Abstract
One of the numerous ways people express their worldviews, feelings and experiences is through naming. Idiomatic innuendo, Igbo personal names and expressions are aspect of Igbo names with high corrective and educative significance. These functions are neglected among the users. These type of names and expressions have been used to attack the hearers instead of the bearers. The work posits that the hearers are part of the owners of the names. It was concluded that innuendo in Igbo personal names and expressions are embodiment of meaning which is interpretable culturally and linguistically. This work was framed on the Relevance Theory. Our data were collected through introspection, oral interview, library and internet materials.

Keywords: Culture, Figures Of Speech, Idioms, Innuendo And Name.

1.0 Introduction
Idioms are classified under figurative language and figurative language is used in speaking and in writing to reinforce and explain what a speaker means. It is a form of style in which words are used to express more than they ordinarily mean in order to give effective expression to the idea. Speakers use it to deviate from an ordinary language use in order to enhance understanding. By the use of such figure of speech life is discovered fully, properly qualified and reorganized in every phase of human existence. All human activities revolve around language. Figurative language is used to discover similarities or differences in life. According to Thrall and Alibbard (1980,p.20)” a figure of speech is an intentional departure from the normal order, construction or meaning of words in order to gain strength and freshness of expression. It is usually employed in discourse to illustrate similarities in otherwise dissimilar things in order to specifically increase the reader’s or hearer’s understanding.”

To a reasonable extent, Igbo innuendo users use it to communicate their feelings and correct societal ills. In fact, innuendo has existed throughout recorded history. Innuendo is one of the linguistic techniques or an expressive dogma used as a shield or weapon against others. It is used as a means of expressing anger and frustration. Most Igbo personal names are regarded as innuendo names because they display those attributes that are also seen in innuendo expressions. This is what motivates this research exercise. The cultural and idiomatic contents of innuendo expressions and personal names are thrust of this paper.

As observed by Ubahakwe (1982, p.4) “an indigenous Africa name personifies the individual, tells some stories about the parents and/or the family of the bearer and in a more general way points to the value of the society into which the individual is born” (p.4). Users of the innuendo also modify the meaning of words through a linguistic process known as metaphorical extension drawn from their collective cultural milieu. In other words, the meaning of an existing word can be extended in a
recognizable way through innuendo names and expressions. We must emphasize that a proper understanding or mastering of the socio-cultural and the linguistic contents of innuendo expressions and names enhance their interpretations.

Language is used by the people and the people cannot exist without the knowledge of that which helps them to function effectively. According to Sapir (1929, p.209):

_Human beings do not live in the objective world alone, not alone in the world of social activity as ordinarily understood, but are very much at the mercy of a particular language which has become the medium of expression for the 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 habit of the group.... We see and hear and otherwise experience very largely as we do because the language habit of our community predisposes certain choices of our interpretation._

Giving names is a form of linguistic and cultural creativity. Innuendo meanings are connected with events and happening in the world. They make propositions that may be ordinary or ethnical. The essence of innuendo expressions and names in Igbo land is to main social order. We therefore posit that innuendo Igbo expressions and personal names perform what Austin (1975) called “act”. As observed by Wardhaugh (2010, p.301) “one thing that many utterances do is to make proposition. They do this mainly in the form of either statement or question but other grammatical forms are also possible.” More so, we begin to see utterances from the point of view of what they do. It is possible to see every utterance as a speech act of one kind or another; that is, having some functional value which may be quite independent of the actual word used and their grammatical arrangement (see Wardhaugh, 2010).

Onukawa (2016, p.1) emphasizes that “personal names have special significance among Africans especially the Igbos.” The Igbo names, like most other African names, have high cultural content. They are not simply labels used for mere identification purposes, like baggage tags. In using innuendo expressions and personal names, users unconsciously or consciously try to uphold the various categories of what Austin called performatives---using utterances to do something other than saying something.

It is better to classify innuendo Igbo expressions and names in terms of what they do. Our interest is to discover what innuendo expressions and personal names do; their contents as well as what they mean. Igbo idiomatic innuendo expressions and personal names involve much more than using utterance to state a proposition or convey facts. Through their use’s relationships are established and a certain measure of co-operation is also achieved in the society. The utterance we use in idiomatic innuendo expressions and names help us to achieve these things because innuendo is used for social maintenances which help to sustain reality. It is used to find release in aggressions. In other words, Igbo innuendo expressions and personal names offer users some emotional release.

2.0 Theoretical framework

The theory adopted is the pragmatic theory of human communication-Relevance Theory developed in the mid-1980s by Dan-Sperber and Deirdre Wilson. The proponents of relevance theory insist that the human mind has an ability to maximize the relevance of the stimuli that it produces. Naturally, it is impossible for human mind to pay attention to the lots of information that gets to it, hence, its ability to filter irrelevant information and focus on the relevant ones. Dan Sperber and Deirdre Wilson (2002, p.254) explain:
As a result, constant selection pressure towards increasing efficiency, the human cognitive system has developed in such a way that our perceptive mechanisms tend automatically to activate potentially relevant assumption, and our inferential mechanism tend spontaneously to process them in most productive way. In the same thinking Fransisco (2010) comments: Filtering information which does not appear to be relevant (for example, when we do not recall most of the people who pass by us in the street but do remember those who for some reason; stand out from the crowd) is indeed a typical mental activity oriented towards this relevant seeking procedure, but it is also essential for human survival to identity underlying intentions and attitude in the actions (communicative or otherwise) of those who are around us. (680).

This theory seeks to explain that the human mind tends to pick from the context only the information that might be useful for drawing conclusion. Human beings try to develop the ability for accessing the right information stated for adequate conclusion and also the ability to combine the novel information with the previous information in the mind to enable interpretation. The cognitive principle of relevance explains that the human mind has an inherent ability to focus on potentially relevant information. One of the major interests of the researchers in this theory is the view that one of the abilities of the human mind is that of merging contextual information with new information in order to achieve relevant conclusions.

A. Idioms

Idioms are highly idiosyncratic. That is, they are language-specific. Idioms are only interpreted within the context of use; and unlike proverbs their meaning cannot be determined by their constitutive parts. Idioms are naturally metaphorical and also inherent in innuendo names and expressions and as well perform innuendo functions. For Katie (2010, p.198) “not all idioms are lexical; some are grammatical peculiarities.” Idiomatization seems an almost inevitable consequence of social interchange and the need to be polite. Every language is bound by the culture of the user. Though in this combination there has been a controversy such as whether culture is inherent or embedded in language or vice versa. However, both affect each other. Whorf and Edward Saphir were of the opinion that language influences culture. Whichever way, Kathryn (2015,) admits that:

Culture can provide directions on how to express an idea; but culture does not create an idea. In other words, culture explains how to convey an idea; but not what the idea is. We know from culture to culture, there are shared human experiences that are expressed through language. These experiences lead to the same idea being expressed in different ways in different culture. Ideas are derived from culture and are expressed through language. Socially, man gets cultural experiences that must be expressed through language (4).

Idiom expresses ideas nurtured in the culture through images whose meaning cannot be gotten by mere expression of speech word by word. There is a lot of connotation in idioms. Their meanings are contextual as such, the people’s culture must be understood as to enable a better understanding of idioms. Kathryn (2015) supports that the study of idioms must go hand in hand with the knowledge of history and culture. This helps in enhancing the understanding of the meaning of idioms which is shared by the other cultures in a variety of expressions. Culture has a lot of influence on language which is expressed through idioms. The Igbo innuendo expressions and names effectively transmit the cultural and social values even the most pervasive aspects of the socio-cultural patterns.
As observed by Dobrovol’sky and Piirainen (2006, p.1)

*The most salient features of conventional figurative units such as idioms cannot be captured without addressing cultural knowledge. Underlying conceptual metaphors (as developed in the scope of the cognitive theory of metaphor) are not the only linguistically relevant type of knowledge. In order to describe how idioms function and to uncover their semantic and pragmatic features, one has to take into account other concepts as well, above all culturally based concepts which govern the inference from literal to figurative. Being an irregular unit of the lexicon idioms cannot be sufficiently described by metalinguistic instruments designed for capturing regular mechanisms of metaphor production. What is needed is a theory specially designed to describe the irregularities of idioms.*

In discussing idioms used as innuendo we postulate that the image components may not exactly contribute to the actual meaning but can be determined by the context of use. Our task however is to discover the semantic import and correlate it with the contexts as encoded in the linguistic structure. In this same vein, Debrovol’sky and Piirainen (2006) opine that “many idioms containing a number of constituent can be interpreted only by means of culturally bound semiotic knowledge which provides the motivational link between the figurative and the literal reading.” (p.6) The duty of the idiomatic constituents is to evoke associations and at the same time point to the concept or idea which the user wants the hearer to conceive.

**B. Culture**

Naming is one of the crucial components of culture. Culture reveals certain disparities in the manner different people of the world conceive different aspects of their culture. It is these disparities that bring about peculiarities or uniqueness in the various cultures. Culture is a total combination of traits which manifest in the people’s idiosyncratic manner of doing thing. McGregor (2009, p.156) notes that:

> All speech occurs in an interactive context in which interactants-speakers-hearers make choices from the linguistic system. These include lexical and grammatical choices that express appropriate experimental meaning, that is meaning concerned with the construal of the world of experience. People’s world views characterize their culture and people’s culture determines their linguistic choices.

Thriveni (2002, p.10) sees “culture as a kind of complexity that include knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, customs and some habits formed by living in a certain society.” Language is the carrier of culture and Vermeer (1989, p.222) emphasizes that language is a part of culture and Lotman’s theory (1978, p.32) stamps it that “no language can exist unless it is steeped in the context of the culture”. This is another way of readdressing the belief that language is culture bound as the two concepts remain inseparable.

On this premise Alexandra (2002, p.14) observes that “culture” addresses three important categories of human activity; which are: “the personal; whereby we individuals think and function as such; the ‘collective’ whereby we function as social context and the ‘expressive’ whereby society expresses itself”. Yule (1996) in discussing language and culture states:

> In the study of the world’s cultures, it has become clear that different groups not only have different languages, they have different world views which are reflected in their languages. In very simple terms, the Aztecs not only did not have a figure in their culture like Santa Claus, they did not have a word for this figure either. In the sense language reflects culture. This is a very important observation and the existence of different world views should not be ignored when different languages or language varieties are studied (p.246).
It is the people’s culture that differentiates them from another group. People’s culture or world view is reflected in their language. This gives them identity and pride. Ota (2010) asserts that culture is the totality of people’s way of life; their norms, value and orientation. It is a phenomenon that is hammered on the anvil of a common history and shared experiences. Oti (2011) observes:

*Culture influences names, part of speech and their positions in synthetic arrangement with a given language. The belief in reincarnation among the Igbo people of Eastern Nigeria informs certain names like Ogbonaya (the father’s name sake where the child reincarnated by the same ancestor that reincarnates the father). (p.40)*

Oti (2011) also added that “cultural traits in form of beliefs guide the use of language. Remember that belief is the psychic foundations upon which social phenomena are built (language being part of social phenomena). Certain beliefs about people’s relationship with the supernatural beings may make some linguistic forms very prominent in the society.” (42).

Culture is a total combination of traits which manifest in the people’s idiosyncratic manner of doing things. The remark idiomatic innuendo Igbo expressions and personal names make are usually indirect. The deliberate act of the users to be indirect makes the meaning highly vague. The use of idiomatic innuendo Igbo expressions and personal names compels one to the in-depth insight and understanding of the cultural components of the expressions and the names for effective interpretations since the culture prescribes and proscribes ideas for language users. For an effective interpretation of idiomatic innuendo expressions and names, the socio-cultural milieu where these expressions and names are used should be given adequate consideration. Consider the expressions or names below:

1) **Agbeisiimimkpuru (a silent killer)** as expressed among the Igbo people is used idiomatically to refer to an unscrupulous fellow. Culturally, the Igbo people tie wrapper mostly the women and the gnat are particular kind of insect found commonly among them. If mistakenly the gnat intrers into someone’s wrapper and bites the person it can silently cause an embarrassment such as causing the person to strike herself naked. Whenever this expression is used of a person, it is usually easy interpreted by understanding the nature of this insect and how it operates in the life of the people then one can understand why a fellow is referred so.

2) **Asirigbakaute (a gossip)** In the Igbo cultural milieu, before modernity people in their mould houses had their parlors “mgbe” where they build “ukpukpu” a bedlike carve which was usually covered with mat “ute” and served as a seat to welcome visitors. It where visitors seat and interact with their host and is a gossip visits, he/she stays consistently and in the prolong stay and gossiping tears the mat. Even now as the referent of the mat is lost the idiom is likely to become attrited and meaning far-fetched. This expression or name is used to refer to a gossip in Igbo society.

3) **Agwoisilaabo/Agwoucheche (a deadly and an unpredictable fellow)** When a snake is seen in the night without light it often difficult to be killedas to determine the position of its head. Moreso, in the Igbo cultural milieu, there are wormlike snakes that have heads on both their heads and tails. You hardly predict with which head they can run with. Such snakes are called “Eche di anya” (tomorrow is too far) as a result of poisonous nature. They are so deadly that their venoms kill the victim instantly. #
4) Ajuuaghanaahia (a weight balance or a rag use in caring something on the head that was left at the market). Idiomatically, this expression is use to refer to person or something that is worthless or had lost value. In Igbo land rags also have values but when the owners deliberately abandon them in the market it means they do not have need of them anymore.

5) Nkpiimirimaara (a he-goat beaten by rain) This is idiomatically use to mean ugliness

6) Ochebarber (barbering seat) This expression is used to refer to an inconsistent or an unreliable fellow. This is also derived from the culture of the people.

7) Ekukusekuseku (a kind of bird) This is used idiomatically mean a contender. In Igbo socio–cultural milieu this kind of bird that perches on a tree without allowing other to perch. So, if one is regarded as the ekukusekuseku of one’s life it means that such a person is contending with something in the other person’s life.

8) Ugboghorororoahia (a pumpkin leaf that was returned from the market) this idiomatic name or expression is used to refer to a weakling.

9) Onyeokoronaaonyeogwolaghara (he who lacks and he who has exhausted). In this innuendo Igbo expression or name, the user uses it to refer to a helpless fellow and this is also drawn from the experiences in the Igbo society.

10) Ozummirimaara (a corpse beaten by rain) This is also idiomatically used to refer to a useless, shameful person. In Igbo socio-cultural belief, it is believed that when rain beats a corpse, the corpse is unaware and cannot express any kind of shame

11) Mmiriimealanegbuji (an underground water that damages the yam). This is used to denote idiomatically a very subtly poisonous fellow.

Other innuendo Igbo expressions and names

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Idiomatic Names/Expressions</th>
<th>Translation</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nturughiki</td>
<td>A kind of insect</td>
<td>A recalcitrant fellow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ozunwabekee</td>
<td>The corpse of a white man.</td>
<td>A very difficult person to please</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aturutaba</td>
<td>Let the sheep continue to consume.</td>
<td>Something with no notable value is placed on</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Azuotuaka</td>
<td>A thatched house with one pillar.</td>
<td>A person without supporter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jidecho</td>
<td>You have; yet you are in need.</td>
<td>Good for nothing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utonko</td>
<td>A kind of fermented cassava</td>
<td>A worthless/useless fellow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Osuimi</td>
<td>To point nose at something.</td>
<td>A betrayer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expression</td>
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<td>Translation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oji ochi eme njo</td>
<td>Someone that uses laughter to undo another.</td>
<td>A deceiver.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unighini: otom egbum</td>
<td>A very sweet kind of fruit that if leaked a greater quantity gives of diarrhea.</td>
<td>Frenermy Unfriendly friend.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Obataosu</td>
<td>A precipitator of problems.</td>
<td>A troublesome fellow.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ojiukwuobiukazi</td>
<td>someone that slices ukazi leaves with her legs</td>
<td>a-promiscuous-fellow,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ononayomariheajuzu</td>
<td>One that does not go the market but knows all that transpired in the market</td>
<td>a-News-monger</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.0 Conclusion

This work aims at analysing Igbo innuendo expressions and personal names culturally and idiomatically. Idiomatic innuendo Igbo expressions and personal names are means of communication. Based on our findings, we conclude that idiomatic innuendo expressions and names are linguistic tools design from the people’s ideational experiences and their associate meaning with events in their socio-cultural milieu. And idiomatic innuendo Igbo expressions and personal names are not just mere expression but a totality of meaning which are better understood via linguistic and cultural interpretations. This category of expressions and names share euphemistic, dysphemistic, satirical, ironical and metaphorical functions through which human flaws are addressed.

References


