

The Igbo Perception of Womanhood: Evidence from Sexist Proverbs

Benjamin Ifeanyi Mmadike
Department of Linguistics, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, P.M.B. 5025, Awka, Nigeria
E-mail: benifenwemmadike@gmail.com

Abstract

Sexist proverbs are proverbs which are laden with impertinent reference to any member of the opposite sex. As used in this study, such proverbs are targeted at the female. The Igbo language has a number of such proverbs. Fifteen of such proverbs from discourse contexts have been translated literally. The literal meanings of the proverbs conceptualise the image of female sexuality which the Igbo ascribe to women. The study therefore shows that Igbo sexist proverbs sustain the notion of male domination over the female. It concludes that it is difficult to change the cultural stereotype ingrained in these proverbs.

Keywords: sexist, impertinent, domination, patriarchal, stereotype.

1. Introduction

The Igbo live in the southeast of Nigeria, in the states of Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu, and Imo, as well as in parts of Delta and Rivers states. The term Igbo refers to both the people and their language. Like other African languages, the Igbo language is rich in proverbs. Proverbs are regarded as nuggets of folk wisdom which are rendered in the form of succinct sayings. According to Ralph (1993:1), “a proverb is any saying which expresses an opinion or attitude about life, is fairly common knowledge within a community, and is regarded as traditional.” The proverb has equally been defined as “the wisdom of many and the wit of one, the experience and wisdom of several ages gathered and summed up in one expression” (Nwoga 1975:186). For the Igbo, the proverb is the broth with which words are eaten. Atanga, Ellece, Litosseliti & Sunderland (2013:4) see proverbs as an aspect of code, “in the sense that they are fixed and formulaic” (cf. Lyons 1968:177). The Igbo regard one’s dexterity in the use of proverbs as an eloquent expression of the degree of one’s communicative competence in the language.

A number of studies have been conducted on Igbo proverbs. Some of these include Egudu (1972), Emenanjo (1972), Nwoga (1975), Ogbalu (1978), Ugonna (1980), Umeh (1986) and Nwachukwu-Agbada (2002). Ogbalu (1978) is a collection of over 1,000 proverbs which is said to be “recorded for posterity before they vanish in their original form” (Ogbalu 1978:3). The others analyse the Igbo proverb from the poetic, aesthetic, oratorical, contextual and structural points of view. In this study, unlike in the others, the proverb is analysed from both the contextual and conceptual perspectives. The contextual refers to the use of proverbs in real life situations, whereas the conceptual shows how the images used in the proverbs are visualised and interpreted.

The choice of proverbs in this study is based on the fact that proverbs form part of Igbo oral discourse through which one can have an insight into the nature and perception of the society. In terms of function, Igbo proverbs can be used in imparting moral values, especially to children (Okeke 1982), the acquisition of vicarious experience or knowledge (Umeh 1986) and conflict resolution (Okoli 2012). Thus, “the Igbo view the world within their cultural environment and coin proverbs appropriately to explain all aspects of Igbo traditional life and world view” (Ukaegbu 2006:165). According to Lunde & Wintle (1984:viii) “perhaps the quickest way to understand a people or a culture is to learn their proverbs...” This view is equally shared by Ebeogu (n.d:viii) who says that “a society can be interpreted on the basis of a literature based on it, and this position remains valid even when the writer is apparently not writing about his own society of the present, but about his society of the past.”

In this study therefore, the choice of data is restricted to sexist and obscene proverbs. Such proverbs make use of sexual symbols and images. “It is the image in these proverbs that evokes the message and builds a frame for the logic” (Başgöz 1993:130). It is pertinent to note that like the Igbo

... traditional Yoruba and other Africans do not see sexual objects as obscene just because they use sexual symbols. A Yoruba using these proverbs is simply looking for the most appropriate vehicle to convey his message, his point, his ideas in a forceful way; he is merely aiming at directness, frankness, and starkness. In a word, he just likes to call a spade a spade, and there are no really dirty words (Ojoade 1983:201).

However, there are euphemisms or “polite sets of words for sexual organs and functions, and also polite proverbs making the same moral points as the obscene ones (Ojoade 1983:202).”

The sexist obscene proverbs are believed to be targeted at womanhood. As rightly pointed out by

Balogun (2012:22), “little attention has been directed towards the relationship between proverbs and the oppression of women, and, more specifically, how proverbs, as a discourse in which females are portrayed based on stereotypical gender roles and perception...” Similarly, Atanga et al (2013:5) claim that African traditional proverbs about gender are “largely derogatory when they refer to women” and “are accordingly a predominant topic in African work on gender and language.” This study aims at using a set of sexist proverbs to show how they are used in context and more specifically how they are assumed to show how the Igbo conceptualisation of women is given expression in language. Thus, as a male dominated society, the proverbs are said to depict the image of women in the society in a derogatory manner.

The paper is divided into four sections. Section 1 is the introduction. Section 2 looks at sexism in language. Section 3 is on data collection and analysis, while section 4 is made up of the summary and conclusion. As a tone language, the Green & Igwe (1963) tone-marking convention is adopted. Here, high tone [ˈ] is left unmarked, but low [ˉ] and step [ˊ] tones are indicated by a grave accent and a macron respectively.

2. Sexism in language

Sexism refers to any discriminatory use of language which is detrimental to any member of the opposite sex. This use of language tends to create gender inequality. Atanga et al (2013:1) refer to gender

“as a set of ideas, i.e. what is thought, said and written about women, men, girls and boys: what they are like and do, what they should be like and should do. These ideas are often expressed through gendered discourses.”

According to Xiaolan (2006:87), sexist language is used to express “bias in favour of one sex and thus treats the other sex in a discriminatory manner. In most cases, the bias is in favour of men against women.”

In language, sexism can be expressed in a number of ways. Evidence of such use of language can be illustrated from other languages. For instance, certain terms for women have negative connotations, whereas the corresponding terms for men do not connote any such pejorative values. In English, the words *spinster* and *bachelor* designate adults who are not yet married. However, the female term *spinster* bears a negative connotation while the male term does not. Furthermore, in the following gender based irreversible binomials, the male terms precede the female terms: *men and women*, *boys and girls*, *husband and wife*. This order of precedence is equally observed in Igbo gender-based irreversible binomials. The following examples are illustrative: *nwokè nà nwaànyị* ‘man and woman’, *dị nà nwunye* ‘husband and wife’, and *oke nà nwunye* ‘male and female’ (Mmadike 2013). Now consider the following English proverbial expressions from Xiaolan (2006:90).

1. A woman is like lemon, you squeeze her and throw her away.
2. Seven women in their right senses are surpassed by a mad man.
3. Women have got long hair and short sense.

Likewise, such proverbs exist in Yoruba (c.f. Ojoade 1983, Balogun 2010). In a study by Balogun (2010:25), she asserts that “the proverbial linguistic resources of the Yoruba can be used to substantiate this position. Proverbial expression here is construed as cruel and unfair pithy sayings that derogate the dignity, integrity, rights and freedom of the women folk.” Take for example the following Yoruba proverbs and their interpretation as in Balogun (2010:26-27).

4. Itakun l’obinrin yoo fa kaa ni.

‘Women are climber plants that overrun any available space.’

Metaphorically, women are comparable to a plant which has its roots in one place and its branches in another. The proverb pictures women as people of unpredictable character, with a natural propensity to be involved in multiple affairs at the same time.

5. Bi obinrin b’ape nile, aje londa.

‘If a lady stays too long in the house, she becomes a witch.’

This proverb is a reflection of the Yoruba conception of long spinsterhood. It is expected that a lady will be married by a specific age, and when the contrary is the case, she will begin to lose respect, as indicated by reference to her as a witch.

From the feminist perspective therefore, language is determined by men to perpetuate the world view in which women are perceived as deviant and deficient (Romaine 1994:106). In like manner, it is claimed that men “make the dictionaries and define meanings, they persistently reserve the positive semantic space for themselves and relegate women to a negative one” (Romaine 1994:107).

At this juncture, I crave the readers’ indulgence for the overt reference to the female genital. This is not a deliberate attempt to indulge in obscenity. The study only intends bring to focus an aspect of Igbo orature. The need for the collection of such proverbs has long been expressed by Dundes & Georges (1962) and Halpert (1962), as cited in Ojoade (1983) According to Ojoade,

... all genres of obscene folklore should be collected, not for the sake of the obscenity, but rather because they are ‘needed to put into practice the theory that a com

plete study of folklore must include all genres.’ It is unscientific and unjustified to cut out the offending words or euphemise them (Ojoade 1983:201).

3. Data collection and analysis

The corpus is made up of fifteen sexist proverbs drawn from various discourse contexts. Such contexts involved male adults from my own community. These contexts came about in the course of village meetings and family deliberations in which I was also a participant. Each proverb is translated literally, based on the wording of the proverb. Thereafter, both the contextual and conceptual interpretations are provided. The literal level of translation of the proverb helps to frame or conceptualise the picture or image ascribed to women in the society. At this level, “we are engaged in the understanding or visualisation of the actual statement or picture being projected by the words used in the proverbs” (Umeh 1986:18). It is at this level that the hermeneutic interpretation is fully accomplished. For the purpose of analysis, the proverbs are classified in terms of the literal meaning conveyed by the wording:

(a) male domination, (b) sex differentiation and (c) women as sex object.

3.1 Male domination

The following proverbs are visualised as cultural vehicles by which expression is given to female domination by the male.

6(a). Nwaànyị̀ sị̀ nà ya nà nwokḕ hà ya nyùlie mamīrī̀ elū.

(b). ‘If a woman claims equality with a man, let her urinate upwards.’

The proverb is cited when someone who is deemed incapable of performing a given task claims otherwise. However, based on the visual imagery created by the wording of the proverb, there is a conceptualised of an open challenge to womanhood. A man stands erect while urinating and can channel his urine to any direction—vertically or even horizontally. But this is not possible for a woman because she is constrained to a specific posture while urinating. Thus the Igbo derisively refer to a woman as *nwaànyị̀ nā-ehu ēhū ànyū mamīrī̀* ‘woman who stoops while urinating.’

7(a). Mma/Ūgwù nwaànyị̀ bù di yā.

(b). The beauty/prestige of a woman is derived from her husband.

This proverb is addressed to a despicable person who is gets some measure of respect merely because of his social status or class. The proverb is visualised as a means of admonishing any adult female who appears to be more concerned about her career than getting married. No Igbo parent feels contented if per chance any of the daughters remains single, irrespective of her status. Usually, it is only when a woman gets married that the society ascribes to her the respect she deserves.

8(a). Okḕ ȳbīlā̀ ȳkwū̀ hā nwaànyị̀ kà ȳ gā-àtȳkwàsà di ya

(b). ‘It is the extent of a woman’s legs that she will place on her husband’s body.’

Proverb (8) is cited as a modest appeal to a guest or a beneficiary to accept what is offered by the host or benefactor, not withstanding whether what is offered falls short of expectations or not. However, the proverb creates an image where a short woman places her equally short legs on her husband when cuddled up to each other in bed.

9(a). Àgbȳghò zachaa ònye mùrù ȳ zawa ònye nà-àlȳ.

(b). ‘A lady after answering whose child will later answer whose wife’

This proverb is used as an admonition. It entreats the addressee to realise the need for self-actualization. Literally, the proverb shows that at a point in the life of a woman, she is expected to marry because her identity is usually derived from that of her husband. According to Kiletu & Kioko (2013:36), “girls are expected to marry, leave their parents’ homes and join their husbands’ homestead.” Thus, women are traditionally involved in patrilocal marriage and do not perpetuate family name.

10(a). ‘Àgbȳghò mejuru ò tinye ikè n’ùsekwū.

(b). ‘When a lady lives to her satisfaction, she puts her buttocks in the kitchen.’

This proverb serves as a reminder that one should not be overwhelmed by youthful exuberance but should be mindful of the future. As it were, the proverb seems to remind women that after a boisterous life as spinsters, they will eventually retire to the kitchen to face the drudgery of household chores in their marital homes.

3.2 Sex differentiation

The proverbs in (11)–(16) portray the Igbo man’s perception of the physiognomy of the female genital. Such proverbs seem to make statements that bring the female sex organ to ridicule.

11(a). Nwaànyị̀ chọọ̀ kà ọ̀ hụ́chaa ebe e si àra yā, isi ā kpōō yā n'àlà.

(b). 'When a woman strives to see the entire aperture through which she is sexed, her head will hit the ground.'

Proverb (11) is used in a situation that calls for restraint. It cautions against the consequences of going into an unnecessary scrutiny. The proverb conveys this message by a vivid description of what would likely befall a woman who dares peep into her vagina in a bid to see the entire route taken by the penis in the course of having sex.

12(a). Ọ̀tù mà ùma ègbu àmùmà, ọ̀ gaghī ezò mmīrī.

(b). 'The vagina is feigning in vain as lightning, it will not bring rain.'

A proverb such as (12) is used to show disregard for someone who usually would issue a threat but would renege on his threat. Consider the imagery associated with the vagina and lightning, which naturally signals the possibility of rainfall. Thus, lightning is compared to the reddish part of the vagina which never signals rainfall. In addition, the vagina is used as a metaphor for the person who would never carry out his threat.

13(a). Akị wū èbùbè ọ̀hū, òkè n'enwēghī yā bù ejùlè/mbēlē.

(b). 'It is the pubic hair that dignifies the vulva, the one that lacks it is likened to a snail.'

This proverb is usually given as a counsel. The essence of the proverb is to ensure that one keeps his good name or dignity or else risk being an object of ridicule. The proverb evokes a comparison between the external features of a clean shaven female genital and a snail. The snail metaphor makes the comparison more vivid, as both seem alike. Proverbs (12) and (13) show that the images created by the female genital visualise respectively the "metaphors assumed to be the colour and shape of the female genital" (Chukwukere 2005:290).

14(a). Nwaànyị̀ túsàa ụkwū yā, ọ̀tù ya āgbāā n'ibe n'ibe

(b). 'When a woman throws her legs wide apart, her vulva splits into two.'

Proverb (14) is used as an admonition. It is used to advise someone to be discreet or else one's secret or privacy becomes common knowledge. This proverb evokes the image of a female who throws her legs wide open, thus revealing her genital to public glare. The act of throwing her legs wide open is the metaphor for opening her mouth too wide, showing her lack of discretion, while letting her secret to become common knowledge is realised by the exposure of her genital for others to see.

15(a). Ntukwù nwaànyị̀ adīghī mmā n'ògbò atā.

(b). 'It is not in the interest of a woman to crouch in a bush covered with prickly grass.'

By this proverb, one is advised to comport himself with every sense of good demeanour so as to avoid an unpleasant public reaction. Notice how this proverb creates a vivid scene where a woman, without her dress on, crouches in a bush covered with prickly grass. One can only picture the contact between the prickly grass and the woman's genital and the attendant consequences.

16(a). Èjighī utù ukwu èyi nwaànyị̀ egwù, ọ̀ bughī ya kà isi nnwā.

(b). 'A woman is never scared of a large penis, after all, it is not larger than a baby's head.'

In the face of a daunting situation, this proverb serves as a source of encouragement. It is used to remind one of a more challenging situation that had been previously overcome. Imagine the scenario described by the wording of the proverb. Here, we are made to visualise the vagina if it is being intimidated by the sheer size of a turgid penis which is a metaphor for the size of a baby's head in the course of its passage through the birth canal.

3.3 Women as sex object

This section examines such proverbs that tend to portray the female as a sex object to be relished by the male.

17(a). Nwaànyị̀ a nà-àra ọ̀tù ya ana àha ọ̀nū jiri ntị ya gèrè

(b). 'A woman whose vagina makes a loud noise in the process of having an intercourse should listen to the noise with her ears.'

Proverb (17) admonishes someone to be mindful of any spiteful remarks about one self so as to be able to take a positive action. In this proverb, the 'loud noise' metaphor realised by the strident sound produced by each thrust of the penis in the vagina refers to the objectionable remarks.

18(a). Mā utù anwūchūghī, ọ̀ gā-èri ihe gbārā àfū ọ̀nū

(b). 'If the penis does not die prematurely, it will eat a bearded thing.'

This proverb is aimed at inculcating the virtue of perseverance, especially when there seem to be a delay in one's expectation. The image created by this proverb is made vivid by using the penis as a metaphor for the anxious

person, while the ‘bearded thing’ is the vulva, with the adorning pubic hair. The concept of perseverance is realised as not having to die prematurely.

Thus, once a male becomes a man, he will certainly have a wife. By extension, proverb (18) states that if one perseveres, he/she will certainly achieve his/her goal.

19(a). Ikpù ukwu a nà-àsò anyā, ò bù ya gà-àra ònwē yā?

(b). ‘A large vulva that is regarded with awe, will it be sexed by itself?’

In the event of a daunting situation, this proverb, like (16) above, is used to dissuade someone from being intimidated or petrified by such a situation. That is, no challenge is insurmountable. In this proverb, the large vulva serves as a metaphor for the frightening situation or challenge which the penis will ultimately have access to.

20(a). Ò dighī etu a sīrī nwaànyī àgà nòrọ kà a raa yā ò mụta nnwā ọ gà-àjụ ājū.

(b). ‘There is no posture you ask a childless woman to adopt which she will refuse while making love to her to enable her have a child.’

This proverb addresses a despondent person to be wary of unrealistic expectations as people would like to exploit his predicament. Taken at the literal level, a woman who is incapable of being impregnated will readily accept to adopt any posture for sex with the promise that it would eventually lead to her bearing a child.

21(a). Di ògòrì kpọọ yā òkù n’abàlī obì àlaa yā n’apàtà ya.

(b). ‘When the husband of a woman calls her at night, her mind goes to her laps.’

This proverb is used to address a situation in which one anticipates a course of action that may not have been proposed. The proverb calls to mind a situation in which a woman thinks that when the husband calls her at night, it is an invitation for sex.

22(a). A zọọ ahjia ikpù, ànaghī ekpū yā aka.

(b). ‘In the event of a transaction with the vulva, one cannot shield it with the inner surface of the hand.’

The proverb is cited to state that whatever is common knowledge can never be concealed. Going by the wording of the proverb, the ‘transaction with the vulva’ is the metaphor for sexual intercourse, which eventually leads to pregnancy. There is no way one can hide the bulge of a pregnant woman’s belly with the inner surface of the hand.

Each of the proverbs in (6)-(22) was described as used in context and on the basis of the literal meaning derived from the wording of the proverb. With regard to the literal meanings of the proverbs, one visualises the Igbo man’s perception of womanhood. In the section that follows, the paper considers the extent of the reaction of women to the sexist proverbs which are seen to derogate them.

4. Attitude towards sexist proverbs

This section talks about the reaction of women towards sexist proverbs which tend to derogate them. When such proverbs Igbo proverbs are used in context, they function as a veritable means of communicating values. However, these proverbs become offensive and derogatory only when the literal meaning visualised and interpreted as such.

Balogun (2010) has called into question, the very essence of the use of oppressive proverbs against women in Yoruba culture. She believes such proverbs were authored by men as a means of perpetuating their hegemony over the female. She sees the existence these proverbs as having a demoralising effect in the complementary role of women in marriage. Thus, she proposes that “such oppressive proverbs must be resisted and or reconstructed through proper education and rigorous commitment to the feminine cause” (Balogun 2010:31). Also, Adetunji (2010) refers to the use of such Yoruba proverbs as aspects of linguistic violence because it contravenes the idea of gender equality, which is unacceptable. He therefore proposes that “women should be less complicit in their linguistic subjugation” (Adetunji 2010:15).

There seem to be no such proposal for the reconstruction of Igbo sexist and obscene proverbs similar to the one in Balogun (2010). Though not related to sexist proverbs, Chukwukere (2005(b)) has challenged the justification for the use of Igbo female honorific terms like *Òriàkù* ‘one who consumes (the husband’s) wealth’ and *Òdoziàkù* ‘one who conserves (the husband’s) wealth.’ These honorific terms are taken to be the equivalent of *Mrs* in English. She asserts that such “terms are problematic in that they do not capture effectively the role of a woman in the marital household” (Chukwukere 2005(b):72).

Today, women have become more empowered through higher education. They are virtually in every sector of the economy. They earn money and complement their husband’s earnings for the upkeep of the family.

In view of this, women have adopted the term *Òsòdiàkpata(àkù)* ‘one who joins the husband in making wealth’ as a more befitting and appropriate term.

Despite the fact that women, especially the educated ones, feel repulsive about the use of sexist proverbs, they have not put forward any proposal for changing the provocative words with gender neutral ones. Perhaps the reason for their inaction against the use of sexist proverbs is the fact that such proverbs are seen as fixed and frozen expressions. These proverbs have outlived several generation of the users. Thus, according to Balogun (2010:31), “African proverbs in particular have been viewed as sacred texts that must remain unchanged.”

4.1 Summary and conclusion

This is a study of a set of Igbo sexist proverbs as used in context. The proverbs make use of sexual symbols and images. It further examined the literal meaning of these proverbs on the basis of their wording. It is at this level of meaning that these proverbs acquire their sexist and obscene connotations which are construed as being laden with impertinent reference that derogate womanhood.

For the purpose of analysis, the proverbs were categorised into three on account of their literal meaning. The first category evinces the subordinate status of women in the Igbo patriarchal society. The proverbs in the second category manifest how the Igbo man visualises the female genital. The proverbs in the third category depict the Igbo woman as a sex object meant to serve the sexual pleasure of the man. As evidenced from these proverbs which paint a vivid picture of women, the construed meanings expressed by the literal meaning reflect the perception of a typical Igbo man about womanhood.

The study has shown that Igbo sexist proverbs constitute an aspect of Igbo orature and folk wisdom which help to define and evaluate the female from the perspective of the Igbo patriarchal society. The study is of the view that probably the proverbs tend to give expression to male gynophobia. For this reason, these proverbs have become a veritable instrument in the hands of the men to checkmate women. Thus, the use of such proverbs has therefore contributed in shaping and sustaining the cultural biases of the male against the female in the Igbo patriarchal society. This makes it difficult to change the cultural stereotype, even in the face of Western education.

References

- Adetunji, A. 2010. Aspects of linguistic violence to Nigerian women. *Language, Society and Culture*. Vol.31:10-17.
- Atanga, L.L., Ellece, S.E., Litosseliti, L. & Sunderland, J. 2013. Gender and language in sub-Saharan Africa: A valid epistemology? In Atanga, L.L., Ellece, S.E., Litosseliti, L.& Sunderland, J.(eds). *Gender and language in sub-Saharan Africa: Tradition, struggle and change*.pp 1-26. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Balogun, O.A. 2010. Proverbial oppression of women in Yoruba African culture: A Philosophical overview. *Thought and Practice: A Journal of the Philosophical Association of Kenya (PAK)*. Vol. 2.1:21-36.
- Başgöz, I. 1993. Proverb image, proverb message and social change. *Journal of Folklore Research*.Vol.30.2/3:127-142 (<http://www.jstor.org/stable/3814313>. Accessed 25/05/2014)
- Chukwukere, F.N. 2005a. A feminist linguistic discourse on diminutives in Igbo. In Ndimele, O-M.(ed.). *Globalisation and the study of language in Africa*. pp 285-295. Port Harcourt: Linguistic Association of Nigeria.
- Chukwukere, F.N. 2005b. Sexist lexicography in Igbo: Any evidence? In Ikekeonwu, C. & Nwadike, I. (eds).
- Dundes, A. & Georges, R.A. 1962. Some minor genres of obscene folklore. *The Journal of American Folklore*. Vol. 75.297:221-226 (<http://www.jstor.org/stable/537724>. Accessed 25/04/2014).
- Ebeogu, A.N. (n.d) The Igbo home in Achebe’s fiction. Unpublished mimeo.
- Egudu, R.N. 1972. Proverb and riddle in Igbo traditional verse. *Ikenga*. Vol. 1.1:101-108.
- Emenanjo, N.E. 1972. Some notes on the use of repetition and contrasts in Igbo proverbs. *Ikenga*. Vol. 1.1:109-114.
- Green, M.M. & Igwe, G.E. 1963. *A descriptive grammar of Igbo*. Berlin: Akademie Verlag.
- Kitetu, C.W. & Kioko, A.N. 2013. Issues of language and gender in *iweto* marriage as practised by the Kamba in Kenya. pp.29-52. In Atanga, L.L. et al. (eds).
- Lunde, P. & Wintle, J. 1984. *A dictionary of Arabic and Islamic proverbs*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Lyons, J. 1968. *Introduction to theoretical linguistics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Mmadke, B.I. 2013. A study of Igbo gender-based irreversible binomials. *Open Science Repository Language and Linguistics Online (open-access)*. p. e 23050431. 1-11.
- Nwachukwu-Agbada, J.O.J. 2002. *The Igbo proverb*. Enugu: John Jacobs Classic Publishers.
- Nwoga, D.I. 1975. Appraisal of Igbo proverbs and idioms. pp.186-204. In Ogbalu, F.C. & Emenanjo, N.E. (eds).

- Igbo language and culture*. Vol. 1. Ibadan: Oxford University Press.
- Ogbalu, F.C. 1978. *Igbo attitude to sex*. Onitsha: University Publishing Company.
- Ojoade, J.O. 1983. African sexual proverbs: Some Yoruba examples. *Folklore*. Vol. 94.2: 201-213.
- Okeke, A.N. 1982. Traditional education in Igboland. pp15-26. In Ogbalu, F.C. & Emenanjo, N.E. (eds). *Igbo language and culture*. Vol. 2. Ibadan: University Press Ltd.
- Okoli, G.N. 2012. Igbo proverbs as a means of conflict resolution. *Òjà: International Journal of Igbo, African and Asian Studies*. Vol. 1:164-167.
- Romaine, S. 1994. *Language in society*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Stewart, R. 1993. Scots peasant proverbs. *Scottish Tradition*. Vol. XVIII: 41-53.
- Ugonna, N.F. 1980. *Abụ na egwuregwu ọdinala Igbo*. Ikeja: Longman.
- Ukaegbu, N.F. 2006. Igbo aesthetics: The case of proverbs as a key to Igbo world view and culture. *Journal of Igbo Studies*. Vol. 1:164-167.
- Umeh, A.O. 1986. The role of proverbs in the Igbo language: A contextual analysis of the Igbo proverb in Omenuko. *Añụ: A Magazine on Igbo Art and Culture*. No. 4:18-41.
- Xiaolan, L. 2006. Sexism in language. *Journal of Language and Linguistics*. Vol. 5.1:87-94.

The IISTE is a pioneer in the Open-Access hosting service and academic event management. The aim of the firm is Accelerating Global Knowledge Sharing.

More information about the firm can be found on the homepage:
<http://www.iiste.org>

CALL FOR JOURNAL PAPERS

There are more than 30 peer-reviewed academic journals hosted under the hosting platform.

Prospective authors of journals can find the submission instruction on the following page: <http://www.iiste.org/journals/> All the journals articles are available online to the readers all over the world without financial, legal, or technical barriers other than those inseparable from gaining access to the internet itself. Paper version of the journals is also available upon request of readers and authors.

MORE RESOURCES

Book publication information: <http://www.iiste.org/book/>

IISTE Knowledge Sharing Partners

EBSCO, Index Copernicus, Ulrich's Periodicals Directory, JournalTOCS, PKP Open Archives Harvester, Bielefeld Academic Search Engine, Elektronische Zeitschriftenbibliothek EZB, Open J-Gate, OCLC WorldCat, Universe Digital Library, NewJour, Google Scholar

