

A SOCIO-PRAGMATIC STUDY OF OHAFIA PROVERBS

BY

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DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH AND LITERARY STUDIES,

FACULTY OF ARTS,

AHMADU BELLO UNIVERSITY,

ZARIA

OCTOBER, 2018

DECLARATION

I declare that the work in this Dissertation entitled **A Socio-Pragmatic Study of Ohafia Proverbs** was written by me, and that it is a record of my own research. It has not been presented in any previous application for a higher degree. All quotations and sources are acknowledged by means of reference.

UDONSI, Ezinne Oledi.

Signature

Date

CERTIFICATION

This Dissertation entitled **A Socio-Pragmatic Study of Ohafia Proverbs** by UDONSI, Ezinne Oledi, meets the regulations governing the award of the degree of Masters of Arts in English Language, of the Ahmadu Bello University, and is approved for its contribution to knowledge and literary presentation.

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to God Almighty, and to my parents, Barr. Amogu Aru Udonsi, and Mrs. Okechukwu Ola Udonsi.

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My immense gratitude goes to the Chairman of my supervisory team, who is also my Head of Department, Prof. T. Y. Suraka. Your constant scrutiny, corrections, and gentle nudges in the right direction contributed a great deal to the success of this work. Also, to the second member of my supervisory team, Dr. Saminu Isyaku, words are not enough to describe my appreciation for your attention to details, and for all the time you spent putting me through confusing areas, especially at the beginning stage of my research. Prof Joy Eyisi, thank you for coming just at the right time, and teaching me not to stop at ‘very good’ where excellence is possible. Your warm reception whenever I called and your attention to details are amazing.

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ABSTRACT

This Dissertation titled ‘A Socio-pragmatic study of Ohafia Proverbs’ was embarked upon by the researcher with the aim of drawing the attention of the Ohafia dialect speakers, proverb users, linguists, and the world to the dynamics, as well as the peculiarities associated with the use of Ohafia proverbs. This is done by pointing out the necessity of interpreting Ohafia proverbs within the confines of the cultural contexts in which they are used. This research answered questions on the relationship between the proverbs and the worldview of the people, the reason for the preference of the use of proverbs, instead of literal sentences in conversational situations, the role of context of culture and situation in the understanding and interpretation of Ohafia proverbs, and the place of social demography in the use of proverbs. In the course of reviewing related literature, it was observed by the researcher that although a number of works have been done on proverbs, and more specifically, on Igbo proverbs, little or nothing had been done on Ohafia proverbs, especially when placed side by side with the Ohafia society. The researcher, therefore, studied Ohafia proverbs, using Leech’s Socio-pragmatic theory and Sapir-Whorf’s linguistic relativity hypothesis as models, side by side with a look into the elements of background cultural knowledge, and the possible contexts of culture and situation contained in the proverbs. For easy assessment and analysis, these proverbs were arranged in a tabular form and categorized into two: opaque and transparent. After the tabular analysis, a general discussion followed, where the researcher evaluated the authenticity of the linguistic relativism hypothesis by finding possible relationships between the world view of the Ohafia people and their proverbs, and use of proverbs. In this process, the place of the Ohafia cultures, climate/weather, food, ways of dressing, social hierarchy, age, gender, relationships and beliefs, in the understanding and use of Ohafia proverbs were ascertained. It was, therefore found that among other things, the proverbs of Ohafia people cannot be used without background knowledge of their worldview. Also, the predominant preoccupations of Ohafia people (warring or serving as mercenaries, and hunting/farming) are very much reflected in their proverbs. By getting educated on Ohafia proverbs and their peculiarities, a person becomes familiar with the philosophies, traditions, culture and overall worldview of the Ohafia people.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0. Background to the Study

Human culture, social behaviour and thinking cannot exist in the absence of language. Language is the prime vehicle with which meaning is conveyed. According to Hall (1968:158) "Language is the institution whereby humans communicate and interact with each other by means of habitually used oral symbols". Jespersen (1933:1) remarks: "Language is nothing but a set of human habits, the purpose of which is to give expression to thought and feeling and especially to impart them to others". "Language is a set (finite or infinite) of sentences, each finite in length, and constructed out of a finite set of elements" (Chomsky, 1957). Leech and Short (2001) maintain that language performs a number of functions, and a piece of language is likely to be the result of choices made on different functional levels. Based on all the above definitions, Language is a semiotic symbol, by which man expresses himself, at the heart of which is communication. Proverbs generally constitute the mechanism of language that helps to spice up a communication process.

Defining a proverb at the initial stage proved to be a very difficult task because different scholars always came up with different seemingly non-related definitions. Hence Archre Taylor's classic "the definition of a proverb is too difficult to repay the undertaking... An incommunicable quality tells us this sentence is proverbial and that one is not. Hence, no definition will enable us to identify positively a sentence as proverbial"(1934;25). Another common reference is from Lord Russel (1850), as cited by Meider (1993:67), "a proverb is the wit of one and the wisdom of many". More constructively, Meider(1993) proposes the following definition "a proverb is a

short generally known sentence of the folk, which contains wisdom, truth, morals and traditional views in a metaphorical, fixed and memorable form, and which is handed down from generation to generation”. For Akmajian et al (2008:91) proverbs are “...traditional sayings, having a fixed general sentential form, alluding to a common truth or general wisdom with some (rudimentary) literary value used to guide action, explain a situation, or induce a feeling or attitude”. Hence, proverbs can be seen as specialized and solidified chunks of language, with specific values that are cut out for a specialized usage, and based on the definition of style as ‘the way in which a language is used in a given context by a given person, for a given purpose’ (Leech and Short, 1985), we can possibly see proverbs as an aesthetic effect achieved through language and as a kind of style in language use.

One can deduce from the foregoing that proverbs are statements which aim at philosophical proclamations through the use of wit, allusion, and imagery, and most times are based on shared beliefs or assumptions held prior to, or during occasion of interaction (mutual contextual beliefs), and which can be found in virtually all cultures and languages of the world, including the Ohafia variety of Igbo culture.

1.1.A Sociocultural Background of the Ohafia-Igbo People

Igbo is the official native language of the Igbo people (often erroneously spelt and pronounced "Ibo" because certain Europeans had difficulty making the /q̄b/ sound), who are indigenous linguistic and cultural people of southern Nigeria. Geographically, the Igbo homeland is divided into two unequal sections by the Niger River— an eastern (which is the larger of the two) and a western section. (Ofomata, 2005).

Known as Ndi Igbo in the Igbo language and sometimes identified by their respective Igbo dialects or subgroupings, such as the *Anioma* (many *Anioma* do not consider themselves as Igbos) and the Ngwa, the culture of the Igbos has been shaped primarily by Igboland's rainforest climate, its historic trades, ancient migration folklores and social ties with its neighbours as well as far-flung trading and political allies and lately with the Europeans through colonization and the entire Western World through globalization. They speak Igbo, which includes various Igbo languages and dialects, one of which is the Ohafia dialect, spoken by people from Ohafia.

Ohafia is a town situated in the present-day Ohafia Local Government Area of Abia State, in the South Eastern part of Nigeria. With an estimated population of 920,000 (NPC, 2011), Ohafia as an Igbo group or clan consists of 26 villages of varying sizes, most of which trace their ancestry to a common father, Uduma Ezema Atita. Thus, the people are often referred to as Ohafia Uduma Ezema. Their traditional homeland covers about 176 kilometres in the western part of the middle Cross River, and marks the eastern limit of Igbo land in that area. Some anthropological literatures have described Ohafia as a Cross River Igbo people. This description not only reflects their geographical location, but also the importance of that river to the people in the past. Ohafia has both Igbo and non-Igbo neighbours, the former include Abiriba and Edda to the North, Ihechiowa to the South, and Abam to the West. To the East, the latter include Biakpan, Agbanwan, Ikwun and Usukpam, all of which occupy a narrow strip of territory sandwiched between Cross River in the east and Ohafia in the west. The traditional Ohafia society did not constitute a single centralized polity; it was instead composed of village republics united into a unique commonwealth. Each of the 26 villages of Ohafia is an autonomous democracy, exercising the highest level of effective political and social control. Ohafia is thus best described

as a segmentary society. Nevertheless, all villages acknowledge the primacy of Elu village (Njoku 2000).

The ancestors of the Ohafia people were renowned warriors. According to Ume (1996), in the past, the culture of Ohafia was hinged around one's prowess in war. They were constantly on the lookout for wars in which to take part. They were invited by neighbouring towns as mercenaries to help them defeat enemies. The Ohafia warrior history gave birth to the performance of the *iri agha*, which means 'war dance'. During the war times, Ohafia warriors were known not only to kill their enemies, but behead them and return home with the heads. To them, a human skull was a souvenir, and it was proof of a man's courage which brought to him different types of honour. Therefore, for the war dance, human heads, usually three, placed on a plaque was carried on the head by a young warrior who was usually accompanied by two or more warriors wearing nothing but a loincloth tied around their waist. They danced to a local drum and chants done by yet another warrior, narrating the story of their victory (Ume, 1996).

The Ohafia people have different cultures which form their worldview. One of these is their matrilineal belief. They believe that a child belongs more to his mother and her family than to his father; therefore, in the event of the death of both parents, the child goes to his maternal relations. Also, because the family of the child's father is considered distant relatives, it is permissible for a person to marry his paternal relative. There are certain gender restrictions in Ohafia such as clothing restrictions, where women are not allowed to wear certain wrappers and cloths. There were also access restrictions where women are not allowed to go to certain places especially certain shrines, and initiation activities. There were serious consequences for going against these restrictions.

In Njoku's opinion (2000), another important culture of the Ohafia people is the age grade system; people of a particular age bracket, usually between two and three year's bracket come together as youths to form an age group. They work together for years to develop the community through various services such as vigilante services, peace keeping, and sanitation. When they get to a particular age, usually mid-life, they pick up a major project such as building a particular road, providing electricity, and even building a library or school for the community. When this is completed, they retire from active service to the community, and are celebrated in a huge retirement ceremony, after which they will be regarded as senior citizens of Ohafia. Other well embraced cultures include secret societies, which only men usually belonged to, honorific societies, which men who had done 'exemplary' deeds such as fighting in a war belong to.

The Ohafia people, like other Igbo speaking communities acknowledge four market days: Eke, Afor, Orié, Nkwo, where groceries as well as other day to day needs are bought. Food stuffs peculiar to the Ohafia, and some other Igbo speakers are sold here also. The dominant religion in present day Ohafia is Christianity, but before the advent of Christianity, deities such as *Kalu*, *Kamaalu*, *Ikwan di Orié* (*Ikwan*, the husband of *Orié*), *Orié* and many others were worshiped and revered. It is in light of this that festivals were done in Ohafia to appreciate deities as well as *Chineke* (the creator) for different gifts. One of such festivals is the New Yam Festival. This is usually celebrated after a yam planting season, and is done to thank the creator for a bountiful harvest, and the new yam is eaten only after this festival.

Ohafia people have various other belief systems which form their worldview. According to Ume (1996), the Ohafia man considers himself to be the major protector of his wife, children, and even his clan, because women are considered to be frail, weak and very vulnerable. Therefore, the Ohafia men see themselves as demigods to their women. This therefore subconsciously

affects the way they treat their women. On the good side, the women feel shielded from danger, and safe, but on the other hand, it always makes some of them feel unimportant. However, Njoku (2000) notes that "...this line of thought is fast fading, as western education has come to play large role in giving women a voice". There is also belief that trouble should be avoided at all cost, and peace should be reciprocated. Hence, a person or guest who comes in peace is welcomed with an equal amount of peace. This is taken so seriously that most Ohafia men usually have *nzu* (local clay) in their houses. This clay is smeared on a visible part of the body of their out-of-town guests. These guests then walk around the village freely, without fear of molestation, because anyone who sees this clay on them will know that they are legitimate guests, and that they have come in peace. On the other hand, a person who brings war with him is always met by the ready Ohafia warriors, who are trained with the skills and coordination to fight major battles (Njoku, 2000)

1.2.The Ohafia People and Proverbs

Among the Igbos, the art of conversation is regarded very highly. Besides the wealth of folklore, in the form of fables and legends, the Igbos have a generous store of proverbs, which are constantly used in specialized and everyday discourse. It is common knowledge among people of Igbo descent that indigenous Igbo proverbs play vital roles in speech, communication and exchange of knowledge and ideas among them. They are so profuse that often, it is impossible to understand the full meaning of a conversation without knowing some of the more common proverbs it is bound to contain.

Frequently, a question is asked to which no direct answer is given, instead, a proverb is quoted, hence Njoku's (2000) opinion that proverbs are widely used in the traditional society to describe in very few words, what could otherwise require a thousand words. Igbo proverbs are like storehouses and archives through which one can dig into Igbo philosophy, culture, economics, technology and general worldview. Hence Achebe's (1958) reference to proverbs as "... the palm oil with which words are eaten". In an attempt to elaborate on Achebe's statement, Nwachukwu-Agbada(2002:18) states that

"It is [for] this aesthetic principle of proverbs being first and foremost speech ornaments, that the Igbo proverb has been defined as any utterance which enjoys some traditional and social currency, and which is meant to beautify discourse and advance a user's viewpoint."

According to Onwuchekwa (2012:16), "the value of proverbs to the traditional Igbo man would be likened to the value of the holy book to a religious leader or the value of books to a serious scholar". He further implies that proverbs are a body of institution as they represent the only avenues through which the Igbo man stores and retrieves his philosophy and civilization. Proverbs also serve historical purposes for the Igbo users. As Nwachukwu-Agbada (2002:65) puts it, "proverbs have contributed significantly as authentic indicators of aspects of Igbo history". Most Igbo proverbs embody Igbo historical and cultural information, and carry out their immediate functions by making subtle references to events and phenomena in Igbo history, in which the Ohafia dialect and people actively participate.

Proverbs are as important to the Ohafia people as they are to other Igbo speaking communities. Most parts of speeches delivered during burials, weddings, coronations, political meetings and other social events are done using proverbs. Hence the need for a total comprehension and

deduction of Ohafia proverbs for a person who speaks Ohafia dialect, lives or works in Ohafia, or is interested in the Ohafia dialect of Igbo language

1.3.Statement of the Research Problem

Acheoah's (2012)statement that "half of the 6,000 languages which abound in the globe are spoken by adults who do not pass them unto subsequent generations" is one of the reasons for the interest of the researcher in this study. Ohafia dialect of Igbo language has not been left out of this alarming trait, hence, contemporary speakers of the language use proverbs inappropriately, without paying attention to the peculiarities in the socio-cultural and linguistic contexts, and without recourse to the fact that the proverbs that have emerged from sub cultures of Ohafia dialect have more to them than just their structure and general functions. This therefore leads to possible misinterpretations of the meaning of proverbs by some native speakers, as well as those who come in contact with the language, its people and its use.

While linguists have overtime attempted to shed more light on proverbs, and even Igbo proverbs, little has been done towards a socio-pragmatic study of Ohafia proverbs. The researcher finds this line of investigation to be of importance because it also accesses the peculiarities possessed by the Ohafia proverbs, and the Ohafia dialect. It also answers the question of the relationship between the Ohafia proverbs, the culture and the worldview of the Ohafia people.

1.4.Research Questions

Based on the problems mentioned above, this work intends to answer the following questions

1. What is the connection between Ohafia proverbs and the worldview of Ohafia people?

2. What is the role of background knowledge and Mutual Contextual Beliefs (MCB) in the proper understanding of Ohafia proverbs?
3. How do context of culture and context of situation determine/affect the use, disambiguation and comprehension of the meaning of Ohafia proverbs?
4. Why are proverbs used in place of direct utterances in certain conversational and communicative situations?

1.5.Aim and Objectives

Proverbs are culture bound linguistic elements, just like, in fact the entirety of language, which have the capability of revealing the cultural nuances of the society that has produced them (Ume,1996). Hence, the aim of this study is to draw the attention of the contemporary speakers of Ohafia dialect of Igbo language, as well as all proverb users to dynamics and the peculiarities in its use. This is done by pointing out the necessity of interpreting Ohafia proverbs within the confines of the cultural context in which it has been used.

It is therefore the intention of the researcher that this study achieves the following objectives:

1. To describe how the worldview of the Ohafia people influences their use of proverbs;
2. To examine the role of Mutual Contextual Beliefs (MCBs) and background knowledge in the use and deduction of Ohafia proverbs;
3. To determine the role of context of culture, and context of situation in the use, disambiguation and comprehension of Ohafia proverbs;

4. To establish the reason for the use of proverbs, instead of direct utterances in conversational and communicative situations;

1.6. Scope and Delimitation

This study focuses on a Socio-pragmatic analysis; it therefore employs some elements of Sociolinguistics and Pragmatics in its analysis, using Leech's Socio-pragmatic theory and Sapir-Whorf's Linguistic Relativism Hypothesis. Since Igbo is a language with a vast number of dialects which are sometimes mutually unintelligible, this study is restricted to the Ohafia variety of the Igbo proverbs. This is done also to enable the researcher undertake a thorough analysis of the peculiarities of the Ohafia people/society, and the ways in which those peculiarities reflect in their use of proverbs. As has been foregrounded earlier, Ohafia people are renowned hunters, farmers, and most distinctively, warriors. This work investigates if and how these occupations are reflected in their proverbs. Hence data collection is narrowed to one hundred (100) proverbs used in any of the 26 villages in Ohafia, also to ensure a detailed and thorough analysis.

1.7. Justification for the Study

There is no doubt that there are a number of studies on proverbs, some of which were conducted more specifically on Igbo proverbs. But very little has been conducted on Ohafia proverbs, and none has been done especially using the framework of socio-pragmatics, to the best of the knowledge of the researcher. This study focuses on a socio-pragmatic insight into proverbs used by the Ohafia speakers of the Igbo language. It therefore considers the social, cultural as well as the linguistic contexts of Ohafia proverbs in its analysis.

This work sheds more light on the nature of Ohafia proverbs, identifies the roles played by proverbs in educating students about the worldview of a people, determine the importance of

context in the interpretation and deduction of Ohafia proverbs, and create an insight into the reason for the use of proverbs in place of literal sentences in conversational situations. This research therefore serves as a reference document for teachers and students of Sociolinguistics, Pragmatics, Socio-pragmatics, as well as Paremiologists who intend to embark on further investigations into related areas of study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0. Introduction

This chapter is divided into three sections: Topical review which deals with literature on the concepts and linguistic terms that are relevant to the study, under the fields of Sociolinguistics, Pragmatics, Proverbs, and Culture. The second section reviews studies conducted by different scholars and researchers, as they relate to our work. The third part of this chapter discusses the theoretical framework adopted for this study.

2.1. Language

Language is an inseparable part of human society and the means through which human civilization has been possible. Language is a very important means of communication and it is quite difficult to think of a society without language. According to Sapir (1921:8) cited in Lyons (2002:3), "Language is a purely human and non-instinctive method of communicating ideas, emotions and desires, by means of voluntarily produced symbols." Bloch and Trager(1942) give their definition of language as "a system of arbitrary vocal symbols by means of which a social group co-operates." Another definition of language is given by Hall (1968:158) as "the intuition whereby humans communicate and interact with each other by means of habitually used oral-auditory arbitrary symbols". Afoloyan (1980:19) observes that "Language makes it possible for man to transmit thought across space or time. It is a means of socialization. It enables us to pull

our various kinds of knowledge, skills and abilities together and subsequently organize the community intricately on the principle of a division of labour”.

2.2. Proverbs

Etymologically, the word ‘proverb’ is derived from the Latin word ‘proverbium’. Just like any other term, proverb as a concept has different definitions. Ruth Finnegan opines that a proverb is a saying in a more or less fixed form, marked by popular acceptance of truth tersely expressed in it. According to her, a traditional proverb is a verbal concrete realization of a feeling for language, for imagery, and for the expression of abstract ideas, through compressed and allusive phraseology. (Finnegan 1970)

According to Onyemelukwe (2004:14), a proverb can be seen as “...a popular expression which succinctly conveys truth and wisdom with a view to teach, praise, commend, advice, correct, indict, warn, rebuke or castigate a person, or denounce, reprimand or condemn an undesirable act, behavior or a vice”. She further applies a systematic functional linguistic approach to analyze six randomly selected proverbs in Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart*, focusing on the contextual interpretation of the interlocutors’ utterances, with emphasis on immediate and wider contexts. She opines that proverbial language reflects the culture, values and ideologies of users in the mimetic world, which in turn mirror those of the ethnic group. This is no doubt the stand of this study. Bhuvaneshwar (2003), cited by Upah (2006) expresses reservation on the definition of proverb as a means of conveying wisdom, a view held by Onyemelukwe and majority of Ohafia users of proverbs. According to him, although many proverbs are coloured with wisdom, it is safer to consider them as expressing social practices, which is a wider term that can account for those that do not have wisdom in them. He observes that there is an inherent problem in

deciding what is wisdom and what is not in a proverb. To buttress this point, he asks if a woman will be better if “she is beaten more”, as expressed in the American proverb “a woman, a dog and a walnut tree: the more you beat them, the better they be?” He further asserts that this proverb is an impressionable cognition of social practices rather than sacrosanct expressions of wisdom. He therefore concludes that the truth condition of proverbs is an important area that has to be examined from a formal and functional linguistic perspective to know more about wisdom and social practices.

Surakat(2000) postulates that proverbs reflect a people’s philosophy of life, or worldview, and deal with all the aspects of human experience. Although the proverb is a universal form, there are certain social, psychological and ecological factors that determine the nature and/or context of a particular people’s wise-sayings. According to him, some proverbs make allusion to myths, legends, historical and cultural events that may be interpretable only by those who are familiar with the essence of the allusion. This implies that while some proverbs have a universal appeal, others are culture specific or localized.

Surakat (2000) holds the opinion that the functions of proverbs are numerous. They can be used to praise, warn, rebuke or castigate a person, just like they can serve to sanction virtues and condemn vices. According to him, proverbs can also serve as moralizing, sermonizing or didactic tools in the hand of the user. Strategies or user motives for applying proverbs can be in forms of persuasion, valorization, stigmatization, satirisation, condemnation, and so on. He concludes by noting that the essence or value of a proverb is in its suitability to the context in which it is used.

Writing on the importance of proverbs also, Ogbalu (1965:4-5) believes that the Igbo proverbs form the language of diplomacy, and are used in settling disputes, commerce, oratory and

settling bride price in marriage situations. He further stresses that the Igbo proverb is an accumulation of Igbo experiences throughout the history of Igbo. According to him, dialect differences exist among the Igbos, but the theme of the proverbs still remains the same. In his words, “there may be a few subject-words, or there may be dialectal differences, but the theme remains the same”. On the issues of usage, he says “it is not a good etiquette for a child to address his superior or elders in proverbs, especially ‘deep’ ones”. Still on the importance of proverbs in Igbo land (Ohaflia inclusive), he says that there is “...no language in which proverbs play a more important role than in the Igbo language”. While the researcher understands the viewpoint of Ogbalu, we still think it is a sweeping statement, expressing a myopic view, since he cannot claim to know in totality the importance of proverbs in all other human societies around the world.

Grobler (1994) in his study of proverbs, states that a proverb depends on mutual understanding between addresser and addressee. According to him, to be able to understand the implication of a proverb correctly, the addressee must not only be mindful of the specific circumstances in which it is uttered, but he must also be alert to the addresser’s intention, that is the specific correlation he has in mind. According to Nwachukwu-Agbada (2002:31) “the proverb draws attention to an event outside of it such that even a non-metaphorical saying is an encapsulation of a course of action or an observation which is the summary of the view of tradition”.

From Nwachukwu-Agbada’s postulation (2002) and all other definitions and descriptions of proverbs, including those already proffered here, we can highlight four major attributes or features of proverbs. The first is that it invokes a philosophical reflection over life and living. Secondly, it has literary and artistic quality. Thirdly, its meaning, though relevant to the explanation of a situation or phenomenon is not generated through a strict semantic or

grammatical analysis, but mainly through a context bound examination. The fourth feature is that proverbs are mainly communally owned, and provide a speech resource for any member of the society who knows them, can use them and wants to use them.

As has been earlier stated, there has been a long standing debate among proverb scholars (Paremiologists) as to whether the cultural values of specific language communities are reflected (to varying degrees) in their proverbs. While some claim that since many proverbs are so widely circulated, they are reflections of broad human experience, not only one culture's unique view point, many others claim that the proverbs of a particular culture reflect the values of that specific culture. The researcher agrees with the second school of thought, because to properly comprehend and interpret Ohafia proverbs, one needs to understand (to a large extent) the history, geography, culture and values of the Ohafia people.

2.3. Aspects of Sociolinguistics

Sociolinguistics is the descriptive study of the effect of any and all aspects of society, including cultural norms, expectations, and context, on the way language is used, and the effects of language use on society. Sociolinguistics differs from sociology of language in that the focus of sociology of language is the effect of language on the society, while sociolinguistics focuses on the society's effect on language. Sociolinguistics overlaps to a considerable degree with pragmatics. It is historically closely related to linguistic anthropology and the distinction between the two fields have even been questioned recently (Wardhaugh, 2007).

Fishman (1971:4) defines Sociolinguistics as “the study of the characteristics of language varieties, the characteristics of their functions, and the characteristics of their speakers as these three constantly interact, change, and change one another within a speech community”. Fishman

goes further to describe sociolinguistics as the discipline that seeks to determine who speaks what variety of what language, to whom, when, and concerning what. To Fishman, sociolinguistics is that which studies varieties of language, its functions and speakers.

Gumperz (1971) argues that sociolinguistics is an attempt to find correlations between social structure and linguistic structure and to observe any changes that occur. According to Bloom and Lahey (1978), over the years, in an attempt to define Sociolinguistics, different scholars have focused on different things, thereby giving different definitions, and that all the definitions are logical because most times, definition is based on what the scholar is out to achieve. To them, Sociolinguistics is a very broad field, and it can be used to describe different ways of studying language.

There is some opposition to the idea that sociolinguistic investigations should be confined to fairly straightforward correlational studies of this kind. Critics such as Cameron (1997) claim that these studies do not provide very satisfactory explanations for linguistic behavior because of inadequacies with social theory – sometimes there is none at all – and failure to appreciate the difficulties in using social concepts. What is needed, according to Cameron (1997), is more social engagement so that sociolinguistics would ‘deal with such matters as the production and reproduction of linguistic norms by institutions and socializing practices; how these norms are apprehended, accepted, resisted and subverted by individual actors and what their relation is to the construction of identity.’

According to Osuagwu (1997), the study of language as part of culture and society has been seen in different perspectives and called several names over the years; but the more general term is sociolinguistics. He believes that language is as necessary to the society as society is necessary to language; that to study language without a society is like to study anatomy without a body, and it

is doubtful if a language can exist without people. To him, it is doubtful if an individual, no matter how intelligent, can speak except in company of other speakers. In fact, that language is essentially social. According to Yul-Ifode (2008), an adequate definition of Sociolinguistics runs the danger of either being too brief or too vast. In her opinion, Sociolinguistics can be defined simply as the study of language as it relates to society. She further states that sociolinguistics can either be studied from the macro or micro perspective. The micro aspect deals with relationships between societies as a whole. By examining, for instance, how speech is used in social discourse. This is particularly so where different languages or varieties of language are in contact, and individuals make different choices at different settings, with different topics or persons. Individual speech at different times may therefore not be the same and varies according to the age of the speakers, their sex, social class, or region of origin.

Unlike micro-sociolinguistics, macro-sociolinguistics deals with the general problems of language functions in society (Yul-Ifode, 2008). A study of the relationship between language and culture, such as this research falls within the scope of macro-sociolinguistics. In this case, the language is viewed as a general social phenomenon within a linguistic setting, rather than a speech situation of the individual as in micro-sociolinguistics. While micro-sociolinguistics focuses on the speech and the individual, macro-sociolinguistics focuses on the speech, the individual, and the society the individual represents. There are different existing theories and variables of Sociolinguistics, but the ones found most relevant to this study by the researcher are discussed below.

2.3.1. Language and Society

Looking back at the history of linguistics, it is rare to find investigations of any language which is entirely cut off from concurrent investigation of the history of that language, or of its regional

and/or social distribution, or its relationship to objects, ideas, events and actual speakers and listeners in the real world. According to Wardhaugh (2007), we must acknowledge that a language is essentially a set of items which Hudson (1996:112) refers to as 'linguistic items', such entities as sounds, words, grammatical structure and so on. It is this norm, their status and their arrangements that language theorists like Chomsky concern themselves with. On the other hand, social theorists particularly sociologists attempt to understand how certain societies are structured and how people manage to live together. To do so, they use concepts such as 'identity', 'power', 'class', 'status', 'solidarity', 'face', 'accommodation', 'gender, etc. A major concern of a scholar of language and society is to examine the relationships between 'linguistic items', and the above mentioned concepts.

Since language is entrenched in society, there are many possible relationships between them. Wardaugh (2007) opines that a social structure may have a measurable influence on the linguistic structure and behavior. He supports this view by saying that the age grading phenomenon in which young children speak differently from older children, and children speak differently from adult; studies which revealed that the varieties of language use by speakers reflect such matters as their regional, social and ethnic origin, and sometimes, even their sex or gender, and other studies which show that particular ways of speaking, choice of words, and ways of conversing are greatly determined by certain social requirements.

Wardaugh(2007) gives another relationship that is opposite to the former. Linguistic structure he says may influence social structure. This view to him is behind the Whorfian hypothesis, the claims of Benstein and others who argue that languages rather than speakers of these languages can be sexist. A third relationship between language and society is that the influence is bi-directional. This means that language and society can influence each other. The first possibility is

to assume that there is no relationship at all between linguistic structure and social structure, and that each is independent of the other. Gumperz observes that sociolinguistics attempts to find correlations between social structure and linguistic structure, and to find out the change that may occur

2.3.2 Dialect

According to Osuagwu et al (1997), every speaker of a language always speaks a particular variety of the language he uses. That variety may differ in phonology, grammar and semantics or even in only one of them. To them, a particular variety of a language is what is called Dialect and a language may have a number of dialects. Osuagwu et al (1997), go on to say that Languages exhibit internal variations, that is, each language is in a number of varieties and are in one sense the sum of these variations. These definitions therefore allow one to treat all varieties of a language as a single language with little difference in distribution. And that most times, people find it difficult to decide whether what they speak is the language proper or the dialect of a language. Holmes (2008) is of the view that dialects are simply linguistic varieties which are distinguished by their vocabularies, grammar and pronunciations. Holmes goes further to say that, every user of a language speaks at least one dialect, and that, Standard English for instance is a dialect of English language.

In Yul-Ifode's opinion (2008), language varieties which initially and basically represent divergent geographical origins are known as dialects. She further explains that the dialect of a particular language can generally be understood by speakers of other dialects of the same language. According to her, it is the variety associated with a particular group of speakers and usually intelligible with other varieties. Njoku (2000) however does not agree with this

conclusion. According to him, there are some dialects of a language that are not entirely intelligible to speakers of other dialects of the same language. Two major types of dialect have been identified; regional and social dialects.

Regional Dialect- According to Osuagwu et al (1997), every living language has varieties either according to use or according to location. The latter variety is referred to as regional. For instance, Hausa language has Sokoto, Kano and other varieties. Igbo language also has many varieties. So does English language, Chinese language and other languages in the World. Wardhaugh (2007) observes that if one travels throughout a wide geographical area in which a language has been spoken for hundreds of years, one is almost certain to notice differences in pronunciation, the choices and forms of words and syntax. There may even be distinctive local coloring in the language. Such distinctive varieties are usually called regional variety of a language. Wardhaugh (2007) adds that a regional dialect marks off the residents of one region from those of other regions. In line with this, Holmes (2008) observes that, in most speech communities in the world, the region of origin determines which dialectical variety of the language a speaker uses.

Social Dialect- As opined by Trudgil (1983), a social dialect is a dialect which is thought of as being related to its speaker's social background rather than geographical background, he although suggests that there is a relationship between regional and social dialects. According to Osuagwu et al (1997), Social dialects are linguistic differences which correlate with the speaker's socio-economic class in the society. such variations involve feeling of 'high' and 'low' or 'good' and 'bad' forms of speech. Wardhaugh (2007) also opines that a social dialect would be

a variety associated with a specific social class or group, marking that class or group off from other classes or groups.

2.3.3. Culture

Hudson (1951:81) posits that culture refers to some property of community .especially those which might distinguish it from other communities. He elaborated more by saying that culture may be defined as “The kind of knowledge which we learn from other people either by direct instruction or by watching their behavior”. He contends that speech (language) is used by the older generation to transmit its culture to younger ones. He sees speech as an agent of socialization, although he says that not all aspects of culture is transmitted via speech, some are learnt by observation.

Goodenough (1957) shares the same opinion with Hudson when he posits “as I see it, a society's culture consists of whatever it is one has to know or believe in order to operate in a manner acceptable to its .members ... culture, being what people have to learn as distinct, from biological heritage, must consist of the end product of learning: Knowledge, in a most general ... sense of the term”

Goodenough’s assertion can be related to the Ohafia proverbs which is part of the Ohafia (Igbo) culture. For one to know and understand the Ohafia proverbs, one has to first understand the Ohafia culture. Summarily, Hudson and Goodenough are of the opinion that culture is a socially acquired knowledge and that a society's language is an aspect of its culture. This is what Goodenough calls "part to whole", emphasizing that the relation of language to culture is that of part to whole.

2.3.4. Language and Culture

According to Goodenough (1957), “a society’s culture consists of whatever it is that one has to know, or believe in order to operate in a manner acceptable to its members, and to do so in any role that they accept for any one of themselves”. Wardhaugh (2007) further explains this definition by clarifying that when he talks about culture, he does not intend to use the term in the sense of ‘high culture’, i.e, the appreciation of music , arts, literature and so on, but in the sense of what ever a person must know in order to function in a particular society.

To Wardhaugh (2007), the exact nature of the relationship between language and culture has fascinated, and still fascinates people from a wide variety of backgrounds. That there should be some kind of relationship between sound, words, and syntax of a language and the ways in which speakers of that language experience that world and behave as it seems obvious as to be a truism. It would appear that the only problem is deciding the nature of the relationship and finding suitable ways to demonstrate it.

The researcher finds Goodenough (1957)’s definition of culture to be accurate, as belief systems are what makes up the culture of a people. Their perspective on taboos, euphemisms, kinship, colours, and so on, make up their belief system, and eventually forms their worldview.

2.3.5. Communicative Competence

According to Upah (2006), to adequately analyze a context in which one uses proverbs, it is pertinent to know the kind of knowledge a fluent speaker of a language possesses in order to produce as well as understand contextually appropriate and comprehensive utterances in that language. The importance of context and competence to our analysis of Ohafia proverb cannot be over emphasized. This is because it is fundamental. In stressing the importance, Lawal et al

(1995) describe context and competence as the core and the most unifying. As applicable to all the proverbs, it is ‘meaning’ that unites the lexical, syntactic and phonological levels.

There are however, two levels of meaning at either the lexical or semantic levels: the primary or literal level, and the secondary or idiomatic/figurative level. The primary lower level feeds the secondary higher level through what would seem a fundamental and tacit assumption by all competent users that every proverb is an idiom of a sort, a tightly condensed representation of a fairly comparable and rather large group of possibilities of socio-cultural experience. ‘Linguistic meaning’ is thus transferred in part to ‘pragmatic meaning’ through the use of such figurative devices as metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche and symbolism. Hymes (1971) emphasizes the importance of communicative competence to include one’s knowledge and ability to use all the semiotic systems available to him as a member of a given socio-cultural community. Besides one’s knowledge and ability to use the systems in the community, there is an understanding of certain universal logical principles and general conditions of appropriateness that Grice (1975) has called “conversational implicatures” and Leech (1983) referred to as “the cooperative principle and politeness principle”.

2.4. Aspects of Pragmatics

Pragmatics generally is a linguistic field that deals with the relationship between the language use and the language users in situational contexts. It is a branch of linguistics which originally examined the problem of how ‘listeners’ uncover ‘speakers’ meaning, as opposed to ‘linguistic meaning’ Abaya (2001) gives an instance that “I’m thirsty” might need to be interpreted as ‘go and buy me a drink’ and should not necessarily be taken at face value as a simple statement. As a discipline, pragmatics developed as a reaction against the purely formalist approach to language.

Those interested in pragmatics believe that language use is of critical importance. Scholars have various definitions of the term 'Pragmatics'.

Kempson (1986) defines pragmatics as 'the study of the general cognitive principles, involved in the retrieval of information from an utterance'. Leech and Short (1987) insist that 'the pragmatic analysis of a language can be broadly understood to be the investigation into the aspect of meaning which is derived not from the formal properties of words and constructions, but from the way in which utterances are used and how they relate to the context in which they are uttered'. In a more recent study, Mey (2001) opines that pragmatics studies the use of language in human communication, which is determined by the condition of society.

Levison (1984:21) defines pragmatics as "the study of relations between language and context that are basic to an account of language understanding". This definition places emphasis on inference. This is to say that given a linguistic form uttered in a context, a pragmatic theory must account for the inference of presuppositions, implicature and other pragmatic implications. Levinson further defines the concept as "the study of the ability of language users to pair sentences with the contexts in which they would be appropriate" (p. 24). The central concern of this definition is the notion of appropriateness. Despite his two definitions, Levinson(1984) admits the difficulty of coming up with a definition that will adequately embrace the totality of the expectations that the study of pragmatics is expected to meet. He further observes that pragmatics is not a 'hodge-podge', concerned only with desperate and unrelated aspects of language; rather pragmaticians are especially interested in the interrelation of language structure and principles of language use.

Based on the above definitions of Pragmatics, it is clear that Pragmatics focuses on the contextual meaning of utterances, and this can only be communicated through certain pragmatic mechanisms such as implicature, presupposition, mutual contextual belief, speech act and reference

2.4.1. Presupposition

In speech and writing, there are some basic assumptions which the speaker and writer must make concerning the hearer or reader, in relation to the subject matter on ground. Such assumptions are made without any challenge from the interlocutors because they are built on assumed common ground.

According to Yule (2010), presupposition refers to “what a speaker assumes is true or is already known by the hearer” Strawson (1952) defines presupposition relation by stating that “a statement (S) presupposes a statement (S’), if and only if the truth of (S) is a precondition for the truth or falsity of (S)”. For example, I called my husband today= I have a husband. According to Osisanwo (2003), there are two types of presupposition: Semantic presupposition and pragmatic presupposition (which we are most concerned with).

While Semantic presupposition is concerned with the logical relations that hold between sentences, which is part of sentence meaning, pragmatic presupposition is concerned with the conditions required before a speech act can be considered for a given context. Another issue is that the assumption could be in relation to the speaker or the hearer or even the context. Osisanwo (2013) makes this clearer by referring to Pragmatic presupposition as assumptions and beliefs about the context or the presupposition whose truth a speaker takes for granted as part of the background of the conversation. They could be shared beliefs or background information.

2.4.2. Context

According to Grigas in Monye (2002), the importance of context is obvious in every natural use of proverb. Every proverb finds its real place in the specific environment causing its appearance. We can therefore say that proverbs, just like words, serve their function best when they are used in their proper context. In verbal communication, the proverb somehow awaits its topic of relevance, situation, or even statements in which it can display its full force and duty of suggestiveness. The meanings and ideas conveyed by the proverbs are less easily caught when they are quoted out of context, or in the absence of shared background knowledge.

Malinowski (1923) describes context as the immediate concrete circumstances about what was going on while the words are said. He further states that “the physical environments of a speech event, the participants involved in the discourse, as well as the cultural norms are the necessary guide for the interactants”. According to Lyons (1996:266) “context may tell us what sentence has been uttered from our discussion of locutionary acts...tokens of the same utterance-type can result from the utterance, on different occasions”. Here, context can be said to be a factor in the determination of propositional content of particular tokens of utterance inscriptions (in this case, proverbs).

Nuan (1993) identifies two types of context: the linguistic context which refers to the language that surrounds or accompanies the piece of discourse under analysis, and the non-linguistic context which includes the type of communication event that is taking place at a particular time, such as a joke or a story. Other things, according to Nuan (1993) are the topic of conversation, the setting, physical situation, the participants as well as the relationship between them and the background knowledge and assumptions underlying the communication event.

The two types of contexts: linguistic and non-linguistic contexts have direct bearing on Ohafia proverbs because for an understanding of particular proverb, both speaker and listener would have a proper understanding of both. For example, the Ohafia proverb: *okpa na-aga wara wara, anya na-aga wara wara afuya* (the legs that move swiftly will definitely be seen by the eyes that always look swiftly) here, in the linguistic context, ‘leg’ and ‘eye’ are synecdoche, used to mean a person who always walks the wrong way will definitely be seen by a person who looks the wrong way. In the nonlinguistic (social) context, the proverb warns a person who thinks he/she is smart enough to stray all the time with the thought that no one is watching, that someone is definitely watching him.

Lyons (1996:242), in discussing language and context, believes that the two are related because language use is sensitive to context. He further gives the following illustration:

“Let us suppose that John says “I’ll meet you at the bank” and Mary says “I’ll meet you at the bank”

In the two instances they have said the same thing, that is produced the same utterance-inscription, but have they uttered the same sentence? It is important to realize that we cannot answer this question without knowing not only what forms have been uttered, but also of what expressions they are formed. If ‘bank’ in John’s utterance is a form of financial institution, and ‘bank’ in Mary’s is a form of slopping side by the river, they have uttered different sentences.

This work therefore has a direct bearing on language and context because in most instances, a proverb could be bipolar because it could be uttered either positively or negatively. Based on this, in the interpretation of particular proverbs, it is important to realize that we need to know

what forms are uttered as well as what expressions are formed, that is if a particular proverb is praising or insulting.

Furthermore, Eggins (1996:7-8) stresses the importance of language and context with what is now famous statement:

“I suggest we attack the reds”

She suggests that the above statement taken out of context is ambiguous in a number of ways

- i. Playing a game- it is time to move out the red soldiers.
- ii. In choosing from a box of sweets- one is to take the ones with the red wrappers

Just like in any other language situation, context plays a very important role because any proverb quoted out of context will not really make meaning. For example

Ife Agwọọ mụ ya etweri ogologo (the child of a snake will definitely be long).

This could be positive or negative. If a child behaves well or does something good, someone could utter this to refer it to the parent(s) exemplary life. On the other hand, when the attitude of a child is bad, the same proverb uttered could mean an insult or disappointment in the child's attitude as a reflection from the parent(s). These types of proverbs are used often in Ohafia, and Sieterl (1997) classifies them as bipolar because they could be used either positively or negatively depending on the context.

To further appreciate the operation of proverb in the communication process, it must be investigated in terms of its use in specific contexts.

Context of Situation

According to Upah (2006), Malinowski first introduced this concept in 1923. However, linguists and anthropologists such as Hymes (1962), Gumperz (1968) and Ure (1971) among others helped to popularize the concept. The common area of agreement among these scholars is the fact that the concept is inevitable in any given speech event. To further stress the fact that the concept 'context of situation' is paramount to every speech situation, Malinowski (1946), as cited by Chukwuma (1974:11-12) observes that:

“The concept of meaning as contained in 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 linguistic context is a mere figment and stands for nothing by itself”

Malinowski then concludes that language is a means of social activity and cooperation. The meaning of an utterance in a particular set of circumstance is to be seen in its effect on the environment, which speech seeks to preserve and alter. We have therefore stated the meaning of an utterance, in this case, proverb when we have put it into its context of situation and we see what it does.

Shopen's (1979) research is on the use of proverbs in Maninka society of Mali. He observes that since proverbs are widely used in Maninka culture, a large inventory of them will have to be learned by any stranger wanting to become a good speaker of the language. In addition, it will be necessary for the new comer to learn how to recognize the situations in which each proverb can be used appropriately. To further buttress the relationship between proverbs and context of situation, he paints the following picture of a conversation in the society. Imagine a language learner, a man talking to an old Maninka gentleman, speaking with the control of the language that is obviously that of a newcomer, that is to say he is making a lot of mistakes. The old man

indulges a bit of ironic humour, saying something with a meaning that is opposite of what would seem appropriate for the situation:

The old man: Ah, you are becoming a Maninka,

You are speaking the language just like one of us

If the newcomer is gullible, this is how the dialogue might go:

The old man: Ah, you are becoming a Maninka,

You are speaking the language just like one of us

The newcomer: Gee, do you really think so? Thank you very much

The newcomer will have fallen into the old man's trap and come out looking close to a total fool. Thus, Shopen stresses that in such a society like Maninka where insults are taboo, one becomes sensitive to levels of praise. Given the context, what the old man has said would be best interpreted as the opposite of its literal meaning, and by implication, a criticism. If the newcomer accepts what has been said to him at face value, then he will in effect accept the criticism. With more sophistication on the part of the newcomer, the dialogue might go something like this:

The old man: Ah, you are becoming a Maninka,

You are speaking the language just like one of us

Newcomer: No matter how long a log lies in the water, it never becomes a crocodile.

This is really the kind of response the old man was looking for. As an ingratiating way of expressing his admiration for the newcomer's knowledge of Maninka culture, the old man might respond with another proverb:

The old man: ah my son, a log lying in the water is still a cause of fear

Hymes (1972) quoted in Edward (1976), categorizes speech situations into the following components. They are: form and content of text, setting, participants, ends (intents and effects), key, medium and interactional norms. However, Edward (1976) modifies these components by reducing them to three and these are: setting, participants, and topic.

- i. Setting: this refers to the locale, rather than the action
- ii. Participants: they are important because they give the discourse a clearly defined status, controlling what can be said by whom and how.
- iii. Topic: this is what the speech is all about. The seriousness and sensitivity of a topic demand appropriate language in any given speech event. In Ohafia society, the proverbs could be employed to caution, reprimand, or advice, amongst others.

According to Chukwuma (1974), Edward's components could be likened to Halliday and Hasan (1979) three components. They are:

- (i) Field: According to Halliday and Hasan, this is the total event in which the text is functioning together, with the activity of the speaker or writer. This could, in another way, be referred to as the topic or subject matter of a discourse.
- (ii) Mode: This is the function of the text/discourse in the speech event. This could either be spoken or written. The spoken channels elicit instant feedback between interactants because they

have to chat face to face. In the written mode, there is no visual contact, and thus, immediate feedback is not possible. Your data are gathered through both spoken and written channels for this research.

(iii) Tenor: This involves relevant social relations, permanent and temporary among the participants involved. For example, parent to child, or friend to friend. These are the possible roles one finds in a speech event, depending on the context.

Despite the important role context of situation plays in the understanding of an utterance, Ochs (1979) call for exercise of restraint, as the scope of context is not easy to define. One must, under any situation, consider the social and psychological world in which the language user operates at any given time it includes minimally, language user's beliefs and assumptions about temporal, spatial, and social setting; previous, on-going, and future actions (verbal and non-verbal), and the state of knowledge and attentiveness of those participating in the social interaction at hand.

Therefore, for the purpose of this study, context of situation refers to the possible messages and intentions that a proverb can pass across depending on the mood, tone and situation of its usage.

Context of Culture

Proverbs, as part of the Oral and written tradition of a language, best suit the purpose of transmitting the knowledge and wisdom gleaned in the course of centuries from one generation to the next. Proverbium (2002:339) states that “language is a reflection of culture, a result of culture, a part of culture and a condition of culture” it is precisely in the domain of proverbs where we can discover the values of a people either overtly stated, as in a proverb like “cleanliness is next to Godliness” or prescribed in the form of advice, recommendation, warning, allusion or observation. These values are revealed through the messages of the proverbs (ie their

denotative meanings) and intensified through their evaluative attitudinal characteristics, which make up a part of their conlocational meaning.

Abaya (2001) applies popular culture as a framework in the analysis of inscriptions on vehicles. According to him, some of the inscriptions on vehicles, which are proverbial in nature "... have to do with the beliefs and practices of the people". He identifies four characteristics of popular culture, which are:

- i. Artistic creation
- ii. Widely mediated through the media.
- iii. Contain elements of what is old and elements of what is new
- iv. Widely employed.

He further argues that the inscriptions on vehicles tend to communicate certain values and also make meanings in the culture of the people who write them. This is because they contain certain things that are important to culture such as political, economic, religious, cultural, desirable and undesirable beliefs.

Onyemelukwe (2004), who uses the systematic functional linguistic perspective in the analysis of proverbs in Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* is one of the opinion that the combination of the context of culture and context of situation gives rise to the disparities and resemblances found between one language and another. She draws the conclusion that in analyzing a human language; one is to take cognizance of the people's culture. This is true because by speaking their proverbs, the people in a way ensure the passing of custom and tradition to the succeeding generation in their society.

Hence, for the purpose of this study, elements of context of culture refer to words or items that one can resonate with, based on one's familiarity with, or background knowledge of that word or item, which comes as a result of one's knowledge of a particular culture, and what that word/items means to the people of that culture based on their established worldview.

2.4.3. Mutual Contextual Beliefs (MCBs) and Background Knowledge

Grice concentrated on studying the difference between what is said and what is meant. He realized that to understand an utterance one needs not only shared general knowledge of the world, and linguistic knowledge; but also knowledge of communicative principles which guide interlocutors and which are part of their communicative competence as well as shared contextual knowledge

According to Osisanwo (2003), the concept of mutual contextual belief was brought about by Bach and Harnish (1979). In a speech event, a speaker has an intention and the listener or hearer will make some inference, and both of them will base their role on certain facts shared by them. Such facts, which are well known to both interlocutors and are vital to the encoding and decoding of messages, are called Mutual Contextual Beliefs. Numan (1993:6) defines background knowledge as "the theory of the world which the reader and listener makes sense of in interpreting a piece of spoken or written language". Several scholars have given different postulations about background knowledge. Sacks (1967), cited in Upah (2006) specifies how the speaker's implicit use of these expectancies generates conversation exchanges. Among the most important of these are the social categories or social reactions implied by speech content. Hudson (1983:77) identifies three kinds of knowledge:

- i. Cultural Knowledge: this is knowledge learned from other people or which we create because we see that other people around us make use of them in their thinking.
- ii. Shared non-cultural knowledge: this is shared by people within the same community or the world over, but it is not learned from each other, rather, it is built without reference to other people as a convenient way of interpreting our experience.
- iii. Non-shared non-cultural knowledge: knowledge which is unique to the individual.

For a proper comprehension of Ohafia proverbs, the speaker, as well as the listener needs background knowledge. Hence Bach and Harnish's (1979) proposal of an intention and inference approach to speech act. They argue that illocutionary acts are performed (uttered) with the intention that the hearer identifies the act being performed. They therefore affirm that linguistic communication is basically an inferential process. They propose that in general, the inference made by the hearer is not just based on what the speaker says, but also on mutual contextual beliefs. Because of the role of background knowledge, it is often very difficult for an intruder to understand proverbs without having some kind of background knowledge. For example, the direct translation of the proverb

Uziza afughị ufu, oshighị ishịis

Uziza (a peppery and scent leaf used as a spice in Ohafia soups and pepper-soups) did not burn the tongue, and did not scent. This proverb is used to talk about someone that fell short of expectations.

For this proverb to convey complete meaning, both interlocutors, the listener especially must have background knowledge of what *Uzizais*, and its peculiar features.

2.5. Dell Hymes' Ethnography of Communication

Dell Hymes is considered by many to be the founder of the area known as Ethnography of Communication. In 1962 he proposed "ethnography of speaking" as a way to study how people talked. Later the name was changed to include other symbolic means of expression and called ethnography of communication. One of his goals was to create a theory that helped researchers study language use in specific contexts (at that time, some researchers in the field of Linguistics were trying to study language by itself, removed from the times and places people talked). Hymes thought that by looking at how people actually use language, patterns could be discovered that otherwise would not be, by just looking at the words themselves.

Hymes (1974) states that, "the starting point is the ethnographic analysis of the communication conduct of a community" (p. 9). Communication conduct is what people do when they communicate with each other. He set out to show that researchers could use his methods to study this communication (talk) systematically. To study the communication of a particular culture, Hymes proposed basic units that indicate which area of the culture one is most interested in examining. He set forth the following 6 units: speech community, speech situation, speech event, communicative act, communicative style, and ways of speaking.

The primary unit, speech community, follows from the description of linguistic community proposed by John Gumperz (1962). A speech community is comprised of a group of people that often use common signs. Because they communicate in a particular way, they are different from other groups. Hymes (1972) also defined a speech community as people who share "rules" for when and how to speak (p. 54). In 1974, he said that for someone to be counted as a member of a speech community, he or she must share at least one "way of speaking" with others. Hymes later

includes the meanings of what people say. For instance, users of a particular website may be considered a speech community if they share particular rules for speaking online. Or perhaps, those who ride skateboards may be considered a speech community if the way they communicate is distinct from how those who do not ride skateboards communicate.

Hymes' second unit, the speech situation, occurs within a speech community. You can find a speech situation by finding times when people talk or don't talk. A train ride or a class in school is an example (Saville-Troike, 1982). The third unit is the speech event. A speech event has a beginning and end. It also refers to activities that are governed by rules or norms for speech (Hymes, 1974, p. 52). For example, Hymes (1972) describes a party as a speech situation and a conversation at the party as a speech event.

Communicative acts, the fourth unit, are smaller units of speech. This unit describes what action is getting done when particular words are used. Examples within a speech event of checking out groceries could include requesting the price of an item and paying for the groceries. The fifth unit, communicative style, refers to the way someone usually speaks. You could say that it is characteristic of someone to speak in a certain way. Someone's style also can be noted by patterns in their speech. For some women, the use of "trouble talk" becomes the communicative style by which they are characterized. For users of this style talking about problems is common (Tannen, 1994). Another style is the use of Dugri for some Israeli speakers (Katriel, 1986). This style is considered more direct by those who prefer an indirect style of speech.

The sixth and final unit, ways of speaking, refers to speech not necessarily within one of the other units. Ways of speaking can refer to styles of speech that may be used in various situations and events. It can also be used to describe speech patterns that are characteristic of a culture. For

example, answering a telephone in English can be considered a way of speaking because it is characteristically patterned. One often waits for the phone to finish the ring before picking up. The person who answers begins speaking first, as opposed to the one calling (Schegloff, 1968).

Hymes went ahead to develop eight tools that can help in an analysis of the ethnography of communication. These tools can be remembered easily by thinking about the word, S.P.E.A.K.I.N.G. By using all, or selected units of the tools of S.P.E.A.K.I.N.G., a researcher opens up the potential meanings of a speech community.

S. The first letter ("S") designates Situation, which includes both the scene and the setting. This is where the activities are taking place and the overall scene in which they are a part.

P. The second refers to the Participants involved. This area includes the people present and the roles they play, or the relationships they have with other participants.

E. Next, the Ends or goals of communication can be studied.

A. Acts, or speech acts include both form and content. That is, any action can be considered a communicative action if it conveys meaning to the participants.

K. One can also choose to focus upon the Key or tone of speech. How the speech sounds or is delivered.

I. Instrumentality or the channel through which communication flows can be examined.

N. The Norms of communication or the rules guiding talk and its interpretation can reveal meaning.

G. Finally, one can look at cultural or traditional speech Genres, such as proverbs, apologies, prayers, small talk, problem talk, etc.

By using these tools (S.P.E.A.K.I.N.G.) to analyze one unit, such as particular speech community, one can come to learn more about how people communicate and how that communication is often patterned. Hence, not all the units and tools are needed in every analysis. It all depends on the questions that a researcher is interested in asking as to what units or tools they will choose.

2.6. Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis

According to Wardhaugh (2007), the long standing claim concerning the relationship between language and culture is that the structure of a language determines the way in which speakers of that language view the world. A somewhat weaker version is that the structure does not determine the worldview but is still extremely influential in predisposing speakers of a language towards adopting a particular worldview. These claims are today most associated with the Linguist Sapir, and his student Whorf, hence the title- The Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis. The ‘weaker’ claim has intrigued many anthropologists and linguists and there is a fairly extensive literature concerning it.

Sapir acknowledged the close relationship between language and culture, maintaining that they were inextricably related, so that you could not understand or appreciate one, without the knowledge of the other. According to him,

“Human beings do not live in the objective world alone, nor alone in the world of social activity as ordinarily understood, but are very much at the mercy of the particular language which has become the medium of expression for their society. It is quite an illusion to imagine that one adjusts to reality essentially without the use of language and that language is merely an incidental means of solving specific problems of

communication or reflection. The fact of the matter is that the 'real world' is to a large extent unconsciously built upon the language habits of the group. No two languages are ever sufficiently similar to be considered as representing the same social reality. The worlds in which different societies live are distinct worlds, not merely the same world with different labels attached... We see and hear and otherwise experience very largely as we do because the language habits of our community predispose certain choices of interpretation” -Sapir (1958:69)

Benjamin Whorf, in his attempt to elaborate on the relationship between language and the worldview of its speakers, states that:

“We dissect nature along lines laid down by our native languages. The categories and types that we isolate from the world of phenomena we do not find there because they stare every observer in the face; on the contrary, the world is presented in a kaleidoscopic flux of impressions which has to be organized by our minds - and this means largely by the linguistic systems in our minds. We cut nature up, organize it into concepts, and ascribe significances as we do, largely because we are parties to an agreement to organize it in this way - an agreement that holds throughout our speech community and is codified in the patterns of our language. The agreement is, of course, an implicit and unstated one, but its terms are absolutely obligatory; we cannot talk at all except by subscribing to the organization and classification of data which the agreement decrees” -Whorf (1940:213-14)

According to Pinker (1994), the theory of linguistic relativity is known in two versions: the strong hypothesis (= linguistic determinism) and the weak hypothesis (= linguistic relativism). It is necessary to clarify that the words “strong” and “weak” are not related to the strength of the scholarly argumentation, but rather to the degree to which language is assumed to influence our thought and behaviour. According to the strong version, the language we speak determines/constraints the way we think and view the real world. According to the weak version, the language does influence to some extent the way we think and view the real world, however, does not fully determine or constraint it.

The ability of people to learn and to speak multiple languages casts doubt on the strong version of the theory, since a person may learn many different languages, but this does not change the

way he/she thinks. Therefore, the strong version of Sapir-Whorf hypothesis is refuted by the greater majority of linguists and anthropologists.

Although criticized by formalists (e.g. Berlin & Kay, 1969) who argue that all languages share the same structure (hence, all people view the world identically, according to formalists), the weak Sapir-Whorf hypothesis still continues to interest scholars across many fields and disciplines including linguistics, anthropology, sociology, and psychology. Some scholars devised experiments in order to acquire empirical (i.e. based on an experiment) evidence concerning the hypothesis. One of such experiments was devised and conducted by Kay and Kempton (1984). The scholars invited two groups of monolingual participants: 1) English speakers and 2) Tarahumara (a Uto-Aztecan language of northern Mexico) speakers. Unlike English, Tarahumara does not have separate words to differentiate between “green” and “blue” – Tarahumara has one word “siyóname” which means “green or blue”.

Both groups of participants were presented with several chips of different colours: a) green, b) light blue, and c) dark blue. The results of the experiment showed that in 29/30 cases, the English-speaking participants sorted the chips based on their colour (relying, thus, on the categories established in their language). The Tarahumara speakers, in turn, who do not have such categories in their language demonstrated almost perfect 50%/50% split in choosing an odd chip. These results affirm the theory of linguistic relativity since language has been shown to influence the participants’ behaviour.

It is worth mentioning that neither Sapir nor Whorf suggested the distinction between the strong and weak versions of the theory of linguistic relativity. It is also worth mentioning that both Sapir and Whorf were critical of any endeavours to overemphasize the role of language in

thought or non-linguistic behaviour characteristic of the strong version of the hypothesis. While linguists generally agree that the weaker Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis, also known as linguistic relativism, can be shown to be true to some extent, there are criticisms of the stronger form of the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis, also known as linguistic determinism. Among the criticisms of the strong form of the Hypothesis are:

One of Whorf's central arguments in his paper on language determining thought was that the Hopi terminology for time gave the Hopi a different and unique understanding of how time worked, distinct from the typical Western conception of time. Pinker (1994) argues that Whorf had never actually met anyone from the Hopi tribe and that a later anthropologist discovered, in fact, the Hopi conception of time was not so different from the traditional Western understanding of it.

Also, there is the problem of translatability: if each language had a completely distinct reality encoded within it, how could a work be translated from one language to another? Yet, literary works, instruction manuals and so forth are regularly translated and communication in this regard is not only possible, but happens every day.

Based on the above, we are of the opinion that the weaker version of the hypothesis (Linguistic Relativism) holds more water. This is obvious in the languages spoken within our immediate environment, as well as in the dialect under analysis. Hence, our choice of this version of the hypothesis as a part of our theoretical framework.

2.6. Authorial Review

This section reviews, and critiques previous works done by scholars, which cover aspects of this study. Most of the works reviewed are written on Proverbs, especially Igbo Proverbs, and then there are works on sociolinguistic studies, and a study which focuses on Ohafia specifically.

Upah (2006), in a pragmatic study of Jukun proverbs, opines that proverbs in any language represent the quintessence of the people's collection of wisdom sustained and transmitted from generation to generation. He further opines that due to their polymorphous nature and the varied contexts in which they are used, a close study of proverbs of any one language can provide significant insights into how human languages are used for special communicative purposes. He focused his concern on identifying the illocutionary acts performed through the use of some selected Jukun proverbs. Upah goes further to analyse the types of pragmatic contexts and competence which listeners have to invoke and deploy to interpret them. To establish this, he uses one hundred proverbs that are commonly used in Jukun language, and traced their sources to fifteen roots: talking instruments, songs and chants, individuals, natural phenomena, riddles, names, oral poetry, historical experiences, folktales, mourning the dead, traditional attires, exclamatory remarks, divination, obscenity and proverbs from neighboring villages. On the basis of his findings, Upah (2006) establishes that gender and age are strong factors in the use of Jukun proverbs because "...in any general Jukun gathering, women and children are not expected to speak in proverbial terms". He also concludes that Jukun proverbs are said to be "... a variable tool for affecting and effecting desirable action, as well as protecting the Jukun cosmology among its speakers"

We find his classification of the roots of proverbs particularly interesting, and even hugely familiar to the roots from which Igbo proverbs are gotten, except for minor disparities. Also, his reference to proverbs as a variable tool for protecting the Jukun cosmology among its speakers is seen to be very accurate, as it applies not just to Jukun language, but to the Igbo language as well.

Agu (2010), in her bid to investigate the place of pragmatics in Igbo proverbs observes that proverbs play crucial communicative and pragmatic functions in Igbo language. Their social and contextual importance have been attested to by ethnographers, philosophers of language, literary experts as instruments by which speech is garnished and sustained among the Igbo people. Agu (2010) observes that it is perhaps unimaginable that a speech event involving competent Igbo adults will be conducted and concluded without the use of proverbs, which must be deemed contextually suitable and appropriate if they are to achieve the purpose for which they are being used. She further notes that in spite of their linguistic and pragmatic importance, Igbo proverbs have not been accorded critical linguistic and especially pragmatic focus in research particularly in view of the centrality of contextual features to the interpretation obtained. It is on this basis that Agu (2010) examines Igbo proverbs used in specific social contexts for their pragmatic values.

At the completion of the research, Agu (2010) finds that in spite of technological advancement, proverbs are still profusely used in Igbo traditional societies. However, there is more to the meaning of a proverb than the mere mechanistic examination of its form. She concludes that pragmatic mappings of context and competencies at the linguistic, situational, psychological, social, sociological and cosmological levels as well as other pragmatic features such as mutual contextual beliefs (MCBs), the intentions of the speakers and hearers, presuppositions,

inferences, implicatures, and intuition all affect the meaning of a proverb in any linguistic situation. We find this conclusion to be accurate and applicable in properly comprehending proverbs, including Ohafia proverbs.

Tatira Liveson, in illustrating how proverbs and other witty sayings have been ‘liberated’ and disseminated in Zimbabwe through the Mass media, opines that proverbs permeate virtually all economic activities in contemporary Zimbabwe, by means of radio, television, newspapers, and so on (Liveson, 2001). She further highlights some of the uses of proverbs which include the fact that proverbs are used as titles of programs, and infused in different aspects of the language behavior of the people. According to Liveson (2001), proverb as a genre is timeless as they represent comprehensive summaries of past experiences and truths that have been tested by earlier generations. She concludes that proverbs can be effective as commercial advertisements because they fulfill traditional functions, can summarise a long story, are used to assist in decision making, therefore can help in influencing potential customers. The researcher agrees with Liveson (2001)’s findings, which show that the importance of the role of proverbs, and their influence, even in our contemporary society cannot be over emphasized.

Writing on the importance of Igbo proverbs, Ogbalu (1965: 4-5) believes that the Igbo proverb form the language of diplomacy, settling disputes, settling bride price, commerce and oratory. He sees the Igbo proverb as an accumulation of Igbo experiences throughout the history of the Igbos. Ogbalu recognizes the fact that dialectal differences inherent in the Igbo language have made it possible for different areas of Igboland having different ways of saying a particular proverb, although he believes that the theme of that proverb remains the same. According to him: There may be a few subject-words or there may be dialectal differences but the theme remains the same. On issues of usage, Ogbalu has this to say: “however, it is not a good etiquette for a

child (or junior for that matter) to address his superior or elders in proverbs especially deep ones. There is an Igbo proverb to this effect: *Nwanta tūo ilū nna ya tūo, ya kwūo ugwō nna ya kwūru*. This means that if a child quotes the proverb his father quoted, he will pay the fine the father paid. However, Ogbalu did not specify the age limit one gets to before he is allowed to use proverbs in Igbo land neither did he say why women are not allowed to use proverbs in Igbo land. He also failed to tell us what he meant by "deep ones" in the passage.

In his contribution to the importance of proverb in Igbo land, Ogbalu says; "In no language do proverbs play a more important role than in Igbo". While we understand the reason for that statement, we believe that his assumption is not correct because other people from different other languages regard their proverbs very highly. He believes in "what other writers have said on proverbs as being the experience of a certain people condensed into words. He sees the real essence of proverbs in metaphors and warns that proverbs lose their flavour and aptness when paraphrased or translated from one language to another. He is of the opinion that with proverbs, one can make oneself clearer and understood by the people; can make unpleasant things sound pleasant; convince one's audience and win one's argument. He cherishes the knowledge and appropriate usage of proverbs because it shows maturity and solidarity on the part of the user.

Okonkwo (1974:107-109) agrees with Ogbalu (1965) that the Igbo proverb reveal a lot of the Igbos themselves. He posits that the Igbo proverb is the experience and wisdom of several ages gathered and summed up in one expression. He goes ahead to say that some nations quote the Bible or the works or maxims of acknowledged authorities or wise men, but the Igbos quote proverbs to support and give authority to an idea or a disputed fact. He gives an example with a short story:

There was a case of two people contesting the ownership of a bread fruit tree standing right on the boundary between their two pieces of land. When the matter was referred to the traditional rulers and judges known as "*ndị ichịe*", after much deliberation, an elder said, *ndịIgbo tūrū ilū si na Osịsị dī n'oke dawara oke*. This means that "the Igbos say that a tree on the boundary breaks the boundary". The bread fruit tree, he explained belongs 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.

Okonkwo later proposes three levels of meaning in the study of Igbo proverbs: the philosophical, the literal and the contractual. The philosophical bears the general truth and is very important. He gives an example using a proverb:

Ka eletachaa ka mgbọ jị atụ anwụ n'ịsị

"Let's look at everything, makes the bullet hit monkey on the head"

At the philosophical level it means - Too much of everything is bad.

At this level, the universal truth is clearly brought out.

At the literal level, the universal truth is not seen; rather the proverb conjures an image of a monkey shot because it was moping too long at the hunter.

At the contextual level, the proverb applies to and illustrates a given situation which could mean an unnecessary delay in doing something. For example: A woman spent her time in prolonged and unnecessary shopping and thus missed her vehicle home. It got dark and she got confused. This proverb can apply to this kind of situation.

Surakat (2000), conducting a systemic linguistic analysis of Zainab Alkali's *The Stillborn*, a novel, which focuses on the experiences of women in contemporary Nigeria. It follows the adolescent plans and dreams of Li, as she struggles for independence from the traditional values of her family, home, marriage, and the lures of the city and all it can offer. Surakat (2000) noted that proverbs reflect a people's philosophy of life or worldview, and deal with all aspects of human experience. According to him, it is apparent that the author has borrowed proverbs from some Nigerian cultures, and has translated them to English, hence the proverbial essence of the translated versions may not be glaring, especially to the readers who are not acquainted with the source language, partly because according to Taylor (1934), "people who do not speak a language can never recognize all its proverbs".

Surakat (2000) observes that the appropriation of traditional African sayings is not only for aesthetic reasons; it also reflects the cultural milieu of the story. Illiterate village folks cannot be expected to speak in Standard English Idioms and Proverbs, a style that is more appropriate for city dwellers, especially the educated ones. African worldview, sensibilities, logic, perception, attitude and value systems are also portrayed in the indigenous proverbs, although some of them have a universal or international appeal.

Surakat (2000) concludes that even the title of the text itself '*The Stillborn*' is proverbial or otherwise a literary metaphor which depicts the oddity of this world, and the fact that human confidence is vanity. According to him, it is in this context that one would appreciate why most of the proverbs used are strategically negative. In essence therefore, the appropriate, creative and dynamic application of proverbial language has contributed immensely to the success of *The Stillborn*.

Analikwu (1994) devotes much time to the use of Igbo proverbs in marriage ceremonies and breaking of kola-nut only, using as case study Idemili Local Government Area of Anambra State. In his work, he was able to debunk the claim that the Igbo proverbs are meant for elders only. He gives examples of some proverbs used in marriage ceremonies and breaking of kolanut without saying why they are appropriate, Analikwu quotes Achebe that "proverbs are the palm oil with which words are eaten"; Analikwu goes further to opine that proverbs do more than that, "they also provide the salt which gives taste to the words". Analikwu observes that although Igbo proverbs have attracted a lot of attention from Africans and foreigners, most of the attention has resulted largely in collection, description and explanation of proverbs, that more works need to be done in the areas of usage, and proverbial form, which this work seeks to investigate.

Emetu (2009) in a sociolinguistic study of names and naming in Amaekpu, a village in Ohafia discovered that Ohafia people do not bear names based on the denotative meaning. Also, that Ohafia names do not get altered to recognize masculine feminine gender as is obtainable in English language. For example: Christian and Cristiana, Daniel and Daniela. But Ohafia people have different names meant exclusively for different genders. She is also of the opinion that while Ohafia names have meanings, Ohafians do not bear names based on their meanings but on the context on their birth on events surrounding their birth. She further states that the meaning of a name does not only surround the literal meaning attached to it, but also the people, society and other linguistic segments involved. Emetu concludes by saying that names involve a number of personalities; the bearer and the 'namer', and then to a large extent the general public or the society. This conclusion, and other assessments done by Emetu(2009) is seen to be true and accurate by the researcher, as it gives an insight into the way the culture of the other people affect different areas and aspects of their lives.

Davids (1980:6) is of the opinion that "proverbs emphasize, modify, confirm, nullify and finalise topics". She believes that intelligent people are known by the apt way they use Igbo proverbs and are respected as such. She says: he who speaks in proverbs, speaks in force and does retain the attention of his learners. An Igbo man will say: *Mgbe ilum gwuru, ka ukam gwuru.* meaning "When my proverb is finished, my talk is finished". Nzimiro (1972) agrees with Davids (1980), Okonkwo (1964) and Ogbalu (1975). He sees Igbo proverbs as revealing many things about the lives and experiences of people who lived before us. He believes that Igbo proverbs teach morals, give advice and make the youth completely conscious of the collective wisdom which constitutes the culture of their people.

Basden (1966:273) appreciates the functions of proverbs in speech. Most proverbs conclude discussions, answer questions etc. The work it does depends on the user and his mastery of the Igbo language and proverb. He gives an example where a proverb is used to conclude a discussion.

Ka o di n'ofu meaning "let it be so; that is enough".

He sees this short proverb as useful and convenient expression in bringing an argument to a conclusion.

Basden gives a case in which a proverb was used to answer a question. In the early 1960s, Former Warrant Chief from Okigwe was asked how the warrant chiefs grew so rich. He replied; *Ma ukpara erighi ibe ya, o naghị ebu.* (to grow fat, an insect must feed on other insects) and would say no more; this shows how apt a proverb could be and goes along in showing the potent nature of Igbo proverbs as a communication tool in Igbo land,

Munonye (1966:67) using the character of Chiaku tells us why women are not allowed to use proverbs in the gathering of men (He uses the character Chiaku) she admits: “We women don't know how to speak our minds in proverbs. I shall tell you in very plain words what I have come for”. This is a kind of humble submission on the part of Chiaku. As a woman, she is not allowed to use proverbs in the gathering of men. She can only quote proverbs when she is with her fellow women or when she is advising her children.

Egudu (1972) discusses briefly the importance of proverbs in Igboland with copious examples. His work, centered on literary analysis, aesthetic forms of proverb in Igbo land, he compares proverbs to a mirror with which Igbos see their culture and world view. Onwuneme's (1978) Long essay examines the Igbo proverbs from a semantic/syntax perspective, distinguishing between a linguistic interest and philosophical interest in semantics. He discusses the three levels of meanings of the Igbo proverb as done by Okonkwo (1974) and brings out what he calls the unique structures of proverbs. These unique structures according to him are inversion, invariable structure, co-ordinate structure in collocational relationship and parallelism. He did not however attempt a contextual or cultural analysis of Igbo proverbs as is done in this study.

Finnegan (1970) devotes a detailed commentary on proverbs in Africa, concentrating on Jabo, Zulu, and Azade proverbs; she discussed their importance and how they are used considering their style, form and content - and relates them to the culture-of the people (South of Sahara). She opines that a proverb is a saying in a more or less fixed form, marked by popular acceptance of truth tersely expressed in it. According to her, a traditional proverb is a verbal concrete realization of a feeling for language, for imagery, and for the expression of abstract ideas, through compressed and allusive phraseology.

Boadi (1969) did not quite agree with the traditional belief that proverbs in traditional society were a 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 or value than others by virtue of their being stylistically innovative. The researcher disagrees with Boadi's views. Every proverb is important; proverbs become useful and important at the level of usage. None is greater than the other. Penfield (1978) believes 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.

Nwoga (1972:4-13) in his contribution to the definition of proverbs sees it as: "The wisdom of many and not of one, the experience and wisdom of different ages gathered and summed up in one expression and as the edged tools of speech". He explains that this definition centered on two important aspects of the proverbs: its economy of words and the foci of its being a vehicle of traditional wisdom. He adds the third aspect which he calls the obliqueness of usage. He sees the third element of the Igbo proverb as relating to the Biblical proverbs. He believes that the Igbo proverb is not complete without this third element. He goes ahead to show the obliqueness of usage with an Igbo proverb:

Aka na ikpere ala ka nwa ejiji emu nneya ara (With arms and knees on the ground, a calf sucks from the mothers breast)

This could be a mere description of an observed phenomenon; it only becomes a proverb in usage in which it expresses humility, for example in a prayer before a shrine. The theme of his paper discusses a syntactical analysis of proverbs in terms of structural relations. He recognizes

the importance of both form and content, although he discusses the roles of proverbs in Igbo society mostly. The paper also concentrates on form and style as sources of imaginative creativity in proverbs as an art form. He agrees with Boadi (1969) that the aesthetic unique use of language in proverbs is what distinguishes proverb from other genres. He did not attempt a sociolinguistic study or analysis of Igbo proverbs.

Nwala (1985) advocates for the use of proverbs as a means of educating the growing child, he believes that the Igbo proverbs, music, songs and festivals will equip the child and prepare him towards embracing western education. He advocates the use of formal and informal education as a way of shaping the mind of the growing child in Igbo land. Amadiume's (1994: pp 11 and 67) work on Igbo proverbs centres on collection and translation of Igbo proverbs to the target language English. He distinguishes idioms from Axiomatic Igbo proverbs (*Oniniama*) and gave examples. He sees the Axiomatic proverbs as a short and concise form of Igbo proverb that is self-evident and self-explanatory. According to him, it is powerful because it is truthful. His examples (Axiomatic proverbs)

(i) *Adi ebụ ala ebụ*

Meaning: No one can carry the earth

Exp: An impossible task.

(ii) *Ejighi ike alahu ura*

Meaning: One does not use strength in sleeping.

Exp: Certain tasks don't require force.

He is of the opinion that the Igbo proverbs grow with the Igbo language and that popular proverbs evolve as events generate them. He believes that the Igbo proverbial quotes attributed to animals are intentional in that the animals are meant to deputize for humans as there are certain things animals do better than humans. This researcher was able to notice some loopholes in his work especially his transliteration which was poorly done. In addition, he devoted time to collection, translation, and explanation of Igbo proverbs without saying anything on its usage and its relationship with the culture of its usage.

Skinner (1980), contributing his piece on Hausa proverbs commends the Hausa proverbs for being a dynamic literary genre in Hausa society. He sees the Hausa proverbs as not being restricted the way the English proverbs are. Hausa proverbs are used everywhere, in book titles, newspaper headlines, and in modern plays. He discusses the variations inherent in Hausa proverbs just as it is in Igbo proverbs especially in the pair of proverbs that say opposite things. He categorises proverbs as being a difficult phenomenon to discuss but proposes two main ways of tackling proverbs; either in context or in form. He points out Hausa proverbs that contain a great deal of repetition rhyme, assonance, and alliteration and some figures of speech like allegory, paradox, and irony. He goes ahead to give examples and finds out that Hausa proverbs are frequently characterised by the use of certain words such as "magani" (medicine) remedy, exceed and the likes. On the definition of proverbs, he gave a weak definition that "what makes a proverb is when people agree it is a proverb". The researcher believes that his definition is shallow and lacks depth. He concludes by giving examples of Hausa proverbs that show absurdity, paradox, hyperbole, antonomasia, irony, metonymy, litotes, and Zeugma.

Maiyanga's (1998) work looks at Igala proverbs from a semantic-pragmatic perspective using a blend of semantic/pragmatic models in his analysis of some selected Igala proverbs. His

theoretical framework is amorphous in nature. His data are drawn from books, interviews, audio and visual cassettes concerning the Igala people. His study investigates the fundamental nature of proverbs as it relates to "semantic and pragmatic mappings". He applies thirteen (13) theories from semantic/pragmatic fields in his analysis of Igala proverbs. They include: -

- (i) Semantics of conditionals e.g. of "if and and"
- (ii) Ambiguity - lexical and structural
- (iii) Synonym and Antonym
- (iv) Truth conditional semantics
- (v) Presupposition
- (vi) Speech Acts etc.

His study shows that proverbs exhibit some peculiar semantic structure that is different from the structure of everyday use of language and that proverbs are a garment of the use of illocutionary acts of declarative, directives, assertive, warnings but never commissures.

Knappert (1998), writing on proverbs in African tales, posits that any lesson (moral) to be learnt from African tales must have a form of proverbial colouration or be exceptionally a string of proverbs. He readily employs some Swahili proverbs to give credence to his postulation.

The strength of the lion is in his teeth.

The strength of the giraffe is his tall neck

The strength of the ants is in their numbers

(Pg. 137)

The researcher agrees with Knappert's postulation is that man's individuality 'carries with it some peculiar quality that finds usefulness only when they are discovered in the manner that the lion and giraffe have discovered their proverbial strength and utilised them for self-defense. Another look at the proverb examples above will reveal that every animal keep or stays alive because of its peculiar strength from the creator.

2.7. Theoretical Frame work

The concept of 'socio-pragmatics' refers to the social use of language. It is concerned with the ways language use are derived from the social norms and situations. In other words, it involves the study of both the form and functions of language in the given social settings. As an aspect of sociolinguistic competence, socio-pragmatic competence borders on the ability to use language appropriately to convey messages while observing the social and cultural conventions guiding such use in a particular speech community.

Socio-pragmatics is that part of pragmatics that places a greater emphasis on the social use of language and has a more clearly defined heritage in the Anglo-American view of pragmatics (Horn and Ward 2004) where pragmatics is considered another component in a theory of language distinct from other components in its concern with context. Here socio-pragmatics can be clearly traced to the work of Leech (1983) and Thomas (1981.) Leech (1983:11) contends that Socio-pragmatics concerns itself more specifically with local conditions of language use. Perhaps the key problem with Leech's definition of socio-pragmatics is that it neglects to spell out what this social conditions may be, how local is local; perhaps the way out of this problem is to remember what Leech refers to as specific local condition. With this in mind one could say

that socio-pragmatics concerns itself with any aspect of the social context that is specific to the pragmatic meanings of a particular language use.

A focal point of socio-pragmatics is the way in which speakers exploit more general norms to generate particular meanings, take up particular social positioning and so on. Another reason is that aspects of the social context called upon are not equal in terms of generality. One might postulate that the immediate text and co-text of the interlocutors are the most local: the social situations (including speech events, activity type, frames etc.) are medial: and cultures (national/regional cultures institutional cultures etc.) tend to be the most general. We argue that socio-pragmatics should primarily though not exclusively concern itself with medial context and the phenomena that constitute it. Social situations can provide a link between micro, more linguistically oriented consideration. Perhaps the best way to harness and understand the concept of socio-pragmatics is to see it as the interface of sociology and pragmatics which hitherto Kasper and Rose (2001: 2) refer to as "the social perceptions underlying participants, interpretation and performance of communicative action". The beginning of pragmatic studies brought a controversy as regard its overlap with such areas as sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, pragma-linguistic and others. Pragmatics therefore cannot be easily distinguished from societal factors; it goes hand in hand with sociolinguistics. Socio-pragmatics becomes, therefore the common label for the study of sociolinguistics and pragmatics which is aimed at helping the learner of a language to understand how language use is realized in the social life of a speech community and presents learners with what variety of language is and how usage differences are realized in different context. Leech describes this as the competence of using appropriate terms by following the social rules.

Sapir-Whorfian Hypothesis

The Sapir-Whorfian Hypothesis postulates that the structure of language determines the way in which speakers of that language view the world (linguistic determinism). A somewhat weaker version (Linguistic Relativism) is that the structure does not determine the worldview, but it is still extremely influential in predisposing speakers of a language towards adopting a particular worldview (Wardhaugh 2007).

According to Pinker (1994), the theory of linguistic relativity is known in two versions: the strong hypothesis (= linguistic determinism) and the weak hypothesis (= linguistic relativism). It is necessary to clarify that the words “strong” and “weak” are not related to the strength of the scholarly argumentation, but rather to the degree to which language is assumed to influence our thought and behaviour. According to the strong version, the language we speak determines/constraints the way we think and view the real world. According to the weak version, the language does influence to some extent the way we think and view the real world, however, does not fully determine or constraint it.

Wardhaugh (2007:221) posits that

” ... that there should be some kind of relationship between the sounds, words, and syntax of a language and the ways in which the speaker of that language experience the world and behave in it seems so obvious as to be truism. It would appear that the only problem will be deciding the nature of the relationship and finding suitable ways to demonstrate it”

It is against this backdrop that Leech’s Socio-pragmatic theory and the Linguistic Relativism hypothesis have been found most appropriate for this study. This is based on their stipulation that language affects the worldview of the individuals who use it, and language use is affected by societal factors. Since this is so, it is only logical to assume that proverbs are directly related to the worldview of the language speakers that use it. This research intends to simply apply the

Socio-pragmatic theory and the Sapir-Whorfian hypothesis to ohafia proverbs and identify to what extent the stand of these theories are applicable to Ohafia proverbs.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0. Introduction

In this chapter, we present the methodological procedure adopted for this work. The chapter is therefore divided into three sections. The first section highlights the various sources of the data used for this study. The second section elaborates on the methods employed to extract data from the sources. Then the last section introduces the techniques used for the analysis.

3.1. Sources of Data

One hundred (100) Ohafia proverbs were randomly selected for the study, to enable the researcher undertake a thorough and detailed analysis. The primary source of the data was an Age Grade Retirement Ceremony attended by the researcher. Songs sang in Ohafia dialect by Paulson Kalu and G T Onwuka, as well as home videos such as ‘The battle of Mozanga’, which is set in Ohafia, served as secondary sources of our data collection. Other secondary sources include literary works; because Ohafia proverbs are our concern here, books on Ohafia proverbs in Igbo orthography (sometimes translated in English) and written by Ohafia native speakers were extensively utilized. Most utilized are the works of Ume (1990) and Njoku (2000). These writers wrote extensively on Ohafia, and a part of these books were dedicated to proverbs. The researcher focused on these parts, reading and extracting the proverbs mentioned in the book.

3.2.Methods of Data Collection

The following are the methods through which the data were collected:

- i. Audio-tape recording.
- ii. Interviews.

- i. Audio-Tape Recording- Formal and social meetings, traditional weddings, family meetings, town hall meetings, as well as the 2015 New-Yam Festival celebration of the Ohafia people served as perfect avenues for the collection of data for this study, as they provide fora for proverbial outburst. To achieve this, an audio recorder was used to tape the entire conversations and speeches, during these events, and the proverbs in the speeches were extracted at the end of each event
- ii. Interviews: Perhaps the most veritable custodian of a people's cultural identity is the experiences of their elders. It is as a result of this that we conducted some interviews with some Ohafia elders to find out their views on issues relating to Ohafia proverbs such the social demography of proverb users, as well as the actual meaning the proverbs already collected.

3.3. Analytical Procedure

Given that this is a socio-pragmatic study, the researcher uses Leech's Socio-pragmatic theory, and Sapir-Whorf's Linguistic Relativism hypothesis to form a means for a proper analysis. Therefore, the first aspect of the analysis will involve identifying the proverbs based on their level of interpretation: "Opaque" or "Transparent". For the purpose of the study, transparent proverbs are proverbs whose meanings are understood and which can be interpreted correctly

based simply on their direct translations. Opaque proverbs, on the other hand are proverbs whose interpretation may still be lost, even after a direct translation is done. These proverbs require experience and complete mastery of the dialect, to be properly interpreted.

Next, the proverbs are arranged in a tabular form, in an attempt show to the literal and actual meaning of each proverb, and to extract the elements of background knowledge (Cultural background), Mutual contextual belief, and context of situation that they possess. The third stage of the analysis involves general discussions on the proverbs, using the Socio-pragmatic theory and the Sapir-Whorf's Linguistic Relativism hypothesis to analysis the relatedness of the Ohafia proverbs to the worldview of the Ohafia people, and the place of background knowledge and communicative competence in the understanding and proper application of Ohafia proverbs. The place of social demography such as age, gender and class/social status in the use of Ohafia proverbs will also be discussed.

Since the Sapir-Whorf linguistic relativism hypothesis believes that language somewhat shapes our thinking and behavior, this study focuses on discussing if and how ohafia proverbs relate to the ohafia worldviews; and if and how the Ohafia worldviews, cultures, traditions and environment affect the use and comprehension of Ohafia proverbs.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.0. Introduction

This chapter focuses on the presentation and analyses of the data collected. It is divided into five sections. The first section presents the data in Ohafia dialect, alongside their translation. The second section which presents the data in their translated forms is further divided into two subsections, based on the classification of the proverbs into the 'opaque' and 'transparent' categories. In this section, the actual meaning of each proverb, the elements of cultural background knowledge, context of culture and situation and the themes of the proverbs will be identified. After each subsection, a brief discussion which further explains the 'opaque' and 'transparent' nature of the proverbs will be given. The second section of this chapter focuses on the general discussion on the relationships between the Ohafia proverbs and the worldview of the Ohafia people. In this section, the theoretical framework of this study will be validated. Also, the role of situational contexts in the use of Ohafia proverbs will be evaluated. Finally, the findings of the study will be revealed and discussed.

2.1. Presentation of Data

Proverbs and Their Translation

1. Awọ anaghị agba ọsọ efifi amụma.

Translation - A frog does not run in the day time for no reason.

2. Mkpukpu nne ewu kpu anaghị afa nwa ya ishi.

Translation - The path a mother goat walks through is never too narrow for her kid.

3. Agba akụ nke mbụ, yo tua ogwe, agba nke abụọ, yọ tua ogwe; ọwụ ogwe wụ onye akpịri aku?

Translation - When the first arrow is shot, it lands on the log of wood, when the second one is shot, it also lands on the log of wood, are logs of wood the only targets that the arrows are meant for?

4. Onye dị nma azụ?

Translation-Who is good from behind?

5. Nwa ya eli nnaya azia ibisatara oku.

Translation- You know a child that will bury his father 'properly' by the way he assists his father in getting fire from neighbours.

6. Onye amụma anaghị adị ugwu alị ya.

Translation- A prophet is never appreciated in his own town.

7. Ekpe ekpe biri utara, ifere anaghị eme ofo.

Translation- If one properly portions one's garri (cassava meals usually eaten with local soups), the soup will not be ashamed.

8. Onye nwe ozu apaya isi.

Translation- The owner of a corpse carries the head-part of the casket.

9. Oke soro ngwuru maga mmini, mmini kọhụ ngwuru, okọhughị oke.

Translation- A rat that follows a lizard to play under the rain; when the lizard's body gets dried, the rat's will not.

10. Agụ soro enwo, yọ majie olu.

Translation- If a tiger follows a monkey to hop on trees, he will break his neck.

11. Aka onye ọjia ka nma ọnu ya.

Translation- A sick person's hands is better in his mouth.

12. Agwọ ahaghị imụ ife dị ọgọlọgọ.

Translation- The offspring of a snake cannot help but be long.

13. Ifere anaghị eme onye ifufe, ọ nde nwe ya.

Translation- A mad person doesn't feel ashamed, but his family members do.

14. Ichere onye isi okpi, ọ gi akpoyi ya okpu?

Translation- Why concern yourself with a person's big head, are you the one that buys his cap for him?

15. Ife ezizie duguru ọdị fụu, nwanta nyikoro elu osisi, onigha afụ ya.

Translation- What an adult sees sitting down, a child will not see, even if he climbs to the top of a tree.

16. Osisì olu anaghị eme ọfịa.

Translation- One tree cannot make a forest.

17. Osimiri anaghị eri onye ọfughị ọkpa ya.

Translation- A river cannot drown a person whose feet it didn't see.

18. Ọkuko abuo anaghị ebu ochicha olu.

Translation- Two chickens cannot carry one cockroach.

19. Oke osisi daa, nwamị enyia la elu.

Translation- When a mighty tree falls, a woman climbs on it.

20. Nwanta tulia nnaya elu, ọgodọ awuchiaya anya.

Translation- When a child throws his father up, his father's loin-cloth will cover his(the child's) eyes.

21. Elelịa nwa ite, yogbonyua oku.

Translation- If you underestimate the abilities of a small pot, it will boil and bubble till it quenches the fire.

22. Nwant kwo aka, yara ndichin eria nri.

Translation- If a child washes his hands clean, he will dine with elders.

23. Egbe gere ugo gere, nke shi ibeya ebela nku kwaa ya.

Translation- The kites should perch, the eagles should perch, whichever says the other shouldn't, his wings should break.

24. Ọkwurụ anaghị akari onye kuyan.

Translation- An okra tree cannot grow taller than its planter.

25. Nne ọkarịlu adaa ọnụ awughị nne o ji atụọ.

Translation- The crunchy sound the bitter kola makes in the mouth does not guarantee a good taste.

26. Agwọ onye olu fụ ahọ eke.

Translation- A snake that is seen by just one person becomes a python.

27. Ọfịa ogwu maa ọkụkọ anaghị epie ya epie.

Translation- A bush whose thorns pierces the feet of a chicken should not be entered into by a hunter.

28. Iyi rii ugbala anaghị eguya egu.

Translation- A river that drowns a duck should not be swam in by humans.

29. Ụkpara okpoko gbu, ntị chii ya.

Translation- A grasshopper that is killed by a noisy cock is definitely deaf.

30. Kum kum wu ure nwa.

Translation- Playing with a baby is the joy of having the baby.

31. Mmini ejule nwa awọ ọnụ.

Translation- Water has filled the tadpole's mouth.

32. Ọ ozu nụ ụka, oye ya ọnụ.

Translation- It is only a dead person that will hear discussion/accusations concerning him and not contribute/defend himself.

33. Anaghị akpa ụka onye nọ ndụ eleghe onye nwụụ anwụ.

Translation- You don't talk about a person who is alive as though he is dead.

34. Chi egwerele efifi jia.

Translation- Darkness has come at noonday.

35. Onye ichin anaghị anọ ulue ewu amụa eriri.

Translation- An elder cannot be at home and a goat gives birth in tethers.

36. Chi ji eji, abụọ le abụọ.

Translation- Dawn must come after a dark night.

37. Eke adikwaghị orie anya.

Translation- Eke and orie (both market days) are not far apart.

38. Okwu awughị ndụ.

Translation- Talk doesn't mean life.

39. Ije'm mara awa ejilem chi.

Translation- A supposed quick journey I set out for has taken me the whole day.

40. Anaghị agba aka afụ nwanta ezie.

Translation- You don't see the first tooth of an infant with empty hand.

41. Aju adighi ebe edowe ya.

Translation- A head-support is no longer in its right position.

42. Odighi ife eji akpogbu mgbamgba.

Translation- You can never totally destroy/extinct an *mgbamgbatree*.

43. Ofo di utu, okpogo tee ya.

Translation- A soup that tastes good cost a lot of money to prepare.

44. Uziza afughi ufu oshighi ishi.

Translation- An uziza (West African pepper) that is not peppery and does not scent.

45. gbu kpoo, geshe wọ.

Translation- A person who triggers trouble in an already tensed situation.

46. Uziza elu ahoro, nke ali atuturu.

Translation- The uziza (west African pepper) seed on the tree were not plucked, the ones on the ground were not picked.

47. Obi nwa adighi agba.

Translation- When it comes to one's child, one hardly can look the other way.

48. Ubia gi, a'nzu, ulagi a'nzu.

Translation- You come in peace, you will go in peace.

49. Onoro agbogo amaghi uwa ya.

Translation- A young girl is usually filled with so many dreams, even without knowing what the future holds.

50. Okoro bika ulue ya bika nke onye oduo.

Translation- A person who destroys his house and goes ahead to destroy another person's.

51. Uzu oma tua.

Translation- Let there be shouts of joy.

52. Ife ojo uwa jekwarianya anya.

Translation- May bad things of the world go far away from you.

53. Anaghi ekpuchi afọ ime aka.

Translation- You can't cover/hide a pregnant woman with your hands.

54. Ife achọ asaa, achọ asaa.

Translation- Something that requires seven, requires seven.

55. Eburu efifi achọ ewu ojii.

Translation- You should look for a missing black goat in the day time.

56. Iji anaghi anu ife eso ozu ala ili.

Translation- A fly that does not heed to words of advice will be buried alongside a corpse.

57. Oke gara gara ama iwuri nri.

Translation- A rat that thinks it's smart will fall early into a trap.

58. Anaghị eshi me ikiri anụ alụgiri.

Translation- A person who does not know how to cook a tough meat will certainly leave it half cooked.

59. Mberede nyiri dike.

Translation- A strong man is usually defeated by events that take him unawares.

60. Anaghị apafe ipegere ebi omu.

Translation- You can't reach the soft palm fronds without first cutting off the hard ones.

61. Mmini nwanta wusi onwe ya anaghị atụ ya oyi.

Translation- When a child pours cold water on himself, he doesn't feel the cold.

62. Eme ngwa ngwa, emehara odachi.

Translation- If one does what one is supposed to do at the right time, one avoids misfortunes.

63. Nkwa ada okwu oku oku apa nma ifu ete ya.

Translation- A drum that is beaten very fast/fiercely is danced with a war knife (machete) in hand.

64. Nwami adighi elege ibe ya, akwa agu ya.

Translation- A woman that is not like her mates will always be in tears.

65. Eme nwami eleghe eme ibe ya, obi adi yanma.

Translation- If a woman is treated as well as her mates, she will be satisfied.

66. Ụkwa rua oge ya, yọ da.

Translation- When an ukwa fruit is ripe, it will fall from the tree on its own.

67. Egbu onye, onye esee?

Translation- Who is being killed, and who is crying?

68. Ụwa ọma ajoghị onye nọ ndụ.

Translation- A person who is still alive has hope of a brighter future.

69. Mgbịsị gba otula, yọ mụrụ akọ.

Translation- If a black ant stings a buttock, the buttocks becomes wiser.

70. Ifu oke enyi atị mma.

Translation- The face of a male elephant blunts a machete.

71. Agbọghọ adighị elege ibe ya, akwa agụ ya.

Translation- When a young girl looks different, or is treated different from her mates, she cries constantly.

72. Ifu asọ ifu.

Translation- Face fears face.

73. Obi ọma nyiri ụwa.

Translation- Only with a good heart can one conquer the struggles of the world.

74. Ozu anwunahile ikwu akwa.

Translation- Death has come to a family of criers.

75. Obiara nke onye abịagbulaya, mgbe ọya ala mkpukpu apụkwaya.

Translation- If a guest doesn't come with bad intentions, when he is leaving, he will leave in peace.

76. Ụkwụ ejile agu mgbada bia ya mgba.

Translation- When a tiger's legs are broken, an antelope can come to wrestle with it.

77. Uka akpa akpa, eji ishi ekwe ya.

Translation- a meaningful/serious discussion is accepted/urged on by the nodding of the head.

78. Anị tujua ntị ehere.

Translation- When praise is said, the ears open up.

79. Ọwughị iyi dum wụ nke alara ọkara.

Translation- It's not when crossing every river that one has to lift one's wrapper.

80. Afụ dimkpa, afụ ogologo imi ya.

Translation- A great man is known by the size of his nose.

81. Ofo gbam ma ọkwurụ, m'ezii ya imi.

Translation- If okra is not available to use to cook a pot of soup, use phlegm.

82. Kama mmaị ya akpara ogorogo ụka, ha ite waa ụzọ.

Translation- Instead of a jar of wine causing trouble between in-laws let it break.

83. Aturū mūrū ebulu gba aka nwa.

Translation- A sheep that gives birth to a ram is childless.

84. Enyi eso enyi ya ama mma.

Translation- A friend follows his friend to look good.

85. Ya dī ishi mma, yọ dī ọkpa mma.

Translation- When all is well with the head, all will be well with the legs.

86. Onye ji nna ya alī ji onwe ya.

Translation- A person who suppresses his father suppresses him-self.

87. Mgberede ka eji ama dike.

Translation- A strong man is known by his reaction to sudden/impromptu/unexpected events.

88. Anaghī eli anwūrū ọkū alī.

Translation- You cannot bury smoke

89. Agha agbata ama anaghī eri nwa ọkwara.

Translation- A foreknown war does not kill a first son.

90. Onye nnaya duwi ozii eji ọkpa agbaka ukwukwara.

Translation- A person who is sent to steal by his father uses his feet to breakdown doors.

91. Ma onye arachaghī ọnụ ya, ụgūrū arachara ya.

Translation- If you don't lick your mouth, harmattan will lick it for you.

92. Anya dị nwoke na ọgụ, dị ya na mgba, nwanyị abatuọ ya.

Translation- A man that lacks concentration can be beaten by a woman in a fight.

93. Ana agbara oyi uguru, ya tūba.

Translation- When you dread the harmattan cold, it chills/freezes you.

94. Agadi nwanyị chie ntị fega ọka, ebusa ozu ya azu ọka.

Translation- If an old woman stubbornly jumps a fence, her corpse will be collected at the other side of it.

95. Onye nko yara ngwa ọrụ ya alu ọgụ.

Translation- A lazy man always fights with his tools.

96. Onye furu efuru nyoo ike mmadu, onye ọduo afu nke ya m'ike.

Translation- If you bend down to peep at someone's buttocks, someone else has seen yours too.

97. Nkenta nkenta wu nne eji ara ofo di oku.

Translation- The process of licking hot soup is gradual.

98. Oru fezia ezie, ezie eru ya aka.

Translation- If a slave serves/worships a king, kingship will get to him.

99. Onye nzuzu agba osọ mmini mgbe mmịni magbahale ya.

Translation- A foolish person runs from the rain when the rain has already drenched him.

100. Ife di anu dikwa ebu, anu juru gbaa, ebu a juru kwa gbaa.

Translation- The thing that is in the bee is also in the wasp. When provoked, they both sting.

2.2. Analysis and General Discussions

This section attempts an analysis of the data collected, by first giving a proper interpretation of the proverbs, then using tools like background knowledge and context of culture and situation to relate the use of proverbs to the Ohafia cultures and worldview. To make this analysis easier to comprehend, it is presented in two tables, one containing the opaque proverbs, and the other containing the transparent proverbs. A general discussion will follow the two tables where these elements will be elaborated upon, and their significance and relevance to knowledge will be ascertained

Transparent Proverbs

S/ NO	PROVERB	ACTUAL MEANING	ELEMENTS OF CULTURAL BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE	CONTEXT OF CULTURE AND SITUATION
1	The path a mother goat walks through is never too narrow for her kid.	A task is not impossible to accomplish if people before you have accomplished it.	Path/mother goat	Encouragement/ caution
2	The first arrow that is shot lands on the log of wood, the second one also lands on the wood, is it the log of wood that the arrows are meant for?	When a series of tragedy or bad things happened to one person in a row.	Arrow/log of wood	Reprimand/observati on
3	You know a child that will bury his father 'properly' by the way he assists his father with collecting fire from neighbours.	A persons behavior in the present can help one to predict his reaction to a future occurrence.	Collecting fire/a child burying his father/ collecting fire from neighbours	Observation/comme ndation/ reprimanding
4	A prophet is never appreciated in his town.	A great person tends to be taken for granted by people he is familiar with.	A prophet/seer	Reprimand/consolati on/observation/ cautionary

S/ NO	PROVERB	ACTUAL MEANING	ELEMENTS OF CULTURAL BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE	CONTEXT OF CULTURE AND SITUATION
5	The owner of a corpse carries the head part of the casket.	The person most involved with an event or a happening should bear the greatest responsibility.	Corpse/casket	Advice/enlighten/ reprimand
6	A rat that follows a lizard to play in the rain; when the lizard's body gets dried, the rat's will not.	You do not do something because others are doing it, it may have a different effect on you than it had on them.	Rat/ lizard/ rain	Warning/advice
7	If a tiger follows a monkey to hop on trees, he will break his neck.	You do not do something because others are doing it, it may have a different effect on you than it had on them.	Tiger/tree/monkey	Advice/ warning
8	The offspring of a snake will definitely be long.	A person cannot help but have the character traits of his parents/guardian.	Snake	Praise/commendation/ reprimanding
9	A mad person does not feel ashamed, it's his family members that do.	A person who does embarrassing things regularly does not realize what he is doing, only those around him will.	Mad/family	Advice/caution

S/ NO	PROVERB	ACTUAL MEANING	ELEMENTS OF CULTURAL BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE	CONTEXT OF CULTURE AND SITUATION
10	Why concern yourself with a person's big head, are you the one that puts on his cap for him?	It is always better to mind one's business	Cap/ big head	Reprimand/enlighten
11	One tree cannot make a forest.	There is strength in unity.	Tree/forest	Reprimand/advice/ caution
12	A river cannot drown a person whose feet it did not see.	For tragedy to befall a person, that person must have done something to trigger it.	River	Caution/condemn
13	Two chickens cannot carry one cockroach.	Not everything deserves ones total attention, or deserves to be worried about.	Cockroach/chicken	Warning advice
14	When a mighty tree falls, a woman can climb on it.	When a person loses what makes him great, he becomes venerable to disrespect.	Mighty tree/woman	Warning/observation
15	The crunchy sound of bitter kola does not guarantee a good taste.	All that glitters is not gold.	Bitter kola	Warning/caution
16	A bush whose thorn pierces the feet of a chicken should not be entered into by people.	When a person who is supposed to be immune to a thing gets affected by that thing, others should beware.	Bush/chicken	Advice/warning/ reprimanding

S/ NO	PROVERB	ACTUAL MEANING	ELEMENTS OF CULTURAL BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE	CONTEXT OF CULTURE AND SITUATION
17	A river that drowns a duck should not be swam in by humans.	When a person who is supposed to be immune to a thing gets affected by that thing, others should beware.	River/duck	Advice/warning /recommendation
18	A grasshopper that is killed by a noisy cock is definitely deaf.	A person who is affected (mostly negatively) by an event that he was forewarned about will have himself to blame.	Grasshopper/cock	Reprimand/ condemnation
19	Playing with a baby is part of the joys of having a baby.	You should enjoy the blessing you have been given	Baby	Observation
20	An elder cannot be home and a goat gives birth in tethers.	A person with experience should not sit back and watch something wrong happen.	Elder/goat/tethers	Observation/ encouragement/ praise
21	Dawn has come after a long night.	After a long period of suffering/ tension/ tragic events, everything is fine again.	Dawn/night	Observation/ encouragement
22	Eke and Orie (both market days) are not far apart.	The days go by very quickly.	Eke/orie	Warning/ encouragement

S/ NO	PROVERB	ACTUAL MEANING	ELEMENTS OF CULTURAL BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE	CONTEXT OF CULTURE AND SITUATION
23	A supposed quick/easy journey I set out for at dawn has taken me the whole day.	When something turns out more difficult than anticipated.	Journey/day/ night	Observation
24	You don't go to see the tooth of an infant empty handed.	There are protocols to be observed in different situations.	Tooth/infant/empty handed	Advice/enlightening/reprimand
25	A person who triggers trouble in an already tensed situation (should be avoided).	A person who triggers trouble in an already tensed situation (should be avoided).	Trouble maker	Condemnation/observation/ reprimanding
26	The Uziza (west African pepper) that is not peppery and does not scent (is useless).	When a person falls short of expectation, it is very disappointing.	Uziza (West African pepper)	Reprimand/condemnation
27	Your coming, clay; your going, clay.	Come in peace and go in peace.	Clay	Encouragement/prayer
28	A young girl is usually filled with so many dreams without knowing what the future holds.	A person makes so many life plans, forgetting that life itself is uncertain.	Young girl/life/hope	Enlightening/caution

S/ NO	PROVERB	ACTUAL MEANING	ELEMENTS OF CULTURAL BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE	CONTEXT OF CULTURE AND SITUATION
29	A person who destroys his house and goes ahead to destroy another person's (should be avoided).	A person who causes havoc everywhere he goes should be avoided.	House/trouble maker	Reprimanding /condemnation
30	Let there be shouts of joy.	Prayers of continuous prosperity and success.	Shouts of joy	Prayer
31	May the bad things of the world go far away from us.	Prayers of continuous prosperity and success.	Bad things going far away (superstitious)	Prayer/ encouragement
32	You cannot hide a pregnant belly with your hands.	Everything that has been hidden will definitely come to light overtime.	Goat/day time	Advice/ recommendation
33	A person who does not know how to cook a tough meat will certainly leave it half-cooked.	When someone doesn't know how to do a thing, they definitely will not do it right.	Poison/tough meat/cook	Caution/warning
34	A strong man is usually defeated by events that take him unawares.	A strong man is usually defeated by events that take him unawares.	Strength/man	Warning/cautionary

S/ NO	PROVERB	ACTUAL MEANING	ELEMENTS OF CULTURAL BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE	CONTEXT OF CULTURE AND SITUATION
35	You cannot reach the soft palm fronds without first cutting off the hard ones.	Become one can enjoy the benefits of life, one must work hard.	Palm fronds	Encouragement/ advice
36	If one does what one is supposed to do at the right time, disappointments are avoided.	If one does what one is supposed to do at the right time, disappointments are avoided.	Timing	Warning/ advice/ encouragement
37	A woman that is not like her mates will always be in tears.	When a person is not treated with all fairness, he doesn't feel happy.	Woman/ tears	Caution/ advice
38	If a woman is treated as well as her mates, she will be satisfied.	When a person is treated with all fairness, he will be happy.	Woman/ mates/ satisfied	Caution/ advice/ observation
39	When an <i>Ukwa</i> fruit is ripe, it will fall from the tree on its own.	When a person is ready for a thing, he won't have to be forced to do it.	<i>Ukwa</i> / tree	Encouragement/ consolation
40	A person who is still alive has hope for a brighter future.	A person who is still alive has hope for a brighter future.	Life/ hope	Encouragement/ consolation

S/ NO	PROVERB	ACTUAL MEANING	ELEMENTS OF CULTURAL BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE	CONTEXT OF CULTURE AND SITUATION
41	When a young girl is treated differently from her mates, she cries constantly.	When a person is not treated with all fairness, he does not feel happy.	Young girl/ tears/mates	Advice/ caution/ reprimand
42	Only with a good heart can one conquer the struggles of the world.	Only with a good heart can one conquer the struggles of the world.	Good heart/ struggles of the world	Enlightening/ encouragement/ advice
43	If a guest does not come with bad intentions, when he is leaving, he will leave in peace.	If a guest does not come with bad intentions, when he is leaving, he will leave in peace.	Guests/ intentions/ peace	Prayer
44	When a tiger's leg is broken, an antelope can come to wrestle with it.	When a person loses what makes him great, he becomes venerable to disrespect.	Tiger/antelope	Warning
45	It is not when crossing every river that one has to lift one's wrapper.	Not every issue that comes up deserves one's attention or response.	River/wrapper	Advice/ caution
46	Instead of a jar of wine causing trouble, let it break.	A prayer that any situation/ celebration that will bring along with it controversy or danger should not happen at all.	Jar of wine	Prayer

S/ NO	PROVERB	ACTUAL MEANING	ELEMENTS OF CULTURAL BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE	CONTEXT OF CULTURE AND SITUATION
47	A strong man is known by his reaction to sudden/ unexpected/ impromptu events.	A strong person is known by his reaction to sudden/ unexpected/ impromptu events.	Strong man	Consolation/ encouragement
48	You cannot bury smoke.	A person who is full of life, or destined to excel cannot be stopped.	Smoke/busy	Advice/warning/ consolation/ observation
49	A foreknown war does not kill a first son/ an heir.	Prior knowledge or warning prevents or reduces the impact of a tragedy.	War/heir	Encouragement
50	If an old woman ignores counsel and stubbornly scales a fence, her corpse will be found at the other side of the fence.	A person who does not listen to counsel will definitely get himself in trouble.	Old woman/ counsel/corpse	Advice/ warning
51	A lazy man will always reject the hoe given to him.	A person who does not want to follow through with a task will always come up with excuses.	Lazy/ man/ hoe	Observation

S/ NO	PROVERB	ACTUAL MEANING	ELEMENTS OF CULTURAL BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE	CONTEXT OF CULTURE AND SITUATION
52	When you bend down to peep at someone's buttocks, someone has seen yours too.	A person who makes an effort to humiliate another person ends up being humiliated also.	Buttocks	Warning/ observation/ consolation/ condemnation
53	The act of licking hot soup is gradual.	It is better for one to take ones time in doing anything sensitive, to avoid hurt or damage.	Soup	Advice/ caution
54	A foolish man runs from the rain after it has already drenched him.	Only foolish person stays in a place or situation he should have gotten out of until it is too late.	Foolish man/ rain	Warning/ observation
55	The abilities that the bee has, the wasp also has; when provoked, they both sting.	Nobody has the monopoly of anger..	Bee/ wasp	Warning/ caution/
56	A man that lacks concentration can be beaten by a woman in a fight.	No matter how strong, hardworking or intelligent a person is, if he is not dedicated to a task at hand, a weaker person can outshine him.	Man/woman/ fight	Warning/advice/ encouragement

S/ NO	PROVERB	ACTUAL MEANING	ELEMENTS OF CULTURAL BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE	CONTEXT OF CULTURE AND SITUATION
57	Falling is always a by-product of wrestling hurriedly.	Hasty decisions usually lead to failure.	Wrestling	Warning/ advice
58	The act of licking hot soup is done gradually.	Actions that have delicate consequences should not be rushed into, or done in a haste.	Hot Soup	Warning/Advice
59	A foolish man runs from the rain, only when the rain has drenched him.	Only a foolish man will wait to be hurt, before avoiding an obviously dangerous situation.	Rain/ Foolish man	Observation
60	The ability of a bee is also possessed by a wasp; they both sting.	No one person has the monopoly of aggression or hurtfulness.	Bee/Wasp	Observation/ Warning

Even though the above proverbs make use of synecdoche, and sometimes metonymy, to drive home their points, most of these proverbs can be understood by an average speaker of the Ohafia dialect or an English speaker with no deep knowledge of the ohafia worldview, when translated therefore, they are surface level or transparent proverbs. In other words, these proverbs in their proverbial forms, even without being interpreted to their actual meaning can communicate to their hearers.

In Proverb 6 on the above table for instance, even without being interpreted to the actual meaning, one can still understand why a rat will have a hard time getting its body dry after following the lizard to play under the rain. A person only needs to have knowledge of what the skin of a rat, and that of a lizard looks like to be able to understand this proverb. Also in proverb 2 above, one only needs to know that a mother goat is obviously bigger than her kid, to know why it is said that a path she has walked through cannot be too narrow for her kid, because since she who is big can pass through the path, her kid who is obviously smaller should not have issues with it.

Another illustration is Proverb 48 above, where ones knowledge of smoke will make one understand why it cannot be buried, since by the very nature of smoke, it cannot be contained in a particular place. Therefore, one does not need deep thought or calculation to understand why the proverb is used in that manner. In Proverb 49 also, it is easy to understand why a foreknown war cannot kill the first son. It is only logical that a war that one knows about is properly prepared for, and does not/ would not take one unawares. Also, with an understanding of the importance attached to the first sons in Ohafia and all of Igbo land, one can understand why he would be kept away from any anticipated danger.

From all of the above, it is seen that all that is required for a surface proverb to be understood is knowledge of the Ohafia dialect, and knowledge of the variables contained in the proverbs. In other words, the translated meaning of the surface proverbs, and their actual real life meaning are usually not so far apart. Surface proverbs, as seen in all the proverbs above, can be explained logically, and one does not require experience, deep thought, or calculations to understand them.

Opaque Proverbs

S/ NO	PROVERB	ACTUAL MEANING	ELEMENTS OF CULTURAL BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE	CONTEXT OF CULTURE AND SITUATION
1.	A frog does not run in the day time for mothing	When something that rarely occurs happens, questions should be asked.	Frog/daytime	Observation
2.	Who is good from behind?	Nothing good is said about a person in his absence.	Behind	Observation/ Reprimanding
3.	A sick person's hands tastes better in his mouth.	A self-inflicted injury does not cause pain.	Sick person/hands in mouth	Observation /consolation
4.	What an adult sees while sitting, a child will not see, even if he climbs the top of a tree.	Words of advice given by an elderly person should not be overlooked.	Adult/child	Reprimanding/ warning/advice
5.	When a child throws his father up, his father's loincloth will cover his (the child's) eyes.	A person who does not take his father's counsel seriously always ends up in trouble.	Child/father/ loincloth	Warning
6.	If you underestimate the abilities of a small pot, it will boil and bubble till it quenches the fire.	When a person's abilities are underestimated, they are bound to out-do themselves.	Small pot/fire	Caution

S/ NO	PROVERB	ACTUAL MEANING	ELEMENTS OF CULTURAL BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE	CONTEXT OF CULTURE AND SITUATION
7	If a child washes his hands clean, he will dine with elders.	When a young person achieves things that are beyond his age, he will be welcome in a gathering of elders.	Child/ elders	Advice/ praise
8	The kite should perch, the eagles should perch, whichever one says the other should, may his wings break.	Live and let live.	Kite/eagle	Warning/ reprimanding
9	An okra tree cannot grow taller than its planter.	A child can never outgrow his parent's tutorage.	Okra/planter	Warning/ reprimand
10	A snake that is seen by just one person becomes a python.	If only one person witnesses event, he tends to exaggerate when telling the story.	Snake/python	Enlightening /caution
11	Water has filled the tadpole's mouth.	An occurrence that has rendered a person speechless/dumbfounded has happened.	Water/tadpole	Warning/ observation
12	It's only a dead person that will hear an accusation against him and not defend himself.	A person cannot keep quiet when he is accused falsely.	Dead person/ accusation	Observation/ enlightening

S /NO	PROVERB	ACTUAL MEANING	ELEMENTS OF CULTURAL BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE	CONTEXT OF CULTURE AND SITUATION
13	You do not talk about a person who is alive as though he is dead.	An accused person should always be given a chance to defend himself.	Dead/alive	Warning/caution
14	You can never totally destroy/extinct <i>mgbamgba</i> .	You cannot suppress/quiet a lively person.	<i>Mgbamgba</i>	Praise/encouragement/Warning
15	An <i>Uziza</i> that is not peppery and doesn't scent.	Somebody who falls short of expectation.	<i>Uziza</i>	Condemnation
16	When it comes to one's child, one can hardly look the other way.	A person is always sentimental when dealing with his/her children.	Child/parent	Observation
17	You cannot hide a pregnant belly with your hands.	Everything that has been hidden must come to light in due time.	Pregnancy	Warning/Enlightenment
18	Something that requires seven, requires seven.	There is a procedure for everything.	seven/duplication for emphasis	Enlightenment
19	You should look for a missing black goat in the day time.	Make hay while the sun shines.	Black goat/day time	Warning/advice
20	A fly that does not heed to counsel is buried alongside the corpse.	A person who does not listen/heed to counsel will always fall into trouble.	Fly/burial/corpse	Warning/advice/reprimanding

S/ NO	PROVERB	ACTUAL MEANING	ELEMENTS OF CULTURAL BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE	CONTEXT OF CULTURE AND SITUATION
21	When a child bathes himself with cold water, he does not feel the cold.	A self-inflicted injury does not cause pain.	Child/bathe	Enlightening/ Consolation
22	A drum that is beaten very fast/fiercely is danced with a war knife (machete) in hand.	When an urgent matter comes up, it should be handled with all urgency.	Drum/war knife	Advice/ recommendation/ observation
23	Who is being killed, and who is crying?	A wrong caused by ones siblings shouldn't be taken to heart.	Killing/crying	Observation/ Advice
24	When a black ant stings a buttock, the buttock will become wiser.	Once beaten, twice shy.	Black ant/ buttock	Caution/ observation/ enlightening
25	The face of a male elephant blunts a machete.	Certain protocols can be broken in certain situations.	Male elephant	Praise/caution
26	Face fears face.	People are bound to give respect to those who they know are superior to them.	Face/repetition for emphasis	Praise/warning
27	Death has come to a family of criers.	A job that befits one's area of expertise has been given to him.	Death/family/ criers	Observation

S/ NO	PROVERB	ACTUAL MEANING	ELEMENTS OF CULTURAL BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE	CONTEXT OF CULTURE AND SITUATION
28	A meaningful/serious discussion is accepted/ urged on with the nodding of the head.	A subject that is unanimously agreed upon leaves everyone satisfied.	Discussion/nodding	Advice/enlightening
29	When praise is said, the ears open.	To get a person's attention, sing his praises.	Praise/'ears opening'	Enlightening/observation
30	A great man is known by the size of his nose.	A strong man is known by his deeds/actions.	Great man/nose	Encouragement/commendation
31	If okra is not available to use to cook a pot of soup, phlegm will be used instead.	Once there is a will to do something, there will always be a way.	Okra/pot of soup/phlegm	Consolation/encouragement
32	A sheep that gives birth to a ram is childless.	Not every supposed success is celebrated.	Sheep/ram/childlessness	Caution/observation
33	A friend will be as fine as his friend.	You cannot constantly be in the company of a successful person and not tap into the success.	Friendship	Observation/encouragement
34	When all is well with the head, all will be well with the legs.	When it is well with one member of the family, it will be well with all other members.	Head/ legs	Encouragement

S/ NO	PROVERB	ACTUAL MEANING	ELEMENTS OF CULTURAL BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE	CONTEXT OF CULTURE AND SITUATION
35	A person who suppresses his father suppresses himself as well.	In an attempt to disgrace/ embarrass others, one equally embarrasses one's self.	Son/father	Caution/ advice
36	A person who is sent to steal by his father will break door with his feet.	When one has the appropriate person's approval, his confidence level is increased.	Father/son	Encouragement/ observation
37	If you do not lick your mouth, harmattan will lick it for you.	You a person doesn't do what he ought to do at the right time, others take advantage of laziness/reluctance for their own advantage.	Harmattan/ 'mouth licking'	Warning/advice
38	When you dread harmattan cold, it will freeze you.	The thing you fear the most will have so much power over you.	Harmattan	Warning/advice/ encouragement
39	When the water-yam cries out, its finished.	When a person 'cries for help', attention should be paid to him immediately.	Water-yam	Observation/ advice
40	If a slave worships a king, the kingship will get to him.	Service brings elevation.	Slave/king/ kingship	Encouragement/ advice/ consolation

Unlike the transparent proverbs, the opaque proverbs are ones which do not make complete sense at the surface level. In other words, they are proverbs which appear unrealistic at first, but with experience, lots of thought and calculation can be better understood. This makes them even more difficult to be interpreted and comprehended.

Proverb 9 above which talks about an Okra plant not being able to grow taller than its owner, will not be comprehended by a person who lacks complete knowledge of both the situational and cultural contexts on which this proverb is used. The proverb can be very confusing because it seems impossible for an Okra plant to know its planter's height, and know not to grow long enough to be taller than its planter. But with one's knowledge of the flexible nature of the okra plant, the way in which okra is harvested/plucked, and the possible use of the proverb (a warning or an act of reprimanding), one can decipher that the person who planted the okra can always bend it whenever he needs its fruit.

Also, in Proverb 10 above, without complete mastery of the Ohafia dialect, one can find it difficult to interpret and comprehend the proverb; it will be difficult to explain how a snake can turn into a python because it is seen by just one person. But with deep thought, mastery of the dialect, experience (which usually comes with age), and calculations, one can understand that the snake does not exactly turn into a python, but is reported by the person who saw it as a python, because no one else was there to confirm or contradict the story.

Another example is Proverb 30 above, which calls for a deep assessment or calculation. The proverb which says 'a great man is known by the size of his nose' can prove to be misleading if not properly understood. A person can be confused as to why and how the size of a man's nose can tell about his strength or prowess, until one can understand, based on his mastery of the

Ohafia dialect, and the way Ohafia proverbs are said, that the nose in the context of Ohafia culture refers to something other than the actual nose of a person, his strength in this case; only then can the proverb be interpreted appropriately.

In the above examples and all other opaque proverbs, it is seen that the sentences are unrealistic, and most times do not have a logical explanation. Deep thoughts, combined with a complete mastery of the dialect and culture of the Ohafia people is required for them to be understood and properly interpreted.

4.2.1. General Discussion on the Relationship between Ohafia Proverbs and the Ohafia Worldview

From the tables above which elaborate on both opaque and transparent proverbs, it is seen that the construction, use, understanding, translation and interpretation of Ohafia proverbs cannot be done without a clear understanding of the Ohafia worldview. First, Ohafia proverbs are constructed using understandable concepts which a person with knowledge of Ohafia culture can relate to. These concepts or elements of context of background cultural knowledge are discussed below.

From the highlight given about the Ohafia people and their culture in the introductory chapter of this study, it is seen that the people of Ohafia were predominantly hunters, who went into the bushes and forests to hunt wild animals for their consumption, and for commercial purposes. This is reflected in the Ohafia proverbs, as more than 50% of our data uses different animals or insects, as well as bushes or forests allusions to convey its message. This is so because it is obviously what the people understand, since an average Ohafian is either is hunter or a farmer. Therefore, the use of animals; both domestic ones like ‘mother goat’, ‘kid’, ‘mother hen’, and

more notorious ones like ‘snakes’, ‘elephant’, ‘python’, ‘lions’, and so on is seen across the data collected. It is also observed that only animals, insects or birds that can be seen in, or have been at one point or another in Ohafia village were used in the proverbs gathered. Hence, animals which are not found in Ohafia and its environs, such as polar bears, zebras, or even donkey, were not found in Ohafia proverbs.

Another prominent theme in Ohafia proverbs is their local delicacies and food components. This is used very frequently in the proverbs to derive maximum comprehension, since anyone who is from Ohafia village, or has a mastery of the Ohafia dialect is expected to know the different food components commonly used in Ohafia. Proverbs containing foods like *Uziza*, *Garri*, Soup, Okra, bitter kola, Meat, *Ukwa*, Palm wine, and so on are constantly seen in Ohafia proverbs. It is worthy of note that only foods which can be grown in that part of the country are contained in the data collected. Therefore, even foods as common as rice, beans, onions, sugarcane, dates and so on are not seen in any Ohafia proverb, to the best of the knowledge of the researcher, even though they are popularly consumed in Nigeria. Fourteen percent (14%) of data collected contains foods or food components.

Another interesting worldview of the Ohafia people which is seen in their use of proverbs is respect for elders, and the belief that wisdom and experience come with age, and that words of elders of elders definitely trump the opinion of youths, hence the proverb which says ‘what an elder see while sitting, a child/youth won’t be able to see it even if he climbs the tallest trees’. Elders are accorded immense regards, and this is very much reflected in their proverbs. Five Percent (5%) of data collected reflects this.

Furthermore, there is the father-son relationship which is held in high esteem. As mentioned in the introductory chapter of this work, a woman in Ohafia, and all other Igbo speaking communities is not regarded as a complete woman, until she ‘gives her husband’ a male child. In other words, an Ohafia man, even though he has achieved so much affluence and social status still considers himself incomplete without a male child, hence the infusion of that relationship in Ohafia proverbs. Therefore, five percent (5%) of data collected relates to this relationship.

Life and death is also an important worldview of the Ohafia people, their belief in the uncertainty of life, life after death, reincarnation, the supernatural, prayers, the presence of a higher being (*Chineke*), and the fact that once you are alive, you should be hopeful, are used in different proverbs to explain or drive home different points in different contexts. This is contained in eight percent (8%) of data collected.

About 12 percent of data collected makes reference to time, days, market days, nights, and seasons such as rainy and harmattan seasons. This is easily attributed to the fact that before the advent of technological tools such as clocks and watches, Ohafians used the sun rise, sunset, cock crows, market days, and different seasons to tell and measure time spent. Birthdays and other anniversaries were non-existent because there was no way of knowing the actual day and time an event happened. This is seen in the 8% of the proverbs in data.

There is also the component of the Ohafia worldview which is the culture of communal living, peaceful coexistence, dispute settling, commendation and reprimanding. As explained in chapter one, the Ohafia people have a system of settling disputes and handling other communal affairs in a manner that fosters peace, unity and order, this is seen in their use of proverbs as thirteen percent of proverbs collected reflect these practices.

Furthermore, Ohafia being a warrior community has cultivated beliefs which emphasize the importance of war/war related circumstances. War dance, machetes, war drums, chants and songs form a part of the worldview of the average ohafia indigene. This is seen in their use of proverbs, as war items are used as allusions to explain and elaborate upon other life issues. Also, men were expected to be born-warriors, who are always ready to defend their wives, children and their community from external attacks. Therefore, it is expected that men should be strong and undefeatable, and should command the respect of women, who were regarded as weaker specie. This is very evident in Ohafia proverbs where the strength of men, and the weakness and frailty of women are always referenced. Furthermore, because of the mystery and secrecy attached to war situations, and the need to guard the information that circulates for fear of its leak into the wrong hands, proverbs containing supposedly transparent expressions were used to mean something else. For example, *Onye ra achi anaghị aso egwu* which means ‘a person that licks achi (a local Igbo soup ingredient) should fear nothing’ is used in war situations to mean ‘if you are an indigene of Ohafia community, should not fear, because the warriors will not let harm come to you. Thirty percent of proverbs collected are war related.

Another very important belief is that the male folks, young or old are stronger than the females. As elaborated upon in the first chapter of this work, Ohafia men, and men from all other Igbo speaking communities are usually assigned with the heavy lifting tasks, such as major farming, wood cutting, fighting wars, and hunting, while women are expected to stay at home and focus on child bearing and domestic issues. In other words, child bearing is considered the major responsibility of every married woman. Women are also considered lower than men in the social hierarchy, and are thought of as venerable, and even as an acquired asset. Ohafia proverbs tap into this belief to proper explain issues relating to venerability, strength, war, and so on.

In addition to the separation and clear definition of gender roles, which is seen in the proverbs, there is also the aspect of social hierarchy/ status both in proverb usage and in the proverbs themselves. The people of Ohafia are of the belief that through hard work, dedication and humility, one can achieve great heights in life (Njoku 2000). This is seen in Ohafia proverbs such as ‘if a slave worships his king, the kingship will get to him one day’. On the usage on proverbs, it is observed that people on the top of the leadership hierarchy in Ohafia usually give ‘proverb-filled’ speeches. They use this to drive home points, and deliver otherwise sad or provoking messages in a somewhat subtle manner. Other times, they just use proverbs as a preamble to the speeches that they want to give. Therefore, about four percent (4%) of our data contain proverbs on hierarchy.

Proverbs and Context of Culture and Situation

Chukwuma (2001:11-12) observes that:

“The concept of meaning as contained in 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 linguistic context is a mere figment and stands for nothing by itself”

Based on this, different Ohafia proverbs are used in different situations and cultural contexts. From the data collection, translation and interpretation processes of this study, eleven different contexts of culture and situations were retrieved. The researcher does not intend to conclude that these are the only contexts of use of every Ohafia proverb, but intends to show the diverse possible contexts in which Ohafia proverbs can be used, using the ones contained in the data for this study as a means of reference.

The eleven different contexts of culture and situations are advice, warning/caution, recommendation, observation, reprimanding, praise, condemnation, consolation, encouragement,

enlightening and prayer. It is worthy of note however that some proverbs can be used in two or more contexts, while others are reserved for just one context. These different contexts help in the deduction of the meanings of proverbs.

2.3. Findings

After the analysis of data gathered, the study has been able to come up with the following findings:

- i. The Ohafia-Igbo language and the worldview of the Ohafia people are hugely related. This is seen in the composition of their proverbs, where only events, situations, objects, beliefs and traditions associated with the everyday life of the Ohafia people or things they have come across at one point or the other in history are contained in their proverbs.
- ii. Background knowledge and Mutual Contextual Beliefs play significant roles in the proper understanding of Ohafia proverbs, as majority of the proverbs contain allusions, symbolisms and even metaphors, which will be almost impossible to understand or decipher without prior knowledge of what they signify.
- iii. Interpreting proverbs outside of the context of culture and situation of their use would result in little or no comprehension of the message contained in the proverbs. This is because some proverbs can be sarcastic, ironic, or even bipolar. Therefore, a proper understanding of the context of their usage will help to disambiguate them.
- iv. Ohafia proverbs are used in place of literary items in certain situations for reasons such as political correctness, in speeches where application or usage of literary language would either seem demeaning, harsh, vulgar or disrespectful to a person. Also, proverbs say in a few words, what would otherwise have been said using many. Proverbs are also usually

subtle suggestions or advice, as opposed to direct commands, instructions or criticisms. It therefore helps the listeners feel like they are thinking for, and making their decisions by themselves. Furthermore, it serves as codes and coded language to Ohafia indigenes, and warriors, helping them do communicate discreetly in war situations. This means of communication was necessary during war times, to ensure that they are not understood by enemy fighters.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

5.0. Introduction

This chapter, being the final chapter of this study focuses on a summary of the entire study, and the conclusions that were drawn as a result of the literature review and analysis.

5.1. Summary

This work, ‘A Socio-pragmatic study of Ohafia (Igbo) Proverbs’ was embarked upon by the researcher with the aim of drawing the attention of the Ohafia dialect speakers, proverb users, and the world to the dynamics, as well as the peculiarities associated with the use of Ohafia proverbs. This is done by pointing out the necessity of interpreting Ohafia proverbs within the confines of the cultural contexts in which they are used. This research attempted to answer questions on the relationship between the proverbs and the worldview of the people, the reason for the preference of the use of proverbs, instead of literal sentences in conversational situations, and the role of context of culture and situation in the understanding and interpretation of Ohafia proverbs.

In the course of reviewing related literature, it was observed by the researcher that although a number of works have been done on proverbs, and more specifically, on Igbo proverbs, little or nothing had been done on Ohafia proverbs, especially when placed side by side with the Ohafia society. The researcher therefore attempts a study of Ohafia proverbs, using Leech’s Socio-pragmatic theory and Sapir-Whorf’s linguistic relativity hypothesis as models, side by side with

a look into the elements of background cultural knowledge, and the possible contexts of culture and situation contained in the proverbs. For easy assessment and analysis, these proverbs were tabularized and categorized into two: opaque and transparent. After the tubular analysis, a generation discussion followed, where the researcher attempted to evaluate the authenticity of the linguistic relativism hypothesis by finding possible relationships between the world view of the Ohafia people and their proverbs, and use of proverbs. In this process, the place of the Ohafia cultures, climate/weather, food, ways of dressing, social hierarchy, age, gender, relationships and beliefs, in the understanding and use of Ohafia proverbs were ascertained.

It was therefore found that among other things, the proverbs of Ohafia people cannot be used without background knowledge of their worldview. Also, by getting educated on Ohafia proverbs and their peculiarities, a person becomes familiar with the philosophies, traditions, culture and overall worldview of the Ohafia people.

5.2. Conclusion

Proverbs to Ohafia people is a major form of language use. To them, it adds style, glamour and sometimes political correctness to otherwise ordinary, boring or offensive conversations. The socio-pragmatic analysis of Ohafia proverbs has revealed that these proverbs do not just exist in a void; rather they are formed using day to day concepts that are part of the life of a person in Ohafia. Based on this, for a person to totally understand and relate to an Ohafia proverb, an understanding of the Ohafia worldview, which consists of the belief systems, culture and tradition, is required. This work therefore further validates leech's socio-pragmatic theory, and Sapir-Whorf's Linguistic Relativism Hypothesis as they have been proven to be accurate in the case of the Ohafia Proverbs and their relationship with the Ohafia societal rules and worldview.

This research has therefore succeeded in identifying the extent to which context of culture and situation, and proverbs are intertwined. It has emphasized the significant relationship between the mutual contextual beliefs and background knowledge that the proverbs interlocutors share, and how that relationship determines the interpretation and comprehension of proverbs spoken. Ohafia is a unique Igbo dialect, whose speakers share certain worldviews which are formed by common values, interests and their predominant preoccupations (warring, farming and hunting). This study has shown how those interest, values, and most importantly, preoccupations affect their use of proverbs. It therefore insists that studying proverbs in insolation from the culture, beliefs, and situational context of the users of these proverbs will produce sketchy, or even invalid results.

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