

ASPECTS OF SEMANTIC CHANGE IN SELECTED NOUNS AND VERBS IN IGBO

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Abstract

This study investigates the semantic change in selected nouns and verbs in the Igbo language focusing on their meaning extension, pejoration, amelioration, metaphorization and general meaning innovations. Data were collected from adult native speakers of Igbo language of different walks of life. The elicitation and participant observation methods were used to collect the data. The Contextual Theory of Meaning was used as the theoretical framework for data analysis. The findings from the study show Igbo nouns and verbs analyzed have over time semantically evolved with both negative and positive connotations though with more of positive connotations. These semantic changes are part of the dynamic nature of language itself and also reflect the

continuous adaptation of Igbo language vocabulary to different contexts of usage.

Keywords: change, metaphoric, meaning, extension, amelioration, pejoration

Introduction

Every language has a history, and changes occur constantly while transmitting it from one generation to another. Languages change in all their aspects, in their pronunciation, word forms, syntax and word meaning (which are known as semantic change). However, these changes gradually occur and are noticeable with time. Meanwhile, the processes of linguistic change can be observed through comparison of written records of a language over a long period of time.

Traughott (2002) studies semantic change from the cognitive point of view. She argues that semantic change is highly regular, unlike Oklah (2014) who believes it is irregular and unpredictable. Investigators of changes in meaning have established a set of semantic categories, such as generalization, in which the meaning and reference of a word widen over the years (example the word *pigeon* once meant *dove* and now means all members of the family Columbidae) and Specialization in which the meaning of a word narrow over the years. Every word has a variety of senses and connotations, which can be added, removed, or altered over time, often to the extent that cognates across space and time have very different meanings. Some types of semantic change have been identified by some scholars (Crowley &

Bowern, 2010, Trask, 2007; Hook 1991 etc). Trask (2007:36-38) states that certain types of semantic change, although not easy to understand, are so frequent that they are given specific names. The author identified these; generalization/broadening, specialization/narrowing, amelioration and pejoration, metonymy, synecdoche and metaphor. According to Trask, generalization (or broadening) refers to the spread of meaning from a narrower to a broader class of things; while specialization (or narrowing) is the opposite of generalization and appears to be more frequent than generalization. Others include amelioration and Pejoration. Amelioration is an 'improvement' in meaning while Pejoration is the opposite. Using Igbo example for semantic broadening of the lexical item *uka* "conversation" derived from *ikparịtauka* means "to converse". Anieto (2018) example that the word *uka* is said to originally mean "to converse" or "to dialogue". With the coming of Christianity in Igbo land, "Sundays" were referred to as the "day of conversation". This is because the evangelism of the missionaries was more like a normal conversation with the natives. The strategy was used to win new converts/members to the new creed of the colonial masters. The new converts who jettisoned their traditional beliefs and accepted the new creed were then referred to as *Ndị uka* "church people" and their place of worship became "*ulo uka*" "church" that is, "house of conversation or reasoning". The first day of the 7th-day cycle which makes up a week was then set aside for conversation; thus " Sunday" became *ụbọchị uka* "the day of conversation". The word *uka* here clearly shows a case where a word shifts its meaning while

retaining its original meaning. Hence, *uka* means both conversation and as well referred to as 'church'.

On the other hand, "Pejoration is the development of a more negative meaning" (Narrog 2012 p. 158). It is the downgrading or depreciation of a word's meaning, as when a word with a positive sense develops a negative one (Burridge, 2010). For instance, in early middle English, the word "silly" meant *happy, blissful, blessed*, fortunate but by late 1500's, the use of the word declined to its present day meaning of "*lacking good sense*", "*empty headed*", "*senseless*", and "*foolish*" (Burridge 2010). Oklah (2014) noted that when a word is used to express negatively loaded values not inherent in its original meaning, the phenomenon is called Pejoration. Another form of semantic change is meaning shift. "This is when a lexical item undergoes a shift in meaning" (Fromkin, Rodman & Hyam 2007, p.478). For example, *lust* used to mean *pleasure* with no negative or sexual over tone, now it means very strong sexual desire especially when love is not involved or even very strong desire for anything.

Norquist (2019) defined semantic change as any change in meaning(s) of a word over the course of time. This can also be known as semantic shift, lexical change or semantic progression as noted by Norquist (2019). To further illustrate the above, Finegan (2012 p.419), "... the English verb *starve* originally meant *to die*. Today, it refers to *deprivation* and *death by hunger*, (or by metaphorical expression, to *deprive of affection*." He further states that semantic change can also occur when

native speakers of another language adopt English expression and apply them to activities or condition in their own social or cultural environment. When speakers create new terms (although sometimes unplanned) and the innovations become acceptable by the language community, then the change is linguistic. According to Holmes (2013), "...the possibility of a linguistic change exists as soon as a new form develops and begins to be used alongside an existing form" (P.207). That simply means that the old form (meaning) will not automatically fade out. The new form is just an additional meaning to the old meaning. Therefore, both meaning will be in use by the speaker's side by side. The older generation may be seen using the old form because they are more conversant with it.

On the other hand, if a word acquires certain pleasant connotations that it did not have before, the semantic change in the meaning of that word is known as amelioration. It is often used by some philologist as *elevation* instead of *amelioration*. In the fourteenth century, the word *fond* meant "*foolish, silly*" but in present-day English this word has acquired the elevated meaning of "having a strong liking for". Also, in the 13th century the word *nice* meant "*foolish, ignorant*". During the last few centuries the meaning of this word has undergone a radical change and nowadays, it is used in the case of pleasant and agreeable persons and things. In Greek, *paradise* was a word for a *park*, a *garden*. Because of the impact of Christianity, the meaning of this word was elevated, like the meaning of *angel*, and

now the word means "*heaven*, the place where good people hope to go after their death".

This paper's focus is to provide an account of semantic changes in Igbo nouns and verbs, identify the context of semantic changes of selected nouns and verbs and account for factors that cause the semantic changes. This study will be significant in highlighting the semantic changes which the selected nouns and verbs have undergone up to their contemporary usage and will be a reference point for future studies in semantics and semantic change.

Semantic Change in Selected Nouns and Verbs in Igbo

Certain lexical items in Igbo can change or shift in meaning as a result of their frequent use in new contexts. This study examines the semantic change or shift of such lexical items focusing specifically on some selected nouns and verbs.

The data for the study were by elicitation method and participant observation methods from (30) adult native speakers of Igbo language within the age range of 30 to 70 years from different walks of life. These people were used because they are not only adults but also native speakers of Igbo as it is often seen that young adults are often initiators of semantic change. The selected nouns and verbs were elicited from the respondents as they were equally asked to provide the possible meanings of the words based on different contexts. Data were also gathered from being part of the respondents'

conversations. Their responses were collected and analyzed, using contextual theory of meaning as the theoretical framework.

The Contextual Theory of Meaning was proposed by Wittgenstein in (1953). He is of the opinion that it is wrong to regard meaning as entities. He rather opines that the meaning of any linguistic expression, be it word or sentence is determined by the context in which it is used. In this theory, the meaning of an expression is determined by, or is identical with its use in the language. Thus, the meaning of expression is characterized in terms of its use. In this approach, context plays a very important role in defining and establishing meaning. For Wittgenstein, language is part of human behaviour and interactions with others in the society, because the way we use it, is useful only if it is meaningful to others who share the language code with us. The Use theory of meaning is also associated with **Speech Acts** theory which deals with utterance-interpretation as originally espoused Austin (1962) (Saeed 2003: p.222). The theory analyses the role of utterance in the relation to the behaviour of the speaker and hearer in interpersonal communication. This study thus, employs the Contextual theory of meaning as associated with the speech act theory to show the intent of the speaker in the use of words.

Igbo language is the principal native language cluster of the Igbo people, a meta-ethnicity from Southern Nigeria. It is part of the *kwa* subfamily of the Niger-Congo language family.

Data Presentation and Analysis

In this section, the data collected are presented under different semantic themes.

Theme 1:

	melioration (nouns)	Literal Meaning	Extended meaning	Use in context (s)
	nụ	outh	ole	
	mouth/ hole)	nụ (mouth) as part of the body through h which food enters the body. One also removes discomforting substances through the mouth.	nụ (hole) animals gain entrance or exit through holes. The central meaning of ọnụ is entrance and exit.	1. Ọ ji ọnụ ya rie nri (he ate with his mouth) 2. Ọke banyere n'ọnụ ya (rat entered its hole)

	mépé	pening	evelopment	
	opening/ evelopment)	his could be any closed thing such as door that needs to be opened	he meaning has been extended to mean a recent event that has some entrance for the present situation.	1.Mmépé obodo dī mma (development of a city is good)
	mé	regnan cy	n (inside)	
	n (inside/ pregnancy)	omeon e who is carryin g a child	t means something inside that is not seen, unless one approach closer or when it comes out.	1.Agwọ bi n'ímé ọhịa (snake lives inside the bush) 2. Ada dī ímé (Ada is pregnant)
	rù profit/fles h/usefulne ss)	rofit /gain	lesh (meat) sefulness	1. Enwere m úrù n'ahịa. (I made profit in the market) 2.Úrù dī n'anụ ahụ, ọkpụkpụ adighị ya (There is flesh

				in the meat and no bone) 3.Ego ahụ baara m úrù (That money was useful to me)
	gbéké (a female child name)	girl born on an Eke market day	local or uncivilized girl	1. Aha ya bụ Mgbéké (her name is Mgbéké) 2. Ó yì èfè kà Mgbéké (She dressed like an uncivilized girl)
	tụ (Ash)	remains of a burned firewood	this is used to refer to hard drugs.	1. Ọ nwere ogwuntụ (He took hard drug) 2. Ntụ dị n'ime usekwu ha (There is ash in their kitchen)
	jị (Kola- nut)	fruit from kola tree given to a visitor.	an indirect way of asking for bribe. nothing served to a	1. Nna m nyere onye ọjị ọjị (My father gave kola to the visitor) 2. Ị chọrọ ka m nye gị ọrụ, Ị

			visitor.	gà-énye m ọjị (If you want me to give you the job, you will bribe me)
	sá (Fish/ beauty)	type of fish.	he meaning has been extended to mean a very beautiful girl.	1.Nwágbohọ a bụ ásá (This damsel is beautiful) 2. Ejì m ásá sie ofe (I cooked with fish)
	kpóró kpúrú ọkà imprisonment/Grains of maize)	imprisonment (compared to) grains of maize.	his is used to refer to imprisonment (jail term).	A tụtụ ya m̀kpóró m̀kpúrú ọkà (He was given a life term jail)
10	kòsò (local game)	local game played by children	his is used to describe a good dancer.	1. Kà anyị tie òkòsò (Let us play the local game) 2. Ọ bụ òkòsò n'ìgbà egwu (He/she is a good dancer)

Theme 2:

	metaphorization	literal Meaning	metaphorised Meaning	Use in context (s)
				Ọ bụ ísíákĩ (

1	síákĩ	oconut head	sed derogatively to describe an unintelligent person.	He/she is unintelligent)
2	sí dust	ead of dust	nintelligent fellow.	Ùdó bụ ísí dust(Udo is an empty brain)
3	kpò matches	box of matches	his is used to describe a small car.	Ha nwere mkpò matches (They have a small car)
4	kulà ólíló	o not hit with the bottle	his is used to describe a mad person.	Nwoke áhụ àkọla ólíló (That man is mad)
5	rá àhụ	o lick someone's body.	omething to be difficult.	Ọrụ a ràrà àhụ (This work is difficult)
6	nwé óbì	o have a heart (as part of the body)	o be persevering, to be hard-hearted.	Udoka nwèrè óbì(Udoka is heartless)
7	nwé ísí	or someone to have head on the body.	or someone to be purposeful. Something to work out as planned.	Ijé ányị nwèrè ísí (Our movement worked as planned)

0	kéírúkà (a female name)	he front is bigger	his is used to describe a woman with big breast.	. Aha ya bù Nkéírúkà Her name is Nkiruka) . Léé óbì nwáányị á, Ọ bù Nkéírúkà(Loo k at that woman, she is busty)
1	zúkà (a male name)	he back is bigger	his is used to describe a woman with big buttocks.	.Nna ya gurụ ya Àzúkà His father named him Àzúkà) . Ukwu nwaanyị a bù Àzúkà This woman's buttocks is big)
2	kàmụ óyí(cold pap)	sed to describe the state of the pap.	his is used to describe a dull passive person.	.Ọ ñūrụ àkàmụ óyí He drank a cold pap) .Ọ bù àkàmụ óyí

				He is a dull fellow)
3.	kébeke e	nglish rat	derogatory name for mini bus	gboalanna m bùòkébekee My father's vehicle is mini bus)
4.	kó junctio n	tching at the junction	derogatory way of describing someone that is itching around the loins.	nà m ènwéókó junction I am itching around my groin)
5.	ròbò (a big bottle of 50cl of fanta or coke (soda)	fat or plump person	Yoruba word borrowed into Igbo to describe somebody especially	da bùòròbò (Ada is fat)

			a lady, that is excessively fat. It is also used to describe 50 cl of fanta or coke(soda)	
6.	kpàákp ú	ag of garri	his is used to describe a fat person.	bùrùnnukwu íbùkaàkpàák pú(He/she is too fat like bag of garri)
7.	ká gum a gummy hand)	omeone that has gum on his palms	stingy person.	1. Ónwèrèáká gum (He has a gummy hand) Nwoke a bùáká gum (This man is a stingy person)

	Pejorated Words	Literal Meaning	Pejorated Meaning	Use in context(s)
8	pịa mkpára	to flog with walking stick	to have intimacy (sex) with a girl	1.Nwoke áhụ pịàrà Ada mkpára (That man flogged Ada with walking stick) 2.Nwoke a nà Ada pịàrà mkpára (This man and Ada had sex)
9	onye áhịa rod some one that trades in rods)	one who sells metal rods.	prostitute.	1.Okeke bụ onye áhịa rod (Okeke trade on metal rods) 2. Ada bụ onye áhịa rod (Ada is a prostitute)

Theme 3:

Theme 4:

8	ords and expression (kinship terms)	iteral meaning	xtended meaning	se context(s) in
9	wanne nwoke (nna ma ọ bụ nne) atrilineal or matrilineal brother	<i>ncle</i>	(Uncle as in teacher) the meaning of the word 'uncle' is extended to any male (young or old) adult, especially teachers in primary and secondary school.	woke a ọ onyenkuzi anyị (This uncle is our teacher)
10	wanne nwaanyị (nna ma ọ bụ nne) atrilineal or matrilineal aunt	unt	he meaning is broadened to include any lady (young or old) particularly female teachers in primary & secondary schools.	ọ onyenkuzi nwa m (She is my child's teacher)

11	í m (my husband)	y husband	ny relation of the husband whether male or female.	á bụ ndị dí m They are my husbands)
12	wunye di m(my co-wife)	ife of my husband	sed in an extended meaning to describe any woman that is married in husband's kindred.	.Adakụ bụ nwuyedí m (Adakụ is my co-wife) . Ndị a bụ nwunye di m These are my co-wives)
13	né (a biological mother)	oman/mother	ny elderly woman	.bụ nné m she is my mother) . Ha bụ ndị nne m (They are my mothers)
14	na (a biological father)	ather/man	ny elderly man	1. Léé nnà m See my father) . Ndị nnà m nọ ebe á (My fathers are here)
15	éédè (elder brother)	male (relative)	ny middle aged man.	.bụ déédè m you are my

				brother) .nwoke a niile bụ deede m (All these men are my brothers)
16	áá nné (elder sister)	female (relative)	pet name for any female elderly person.	. Daa nne, ì bịálá? Elder sister, you are welcome)

Theme 5

	general Meaning	literal meaning	extended meaning	use in context (s)
	nnovations			
17	Iré ágwo	Snake tongue	someone who lies a lot. An unpredictable person.	wátà á bụ íré ágwo This child lies a lot)
18	Mary àmàká	Mary is beautiful	ladys cloth that is too long and old fashioned which depicts a holier than	.Mary àmaká Mary is beautiful) . Ọ dịka mary àmàká(She is old

			thou attitude.	fashioned)
9	irá ósè	o lick pepper	o eat a sumptuous meal.	. Ánà m àrá ósè I am licking pepper) . Ikpori ndụ bụ irá ósè (Enjoying life is to eat a sumptuous meal)
0	nye ogwụ	a medicine man	omeone who takes hard drugs such as ice, cocaine etc.	. Ọ bụ onye ogwụ a) He deals on drugs b) He takes hard drugs
1	nye nkū	firewood person	wealthy person	. Udo bụ onye nkū Udo is a firewood seller) . Ọ bụ onye nkū He is a

				wealthy man)
42	ché barber	barber's chair	someone who is unstable or unreliable.	waanyi a bu óché barber (This woman is unreliable)
43	sííkē	ady hair described as strong in texture.	stubborn or heady person.	1. Ada nwèrè ísííkē Ada has a strong head/hair) . Ọ bu onye ísííkē He/she is a stubborn)

Discussion of Data and Findings

Some of the data presented show certain nouns and verbs in Igbo that their meanings have extended or broadened, ameliorated pejorated and metaphorised contextually. Yet, there are other general semantic innovations in the Igbo language. All of these processes constitute semantic change in language. In theme 1, ameliorated nouns and verbs are indicated. *Ọnú* and *mmepe* (in 1 and 2) means "mouth /hole" and "opening" contextually. *Ọnú* (mouth) has on opening and can be referred as same *mmepe*. Now, the two terms are used contextually to refer to where something can gain entrance (a hole, an open place e.g. door) probably because it can be closed. In its extended meaning '*mmepe*' which refers to as 'opening' /

development" vary with ' Ọnú ' (mouth/hole) but can be linked to recent event that has some relevance for the present situation which means it is something that was in the past (closed) and set to start a new (develop). 'Ime' (3) simply means deep/ inside. But the meaning has contextually ameliorated to be pregnancy; something that is inside /deep that is not seen, until one approaches closer. In data (4) *uru* which means profit/gain literally has gained contextual meanings to be *flesh* and *usefulness*. *Mgbeke* (5) originally means *a girl born on Eke market day contextually*, but now it is used to describe an uncivilized girl. *Ntụ* in (6) means *ash from firewood*. Now the meaning has ameliorated to the intake of like cocaine, marijuana, Ice, Indian hemp etc probably because hard drugs look like syrup liquid while some are in form of ash. In 7, Ọjí (kolanut), usually offered to visitors especially in south East Nigeria, depicts a symbol of welcome or warmth welcome of a guest contextually, has acquired an amelioration meaning '*bribe*', (although negative connotation) particularly in offices. A situation where someone tables an official request in some offices, *kola* (Ọjí) is demanded which simply means "*pay some money*" (*bribe*) before that request could be granted.

The expression in (8) "*Asa* means a type of *fish* contextually, has acquired ameliorated meaning of a beautiful damsel /beautiful person, respectively. In 10, *mkpórọ* means *prison*; *mkpúrú ọkà* means *maize grains* contextually. However, grains of maize are usually many in a cob and no one counts it. This meaning has ameliorated to be life imprisonment which seems to be

unending. In 11, *okoso* contextually, is a conical shaped local game, when struck with finger, it dances. The meaning has ameliorated and therefore used to describe a good dancer.

In theme 2, metaphORIZED expressions are presented. These expressions have acquired figurative meaning in their usages. Data 12-13, *isiaki* (head of coconut) and *isi dust* (*dusty head/ empty head*) portray an unintelligent person. The empty head (*isi dust*) is compared to coconut (*isiaki*) which contains water and some empty when opened; hence describing an unintelligent person. In data 14, *mkpo matches* (box of matches) is used to describe a small car or a short person contextually. The meaning is changed metaphorically from normal "box of matches" used for lighting kitchen utensils such as gas cooker, stove etc to a small car or short person. In 15, *akulaolilo* literally translated as *do not hit with the bottle*, in a metaphorical context means a mad person. It portrays the picture of a mad person that is always ready to attack anyone with bottle. In 16-17, literally, the expression "*inwe obi*" (*to have a heart*) "*inweisi*" (*to have head*), '*iraahu*' (*to lick someone's body*), now have been extended to mean "*to be hard-hearted*" "*to be purposeful*" and '*something to be difficult*' in metaphorical context, respectively.

Theme 3, pejorated words and expressions are indicated. In 18-19, the meaning of the expressions "*ipia mkpara*" (*to flog with walking stick*) and "*onyeahia rod*" (*one who trades on iron rod*) have been degenerated to mean to have sex with a girl or a prostitute too. *mkpara*

(walking stick) represents the man's private part. Meanwhile, the man's private part is also regarded as the iron rod. A promiscuous woman trades on iron rods, which means that she has multiple sex partners. Data 20-21, *Ñkéírúkà* and *Àzúkà* are Igbo names contextually. Subsequently, the terms have acquired new meaning of describing a woman in a derogatory way. *Ñkéírúkà* means (the future is bright or tomorrow will be greater) is now used to describe a woman with big breast. This expression degenerated to mean *Nke-iru-ka* (as front side of the woman is bigger / big breast). *Àzúkà* also, is literally translated as *the back is bigger*. However, it means the successor will be greater. (Simply put, those coming behind me will be greater) *Azụ-ka* (back side is big) but the pejorated meaning now is about a woman that is blessed with big buttocks. In 22, *àkàmụ oyi* (cold pap) is conceptualized as a dull, passive person. This however suggests a semantic connection between cold pap, that is, food and passive fellow. Hence, the full / passive person is pejoratively described as *àkàmụ oyi* (cold pap). In 23, '*Oke bekee*' (English rat) have gained pejorative meaning contextually. *Oke bekee* (*English rat*) is now described as *mini bus*. Anytime someone makes reference to oke bekee, the person is referring to mini bus not English rat per se. The data in 24 which is '*ọkọ junction*' (literarily translated as itching at the junction) means itching around the loins. Junction is the meeting point of two or more roads. Therefore, it is the derogatory way of portraying someone that is itching around the private parts. Data 25, the meaning of the expression *orọbọ* (a Yoruba word for specie of chicken) has changed pejoratively. It now means *a plump or a*

very fat person or the big bottle of (50cl) of fanta or coke (soda). 26-27, '*akpa akpu*' (*bag of cassava*) and '*aka gum*' (gummy hand) contextually, have degenerated to mean a fat person (*akpa akpu*) and a stingy fellow (*aka gum*).

Theme 4, presents words and expression that are mostly kinship terms with extended meaning. The expressions in data 28 and 29 *nwanne nwoke nna ma o bu nne* (uncle) and *Nwanne nwaanyi nna ma o bu nne* (aunt) contextually maternal or paternal uncle and aunt, now have broadened meaning to include any young or old, male or female teachers in primary and secondary schools respectively. The pupils and students in these levels at schools do address their teachers as uncles or aunts respectively. The reason is to show respect. Data 30 and 31, *nwunye di m* (the wife of my husband or my co-wife) and *di m* (my husband) have cultural undertone. In cultural context, *nwunye di m* refers to any married woman in the husband community. The relationship that exist between the man (*di m* - husband) and the woman (*nwunye* - wife) is referred to as "the wife of my husband" or (my co-wife) does not go beyond that name contextually. Furthermore, the meaning of *di m* (my husband) is extended to include anybody from the husband's kindred whether male or female. Also in data 32 and 33 *nne* (biological mother) and *nna* (biological father) respectively, have been broadened to include an elderly woman or man from anywhere. It is not just limited to our parents but people old enough to birth us. In 34, *deede* (elder brother) refers to someone's elderly male sibling contextually, but now, the meaning has

extended to anyone that is older than the speaker. This is also applicable in data 35, *Daa nne* (elder sister, a female relative). It is a respectful way of addressing someone's female elder sibling. (*Daa nne*) is an honorific and pet name used as semantic extension for any female elderly person.

Theme 5, presents some general semantic innovations. In 36, *Ire agwọ*, literally translated as (snake tongue), is an idiomatic expression for someone who lies a lot. An unpredictable fellow, the expression applies to anyone that has a deceitful and convincing tongue. As the snake is known to be deceitful and cunning, it depicts a human with such characteristics. In 37, Mary *amaka*, literally translated as Mary (someone's name) *amaka* (is very beautiful), is contextually seen as a *lady's cloth is too long or old fashioned*. The expression applies to any lady whose cloth is uncomfortably too long irrespective of the name. It also depicts a 'holier than thou attitude' (churchous'' person). The expression is seen to be ironical as well because it is saying the opposite of what it meant. In 38, *Ira ose*, literally means to ('lick pepper'). The expression however, in actual contextual sense, means to eat a sumptuous meal while the action could mean to feel pepper in one's mouth. In 39, *Onye ogwu* literally translated as a (medicine man). The expression depicts someone who takes hard drugs such as cocaine, ice, Indian hemp etc. The meaning goes beyond someone that trades on drugs to a person that is addicted to the intake of hard drugs. In 40, *Onye nku* translated as (firewood person) means a wealthy fellow. This expression is linked to firewood used in cooking. The

bunch cooks enough food for people to eat. Therefore, one who has firewood is compared to a wealthy person who is very comfortable to an extent. In 41, *Oche barber* literally translated as (barber's chair). The expression in actual sense means an unreliable person while the action of the barber's chair is rotation; it is similarly used to portray the lifestyle of a person who is indecisive, unpredictable and inconsistent. The data in 42, *isiike* literally means (strong head). The expression is used to describe the texture of human hair (probably ladies). The expression is seen to be idiomatic to mean a stubborn person. The strong hair texture is compared to the die-hard attitude of a heady fellow (stubborn nature of someone).

Conclusion

This study examined the semantic change in selected nouns and verbs in Igbo language with particular focus on amelioration, extension, pejoration, metaphorization and general meaning innovations. This work has shown that meaning change is inevitable in all languages as speakers try to adapt words in different contexts to achieve their communicative needs. The findings of this study which focused on just nouns and verbs are indicative of a general linguistic phenomenon which may not just be affecting nouns and verbs but other aspect of the Igbo language and therefore requires further research.

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