

## 5. Semantic Study with an Affective Meaning and Different Interpretations

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### **Abstract**

*This paper sorely examines just an aspect of meaning, the 'Affective meaning' as it relates to Ijo worldview. The significance of this study to know, how the theory comes up with it so that meaning cannot be viewed as an entity, but in the context (here, the data are collected and analyzed in detail). However, by the empirical method, the data collection is consultations from textbooks, internet and competent speakers of the various languages. This paper revolves around on the major research questions, 1. How does 'affective meaning' work in languages? and 2. How does a particular affective meaning have an individual role in African languages? These questions will address with various languages, including 'Igala,' 'Igbo' and 'Kswahili,' and 'Ijo.' These languages are the major focus of this work. In short, it is found that the ways of expressing affection or feeling across cultures and/or languages are sometimes similar.*

**Key words:** *Semantics, Igala, Igbo, Kswahili, Ijo, Interpret, Connotative*

### **Introduction**

Chierchia G., and Sally McConnell-Ginet (2000, pp. 220) write, "The dynamic approach seems especially promising for developing an abstract semantic theory of sentimental meaning that goes beyond truth conditions. The fundamental idea is that there is a formal discourse structure associated with the context of utterance." In other words, semantics is a branch of linguistics, which studies about meaning. The general overview of semantics is all about the studying 'meaning of words' and

'sentences' in various languages. As such, it has left various scholars researching about meaning in their various disciplines. However, there are various aspects or forms of the meaning itself in semantics.

The aim of this paper is to present affective meaning in various languages, like 'Igala,' 'Igbo' and 'Kswahili,' and 'Ijo. Such four languages come from Nigeria and they are flexible; even those languages have an influence on other languages. Thus, it is significant and easy to know about African cross-cultural meaning and affecting words meaning. Let's see the short introduction of these languages, 1) Igala: 'This language is spoken by approximately 2,000,000 people, and Igala is one of the ninth main languages in Nigeria. The name Igala refers to the people as well as their language. The Igala language belongs to the New Benue-Congo branch within the Niger-Congo phylum' (Ochala pp. 7). 2) Igbo: The Igbo language is primarily indigenous to the Igbo people as well as it is one of the three major languages in Nigeria. The Southeastern part of Nigeria was occupied by them. They basically reside in the states like Enugu, Imo, Abia, Anambra, and Ebonyi states. This language belongs to the new Benue Congo language family (Ozo-mekuri, 2015, pp. 203). 3) Kswahili: In case of Kswahili, 'Kswahili is a blend of more languages than one. The biggest one being none but other than Arabic. Its grammar is closely linked to the Bantu language in Kenya, Northeast Tanzania and the Comoro Islands' (Nurse, and Spear, 2015, pp. 6). 4) Ijo: 'Ijo is a Niger-Congo language, but there are no associated languages to it and its exact place within the Niger-Congo family is still not obvious. The first European record of the potential term Ijo word was made in 1500' (Williamson pp. 4-7).

### Literature Review

Again Lyons (1977) states, "Semantic is generally defined as the study of meaning." With these meanings, we may conclude that semantics is a component of linguistics that studies meaning. Relevant as Leech (1971) states that they logical/conceptual meaning. Which are logical, cognitive or connotative content. Secondly, connotative significance examines what is communicated by virtue of what language it refers to. On its own, the social meaning speaks about what is communicated from the social circumstance of language; reflective meaning focuses on what is communicated through associative. Collective meaning investigates through associations with words, which co-occur with another word in communication. Affective meaning is regarding with what is conveyed through the

emotions as well as the speaker's mood in the words. Then, the thematic meaning that involves what is communicated by the way in which the message is organized in terms of order and emphasis.

Valli and Lucas write, "Affective meaning provides information about the signer's feeling, attitudes, or opinions concerning a piece of information. It can be conveyed by individual sign choice and be sentence structure" (Valli and Lucas, 2002, pp. 151). Briefly looking at the types of meaning, our attention should be centred on Affective meaning, which deals with the feeling and attitude of the speaker. Osgood and other scholars write (1975, pp. 63) in the book entitled, *Cross-cultural Universals of Affective Meaning*, Vol.1 write "Even within a single individual the same "objects of affect" may differ in the type of affect from time to time and from situation to situation." This book is about affective meaning and cross cultural affective to know the language. Each individual has his or her own experience associated with a word and as such, it is the only semantic analysis that can give us various people's opinion of different people about their own languages, and they can properly discuss on the affective meaning of their word choice. But with this paper's semantic analysis, it has brought about how Ijo speaker can express affection through certain words of communication. Words used for Ijo's analysis are collected from Izon English dictionary.

The theoretical framework adopted is 'The Use Theory,' which demonstrates that the meaning of an utterance or expression is based upon the context of use. The impact of this research is knowing how there are certain words used connotatively to insult, flatter or ridicule someone.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This paper is anchored on 'The Use Theory.' Mwhaki (2004) says about 'The Use Theory', "It is a semantic theory developed by Wittgenstein, a German scholar in 1953. It was further reviewed by Firth and Halliday." Other theorists, Anagbogu and others (2010, pp. 231) see that 'The Use Theory' as a theory of meaning. It contends that the meaning of anything is the use it is put to. It is what each society use the content and the meaning makes of it. To a similar view, Ogbulogo (2005, pp. 29) states that 'The Use Theory' can be referred to the contextual or operational theory of meaning. At the time when the meaning of a word or an expression is determined by the context of its use. Again, Ndimele (2005) posits that the meaning of the expression is the effect that it creates in a particular context in which the expression is used. The meaning of 'The use theory,' we can see by the several scholar's opinions. This theory is all about the effect, which it has on the speaker base and in the

context of the use of the expression. Therefore, the contextual effect of meaning is unavoidable. To back this up, the propounded of 'The Use Theory,' Wittgenstein as noted by Ndimele (2005) that it is silly to regard meanings as entities; the meaning of any linguistic expression in a word, a phrase, or a sentence. All these should be determined or abstracted by the context; the context in which it is used or carried the meaning in speaking. Ndimele (2005) further opts that the premise of this theory is that the particular meaning of the expression able to characterize in the time of its use (in any language).

### **Theoretical Studies**

'Affective meaning' is more in a reflection in a straight line of the speaker's personal attitudes or feelings on the way to the listener or the utterance of target. In the structure, those feelings or attitudes are often negative or insincere. Ndimele (2005, pp. 44) says meaning becomes affective as a term are used in specific way to express something regarding the speaker's emotions or thoughts about his or her hearer or the topic of debate. With this we can say that affective meaning is all about what was communicated through language of the speaker's feelings and attitudes.

Again, Anagbogu, Mbah and Eme (2010, pp. 223) say, "The affective meaning refers to the meaning that is defined from a personal perspective. The name assigned to an entity as perceived by the point of view of the perceiver." This type of meaning, when perceived by the listener, consider the utterance of the speakers and the effect. In other terms, when it comes to affective significance, the listener's feelings are taken into account. It may also be referred to as emotive meaning or effects of words evoked in the reader or listener to some linguists. These are conveyed or transmitted to the listener (from the speaker) by the personal feeling or attitudes. For example, the word 'mother' means an adult woman who is married (in a certain culture; there is always a married woman who is not compulsory to consider mother, like as Christianity). But when it is said in the presence of a motherless child; here, the emotions of the child have been put into play and thus have an effect on the mind of a child and changes his/her emotions. Language is used in an affective sense context to express personal feelings, emotional expressions, or their attitudes towards the listener. It may also be relevant to the context or focus of the (written or oral) discourse. Leech (1981) argues that affective meaning denotes the meaning conveyed by language (attitude towards the listener as well as attitude towards what he or she is saying) about the speaker 's feeling and attitude.

The conceptual, connotative context of the words used to always convey an affective meaning. To take one example,

- 1a. You are a vicious tyrant and villainous reprobation, and I hate you. Or
- b. I hate you, you idiot.

It indicates from the instances above that the speaker has a pessimistic disposition towards his / her addressees. Richard (1938) claims that emotive or affective distinguishes literature or poetic language from the factual meaning of science.

Using certain words in a language can make someone or have a positive or negative effect on someone. One's choice of words might trigger him or her a major problem if the speaker is not discreet. Abusive or insulting words regarding the listener's mood, for example, are derogatory. These terms of the languages used as insult, love, flattery, hyperbole or sarcasm normally express affective meanings. Affective language may be seen to be similar to connotative interpretation, in the way that verbs or phrases are used. The meaning of affection is also used for connotative meaning. For example, in Ijo 'Obori,' which is 'goat' connotatively means 'mugu'. If anyone is referred to as 'goat' in an affective context, it implies the individual is 'fool'. A word's affective meaning is more of a customised term description than the abstract definitions synonymous with connotation.

### Empirical Studies

In Ijo language, there is limited work done on affective meaning. We dwell on interviews with native speakers of other languages and the viewpoints of some scholars. In the words of Mwiwaki (2004), 'affective meaning is normally expressed through insults, flattery, hyperbole or sarcasm.'

Insultive or abusive words are usually expressed in Kiswahili with negative attributes and reference to the names of the animal as an example,

2. a. mgavawe means 'pig'
- b. mbwa means 'dog'
- c. mayama means 'beast'
- d. mwizi means thief
- e. mweha means deranged person
- f. mjinga means 'fool'

According to the above speaker, the definitions above speaker are bastardy dirty, greed, cruel, deceitful and unreasonable or an idiot. As stated by Mwhaki (2004), such terms or slurs are focused on the speaker's emotional state of mind of the speaker whose addressee would not be 'pig' or 'beast' forever. Most people are flattered when we are stuck in a mood of zest or in a mood of guile. Especially when we intend to use the flattery in a particular way. According to Mwhaki (2004), flattery is usually expressed in metaphorical utterances and predictably using attractive attributes for example,

3a. m.alaiika 'angel'

b. njiwa 'dove'

c. samba 'lion'

d. ndovu 'elephant'

She also says great beauty, compassion, gentleness, bravery or strength; for a temporary nature, this choice of languages in use has lasted for a period of utterance.

Sarcasm serves as an indirect means of conveying a negative message. In other words, the meanings not actually contained in the words used. Mwhaki (2004) claims that speakers often use sarcastic remarks, when they deliberately want to ridicule the listener. The intention of ridiculing is often a reflection of the speaker's opinion either the status or performance of the addressee. For example, an insensitive or awfully discouraged parent, on seeing the dismal examination results of his/her child could comment.

4. Umetia for a hata ukavuta mkia. Meaning:

'You excelled so absolutely that you pulled the tail'

### Phrases or Affective Words in Igala

Igala has some words, which are used to insult, express love and ridicule.

### Insultive words or phrases

5a. Ene Ibete – (somebody stupid) 'stupid someone'

b. Madu odi Ona agbe akpan – (They don't use rain Ona's cultivate maize) "Ona is untrustworthy".

c. Akpa Ijo be oun e che – (killer occasion spoils you are) "you are troublesome/problematic"

d. **Abaji** – (ape) “somebody, who is nonsensical/crazy”

#### **Flattery Words /Expressions or Phrases in Igala**

6a. **Onyete** – Used for young ladies (A kind of admiration)

a. **Daudu** – Used for young men (A kind of respect)

c. **Ama-ekwu-mi** - “she who knows my needs or the one who knows what I need”.

#### **Sarcastic or Ridiculing Words or phrase in Igala**

7a. **Une ache omite ola** – Une the putter of water to case

**Une case**– elevator

b. **Ade engine ma ona** – she who knows tomorrow from today.

“someone who claims to know everything”

c. **Aka ogecha** – talker of truth

“used to qualify someone who claims to be an eye witness all the time”.

#### **Love Word or Phrases in Igala**

8a. **áfedo mi** – he who loves me

b. **Ufedo** – my love

c. **Emi** – my own

d. **Ateko mi** – my helper

#### **Affective Words in Igbo**

##### **Love Words in Igbo**

Words	Affective meaning
9a O di nobim	My sweetheart
b. Di m oma	My beloved husband
c. nkem	Mine
d. di	An address for both husband and wife
e. Obi m	My heart

##### **Flattery Words in Igbo**

Words	Affective meaning
10a. ákpù nwá	Strong man
b. bekee	English or white man

- |                         |  |
|-------------------------|--|
| c. oma mma-mma-zuru ahu | Beautiful/handsome person                      |
| d. o je mba-enwe-iro    | A person who travels wide and makes no enemies |
| e. azueru-ola           | A wrestler whose back never touches the ground |
| f. Mmiri-na-ezoro-oha   | Rain that falls for many                       |

### Insultive or abusive Words in Igbo

- 11a. onye ori – Thief
- b. awkuna – Prostitute
- c. ewu – Fool
- d. onye nzuzu – Senseless person

### Analysis of Ijo Affective Meaning

Affective meaning as we noticed in the previous sections is when a word is spoken, or an utterance/expression is made in relation to the speakers' personal feelings or attitudes. The insulting words used do not mean that the addressee is exactly, what the refers to him or her as being. It is important to remember when discussing affective meaning of a word, that each individual has a different affective meaning for a word. As such, even the individual who speaks would be conscious of the common affective sense associated with the word. Hadiati (2017, pp. 945-46) writes, "Affective meaning is being employed by speakers to some extent. Speakers may want to show their affection or to shorten the distance with the interlocutors."

### Insultive Word in Ijo

Insultive words in Ijo are also expressed through names of animal and negative attributes as well.

For example,

- 12a. gbaun "fool" (a gbaun yo) "you are a fool/stupid".
- b. Obori "goat" (obori barani) "like a goat".
- c. ikpe "lie" (ari ikpeifa) "you are a liar"
- d. ikiyou fa "lack of sense" (ari ikiyou fa) "you have lack of sense"
- e. furu – thief (a fururyemi) "you are a thief"
- f. kekerre – stiff (ong bi kekeree) "with your stiff body"
- g. sei – wicked (a sei bomi) "you are too wicked"
- h. numu – mad (inumu) "you are mad"



- i. pou – witch (pou ere) “a woman who is a witch”
- j. iyebi – stupid (ari iyebi erebi) “you are a stupid person”
- k. suu “lazy” (Ine suufa erebi) “you lazy woman/girl”
- l. okoti – he goat (ye okoti dengri) “you are like a he goat”
- m. Seibou – bad leg (ine seifa boubi) “with your bad leg”

These insulting words that are exemplified above occur because of the speaker's emotional state. It does not imply the addressee precisely the way he or she is being addressed. But in some circumstances, people are been insulted or abused because of their deformity like in the example (n).

#### Words for Affection of Love

13a. imbau – my daughter (it is used by parents to show affection for their female child)

- b. inebolou – my heart (it is used for mostly spouse)
- c. ineyain – my son (the same expression with 13a)
- d. iyei – my husband (used by wives addressing their husbands)
- e. ebii – beautiful (it is used for admiration for both female and male)
- f. inetari – my love (both husband and wife do make use of it)
- g. ita – my wife (often used by husbands alone)
- h. iyoun baa ere – (the woman in my heart).

The examples above are words, those used to show each other love and affection.

#### Flattery Words in Ijo

When the speaker is in a certain mood or the addressee needs to have satisfied the speaker to some extent, the following words are used. For details, see below,

14a. olotu “champion” (often expressed when someone has to do something right, or a child that falls and doesn't cry)

- b. ebiera “fine woman” (used to flatter females)
- c. kurotobou “strong child” (is often used for a child)
- d. ine bara ogunu “you hand up” (it is used when a certain person won a settlement, or in form of praise)
- e. dii bo desie “he who looks it, likes it” (is used to praise a female child or adult).

- f. Umgbo keme – reputable person
- g. ari owei lami – you are up to a man
- h. weni bou sie bara – the footstep is like a dance (usually used to flatter somebody's footstep).
- i. yei diere – first lady (it is usually used to flatter a woman that her husband is close to).

Ijo flattering words are more in a praise form as we have seen from the examples above.

### **Ridiculing or Sarcasm in Ijo**

In Ijo, ridiculing words are said with positive words, whereas the person who speaks means the opposite. One's deformity may also use for ridicule.

- 15a. yenimukimi – the wise person (in this context it is being referred to a shrewd person).
- b. ine tibi zaoumo – your head is small (meanwhile' it is been referred to somebody who has a big head)
- c. a kemi dimi – you know it (somebody who doesn't know but claims to know all)
- d. ebriere – beautiful woman/lady (refers to an ugly woman/lady)
- e. bin – fat or to be many (it is used in this context for a slender person)
- f. bo keme dangin mi – this man is tall (the person is very short).
- g. ine aka zau moo – your teeth are small (someone with big teeth)
- h. kurokeme – strong person (it is referred to someone who is lazy).
- i. ine buru kerii ebimo – your yam farm looks nice (your yam farm looks very scanty)
- j. ine bide dii ebimo – your cloth looks nice (it used to refer to somebody's dirty cloth).

As we have seen from the above examples of Ijo ridiculing works, we can say that they are expressed the same way with connective meanings. These may also be referred to as connotatively.

### **Findings**

Meaning is peculiar to the context of usage and culture. This can help us to look at the affective meaning in various languages as well as their worldviews, as we have examined so far. We discovered that the focus of this paper is affective meaning which has similarity across culture. It is through negative attributed to things and animals that Igala, Igbo and Ijo express their abusive or insulting feelings.

### **Conclusion**

The paper concludes by saying that somebody can choose and interpret his or her own affective meaning differently from a word. Some of the essential areas of linguistics has acted as a way for us to learn exactly, what affective meaning all is. An individual may take from a word his or her own affective sense, reading it in the way he or she feels. After examining the concept of affective meaning, we can aver that different people have their own unique affective way of interpretation an utterance with affection. Conclusively, from Ijo's worldview we were able to examine the affective meaning. It is worth mentioning that the affective meaning. It is worth mentioning that the affective sense in Ijo is essentially the same with other languages in this region.

The significance of this study is to know, how affective meaning perception proceeds for reality/meaning. It cannot be used as an object, but the meaning is. There are many affective meanings, but this research does not cover other Nigerian languages and the impact of affective meaning. On other linguistic forms, it also does not focus on affective meanings. Additionally, there are certain limitations, where a comparative study with other regional languages such as Indian and Nigerian languages can be explored in detail. Also, it can be compared with the African languages, and interpretation. Even in Nigerian language contexts can be studied too.

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