathered during youth is what one burns at old age

Translation: Utilize your time well now that opportunity knocks

131. **Proverb:** Akpu ngu nnu nara a na-ata ya n'oku n'oku

Literal translation: Tapioca salad salt full is eaten fast fast

Translation: Quick response is needed to minimize loss

132. **Proverb:** O buru onu ka e ji aba ogaranya, onye ara ga-akacha umunna ya

Literal translation: If it is mouth that is used to be rich person mad would have surpassed his kinsmen.

Translation: A man of many words often achieves very little.

133. **Proverb:** Mgbe onye na-akwu udo na-acho osisi ndu ya ana-eto ogologo

Literal translation: When person about to hang himself is looking for stick his life is also being prolonged

Translation: Utilizing a particular time to achieve better results

134. **Proverb:** A naghi amu aka ekpe na nka

Literal translation: Not to learn use hand left at old age

Translation: Time lost can never be regained

135. **Proverb:** Ejighi uchichi ama ewu ojii

Literal translation: Not use night to know goat black

Translation: You don't know a black goat at night

136. **Proverb:** O ruo echi ka anyi chuo n'owere nchi

Literal translation: Let tomorrow reach so we pursue at Owerri antelope

Translation: We have tried for today, we will continue tomorrow

137. **Proverb:** Oge ife n'elu bia anyi efee n'elu, oge iga n'ala ruo anyi agawa n'ala

Literal translation: Time to fly up come we fly up time to walk on land come we walk on land

Translation: Know the appropriate time to act

138. **Proverb:** E jighi ututu ama njo ahia

Literal translation: Not to use morning to know bad market

Translation: Events may turn at any time.

139. **Proverb:** Anya kporo akpo anaghi n'ihi na o ka dikwa n'isi.

Literal translation: Eye blind is not totally wasted because it is still in the head.

Translation: Some damaged valuables can still be put into some use.

140. **Proverb:** Oke oha kaa nka o nuba ara nwa ya

Literal translation: Rat bush grow old will begin to suck breast child him.

Translation: Aged parents deserve the care of their children.

141. **Proverb:** Ejide ibe ji n'aka, a saa aguu okwu

Literal translation: One hold piece of yam in hand answer hunger talk.

Translation: A person is better encouraged to face his enemies when he has sufficient weapons at his disposal.

142. **Proverb:** Nwamkpi siri na ihe ya choro bu ka a gooro ya ofo ndu na o bughi maka ito ogologo n'ihi na tupu onye nwuru anwu aputa uwa ozo, onye di ndu agaghi ito ogologo.

Literal translation: The he-goat says that it is interested more in divination for long life and not for gaining height for the living must surely grow tall even before the dead can come back to life.

Translation: It is more rewarding to go after things of higher value first before pursuing trifles.

143. **Proverb:** Ngwere gbafe ukwu osisi aka akpara ya

Literal translation: Lizard run pass trunk tree hand catch it.

Translation: One exposes himself to dangers when he snubs a possible source of defence and hope in time of trouble.

144. **Proverb:** Nwata erighi n'ihi nne ya o rie ya n'ihu nna ya

Literal translation: Child not eat because of mother he eat because of his father.

Translation: A person with multiple benefactors enjoys a better welfare and security.

145. **Proverb:** O buru na onwu egbughi ji e jiri chuo aja o ga epu ome

Literal translation: If death not kill yam used for sacrifice, it will germinate and flourish.

Translation: A hopeful man always has a cause to smile at last.

146. **Proverb:** Chi nyere nwa ngwii ji awom ga-enye ya mbazu o ga eji egwuputa ya

Literal translation: God that offered an orphan yam in the swamp will give him digger he will use to dig it out.

Translation: There is always twilight of hope even when hopelessness looms.

147. **Proverb:** Ihe o masiri okuko ya daba oke onu ahia, o nwebeghi onye ji nnunnu wee goo mmuo

Literal translation: Even with fowl very costly in the market no one has ever used a bird for sacrifice to the gods.

Translation: Even in the face of great hardship, one can still survive with the little he has.

148. **Proverb:** Usu siri na onye nwere onu, mboaka ekwesighi ka ihe na enye ya nsogbu n'afo

Literal translation: Bat said that one with mouth and finger nails should not say something is disturbing his stomach.

Translation: A sensible person puts to better use whatever he has in order to solve his problems.

149. **Proverb:** O dighi ihe ukwara ga eme nwa enwe kama o pia ya naani agba

Literal translation: Nothing that cough will do child monkey instead it develop pointed mouth.

Translation: Hardship toughens people but does not kill anybody.

150. **Proverb:** Nwaanyi chekwube di ya o were mma gbuwaa okwu

Literal translation: Woman hope husband her she will use matchet to cut word.

Translation: One with strong backing approaches trouble with great confidence.

151. **Proverb:** E chekwube ogoli e rie n'ime abali

Literal translation: If one hopes on a woman he eats supper at midnight.

Translation: A person who places his hope on a man should await delay and disappointment.

152. **Proverb:** Mmiri ataala n'osimiri

Literal translation: Water has dried in ocean.

Translation: The worst has happened (water has dried up in the ocean).

153. **Proverb:** Oso ndu adighi agwu ike

Literal translation: Race life does not tire strength.

Translation: One can never get tired when running for one's life.

154. **Proverb:** Ma onwu egbughi nwa okwe o ga-eto ogologo

Literal translation: If death not kill child, okwe (kind of tree) he will grow tall.

Translation: If there is life, there is hope.

155. **Proverb:** O bu mmiri wufuru ite akuwaghi

Literal translation: It is water poured out pot did not break.

Translation: Pick the pieces and start all over again.

156. **Proverb:** Nke iru ka

Literal translation: The front is bigger.

Translation: Better days lie ahead.

157. **Proverb:** o bu isi na-etokata ha ka okpu

Literal translation: It is head is grow size reach the cap

Translation: There is always hope for a better tomorrow

158. **Proverb:** Enyi m nwoke onye umuahia si na tupu afo agamie, mmiri ezoo

Literal translation: My friend from Umuahia says before the year goes far, rain must fall.

Translation: A piece of advice which has the expectation of hope despite the hard times being experienced.

159. **Proverb:** O buru na oji aghaghi ugha ose agaghi agha ugha

Literal translation: If the kolanut not lie [pepper not lie lie]

Translation: Provided the kolanut does not prove deceptive the pepper will also be dependable

160. **Proverb:** Ozu sibe isi enyi ka nwanne alaa

Literal translation: Corpse begin smell friend greater than brother disappears.

Translation: Ones kith and kin can never abandone one in grave difficulty.

APPENDIX C

Biodata of Research Assistants Interviewed

1. Sir Vitus Unogu
   Ezeigbo II of Zaria, Kaduna State
   Age - 71
   Occupation - Retired Civil Servant
   Level of education – HND

2. Elder Livinus Obani Karforcha
   Age - 88
   Education – Standard six
   Occupation – Farming and Trading

3. Lolo Agatha Nnorom
   Age - 75
   Education – Not educated
   Occupation - Trading

4. Ichie Nkemdirim Onwukwe
   Age - 65
   Education – TC II
   Occupation – Retired Primary School Teacher

5. Oyiridiya Nneka Ojukwu
   Age - 68
   Education – Standard six
   Occupation – Farming and Trading

6. Uzoma Onuigbo
   Age - 70
   Occupation – Retired Headmaster

7. Ifeoma Nwankwo
   Age - 28
   Occupation – Youth Corper

8. Maxwell Okereke
   Age - 35
   Occupation - Trading

9. Stanley Nwaiwu
   Age - 30 years
   Occupation - Teaching

10. Chinecherem Onyemuchara
    Age - 40
    Occupation – Lecturing.

APPENDIX D

Questions used for the interview

SECTION A

A. Name

B. Sex

C .Age

D .Marital status

E. Occupation

F .Level of education

SECTION B

(1) How often do you speak Igbo language A. Always B. Sometimes C. Not at all

(2) How many Igbo proverbs do you know? 1-20, 21-40, 41-60, 61-80, 81-100

(3)Who uses proverbs most in your family or community?

(4)Can you situate a problem thematically?

(5)Do your parents speak or educate you in proverbs?

(6)What functions do proverbs perform?

(7)Have you heard of language extinction?

(8)State one reason that can cause language extinction

9. Would you choose Igbo studies as a career?

10. Did you do Igbo in your primary/secondary school levels?

11. Is there any relationship between Igbo language and Igbo proverbs?