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IGBO POST-CONTACT PROVERBS: THE INYI EXAMPLE

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Certification

Unaegbu, Jephthah Elochukwu, a postgraduate student in the Institute of African Studies and with registration number, PG/MA/10/52921, has satisfactorily completed the requirements for the course and research work for the Master’s degree in African Studies. The work embodied in this Project Report is original and has not been submitted in part or whole for any other diploma or degree of this or any other University.

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In memory of my mother, Mrs. Cecilia Enonanma Unaegbu

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Deus gustibus, non est disputandum.

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Abstract

This work is on post-contact proverbs in Inyi community of southeastern Nigeria. It is observed that there is the need to remove the dearth of focused research or ethnography on post-contact Inyi proverbs. The researcher utilized the quantitative research method. Interview schedule and participant observation are the instruments of data collection. Post-contact proverbs in Inyi were obtained from *Umunna* meetings and traditional marriage ceremonies and also from respondents who are *Okenyes* or Inyi elders versed in Inyi culture. The meanings of these proverbs and the occasions in which they are used are also obtained. Forty-four post contact proverbs were collected during the fieldwork. The eleven (11) contact proverbs which were obtained during participant observation were utilized by Inyi indigenes who were younger than the *Okenyes*. The remaining thirty-three post contact proverbs came from the *Okenyes*. The need for a wider study of Igbo post contact proverbs is advanced.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

This autoethnography aims to study post-contact proverbs in a changing Inyi community of southeastern Nigeria. One of the most important developments in the study of proverbs was the shift to more ethnographic approaches in the 1960s. This approach attempted to explain proverb use in relation to the context of a speech event, rather than only in terms of the content and meaning of the proverb (Arewa and Dundes, 1964).

Social change occurs in every community the world over. Change, therefore, is seen as “the only consistent fact in human or social life” (Igbo and Anugwom, 2002:9). Social change is that change that affects social systems and institutions. To Denisoff and Wahrman (1975:490), social change is “the alteration or modification of social institutions and societies over some period of time”.

A proverb is embodied in a simple oft-repeated utterance or saying, mostly metaphorical and commonly known, that conveys some truth derived from practical experiences of a people. Thus, proverbs are part of information. Therefore, they change as society changes.

There are many post-contact proverbs among the Igbo. The inyi villagers encountered the British, experiencing their modes of transportation which included bicycles, horses, palanquins and hammocks on which a Briton was carried by four ethnics. A proverb, utilizing alliteration and rhyme, arose because of the hammock

encounter: “Ozu níwa Bekee, e vulie nya enu, wa, wa, wa; e vude nya ala, wa, wa, wa” (The whiteman’s corpse, if it is carried up, it is no, no, no; and if it is carried down, it is no, no, no). This interesting proverb points to the insatiable nature of most people despite all well-meaning efforts to satisfy them.

This study, therefore, examines post-contact proverbs, that is, the proverbs that are created through social change which comes specifically from external influences on this ethnic group area of Inyi understudy.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

There is the lack of awareness of the proverbial status of post-contact proverbs in Inyi community. The situation is worsened by the dearth of focused research or ethnography on post-contact Inyi proverbs, which results from social change coming from external influences on Inyi, especially from Western education. Thus, the problem of the study is identifying and studying the post-contact proverbs in Inyi town.

1.3 Research Questions

The following questions are the focus of this research:

- (i) What are the post-contact proverbs resulting from social change among the Inyi?
- (ii) What are their meanings?
- (iii) On what occasions are these proverbs used?

1.4 Objectives of the Study

This inquiry aims to study post-contact proverbs in Inyi, which are created through extraneous social change in this southeastern Nigerian town by:

- Researching for the post-contact proverbs resulting from social change in Inyi culture.
- Exploring their meanings.
- Determining what occasions these proverbs are used.

1.5 Significance of the Study

Post-contact Inyi proverbs, when isolated, will be useful for historical studies which aims are to assess the mode and rate of acculturation and evolution in given ethnic groups. The post-contact proverbs would be indices of the emic of the Inyi. This study will also help in enculturation or socialization, that is, the process of people learning about their own cultures. This study will provide information as an ethnography for equality measures in comparative studies or ethnologies.

1.6 Operationalization of Concepts

Some concepts are used in this study in a sense that is not widely available or subscribed to. Therefore, defining these concepts will help to clarify them:

- (i) Anti-proverbs (Mieder and Litovkina, 2002) or perverb, is the misuse or adaptation of a familiar proverb to twist or change the meaning. Examples

of antiproverbs include, “Nerds of a feather flock together”, a twist on “Birds of a feather flock together”.

- (ii) Paremiography: The art of collecting proverbs
- (iii) Paremiology: The study of the definitional, structural and semiotic aspects of proverbs as well as analyses of the origins, history, language, meaning, use, function, context and dissemination of proverbs.
- (iv) Proverb: A proverb is a fixed unchangeable, metaphorical and memorable sentence which contains wisdom, truth, morals, historical and traditional views and is often repeated during conversations and generally known in a society from generation to generation.
- (v) Proverbial expressions: these are not strictly proverbs which should be fixed unchangeable sentences; rather they permit alterations to fit the grammar of the context.
- (vi) Social change (in Inyi): in this study, this means the alteration or modification of Inyi society, due to acculturation.
- (vii) Post-Contact Proverbs: The researcher coins this phrase to mean proverbs that are created or imported by a society as a result of social contact with other cultures. In the case of Inyi, they are proverbs that indicate contact with Western civilization and other Nigerian cultures.
- (viii) Wellerisms: (named after Sam Weller from Charles Dicken’s “The Pickwick Papers” (1837) are proverbial phrases constructed in a manner

which consists of a proverb and an identification of a speaker (person or animal) to whom the proverb is attributed.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter is divided into seven subsections, namely (i) Outline (ii) Review of Internationally Published Approaches to Modern Paremiology and Paremiography (iii) Nigerian scholarship on Proverbs, with Emphasis on the Igbo (iv) Proverbs and Social Change (v) Inyi Proverbs and Social Change (vi) Review of Theories (vii) Theoretical Framework.

2.2 Review of Internationally Published Approaches to Modern Paremiology and Paremiography

It is germane to look at international scholarship on proverbs from past to present, with an emphasis on the present in order to ascertain the findings of paremiological studies that are close to this present research. A work which dealt firmly with an overview of modern paremiology would be Wolfgang Mieder's "Modern Paremiology in Retrospect and Prospect". In this article, Mieder asserts that the drive to collect and study proverbs "can be traced back to the earliest Sumerian cuneiform tablets and the philosophical writings of Aristotle [a Greek]" (Mieder, 1997:399). Modern proverbs, sometimes, build on loan translations and phraseological units of earlier proverbial expressions. Both the Bible (including, but not limited to the Book of Proverbs) and Medieval Latin (aided by the work of Erasmus) have played a considerable role in distributing proverbs across Europe. Scholars have concluded that cultures that treat the

Bible as their “major spiritual book contain between three hundred and five hundred proverbs that stem from the Bible” (Mieder, 1990:12). Still, most cultures retain some uniqueness in their proverbs. The proverb, “No flies enter a mouth that is shut”, however far it had gone through multiple languages and millennia, could be traced back to an ancient Babylonian proverb (Pritchard, 1958:146).

Hans Walther assembled approximately 150, 000 Latin proverbs and their variants from the Middle Ages through the 17th century in the volume *Proverbia Sententiaeque Latinitaris ac recentioris aevi*. His collection shows that many of the proverbs were common throughout Europe either in the Latin original or through loan translations into the vernacular languages. These variants show that connections and loan translations are happening as part of the origins of proverbs. There are other assemblages the world over (Mieder, 1997:402).

More than ever before, ideas for proverb yearbooks in every country in the world have been advanced. To the preeminent paremiologist in the world, Mieder Wolfgang, a proverb yearbook devoted to African proverbs is a very good idea (Mieder, 1997: 399). Unfortunately, no such yearbook has been created as at the time of this study. On international efforts with African paremiological publications as focus, there is the *African Proverb Scholarship: An Annotated Bibliography* edited by Mieder in 1994 within the framework of the African Proverbs Project and published in Colorado Springs. In the paremiographical front, Stan Nussbaum has edited a large collection on proverbs of Africa, published on a CD, including reprints of out-of-print collections, original

collections. Nussbaum also works on analysis, bibliography, and application of proverbs to Christian ministry (Nussbaum, 1998).

The proposed journals or yearbooks, when filled with valuable interpretive essays, collections, bibliographies and book reviews, would “enhance the regional, national, and international study of proverbs and assure us of the highest quality of comparatively-oriented synchronic proverb scholarship in a global environment” (Mieder, 1997:400).

Essay volumes by different authors are available which present the different aspects of paremiology, including studies on the use of proverbs in literary works or psychological testing to their depiction in art as well as the modern mass media. Alan Dundes and Wolfgang Mieder edited such a volume entitled *The Wisdom of Many: Essays on the Proverb* (Mieder and Dundes, 1994).

Recognition of long-existing proverbs is commonplace in most cultures the world over. Conversely, there is a yawning lack of (published) awareness of the proverbial status of newer simple oft-repeated utterances, except perverbs or anti-proverbs. This attitude also translates to the bent of paremiological and paremiographical researches. There is limited research on proverbs that result from social change which comes about through external influences on an ethnic group. There is also limited research on how such social change brings about proverbs. This situation further exposes the otiose stance of ethnological interests in modern problems and challenges, and a habitual drive by the same interests to understand more of pre-contact and pocket non-proselytizing situations of given modern case studies. Mieder (1997:406) asserts in clear terms, “Paremiography

cannot remain a science that looks primarily backwards and works only with texts of time gone by. Modern paremiographers can and should also assemble proverb collections that include the texts of the 21st century”.

Much as there are not many such approaches aforementioned, there are studies which try to show how proverbs can influence social change. This is different from the study of proverbs which result from social change. Such publications would include, “Contradictory Yoruba Proverbs about Women: Their Significance for Social Change” (Yusuf, 1995:206-215). There are also studies which apply proverbs to modern challenges. Many of these studies exist. For example, there is the use of proverbs as heuristics in the domain of dominoes (Borajo et al., 1990:129-137). There is also the use of proverbs to influence social attitudes and values through the mass media (Lau, 1996: 135-159). An article has also shown how rulers use proverbial manipulations in their memoirs to influence the society. This is “Proverbial Manipulations in Adolf Hitler’s *Mein Kampf*”, published in the *Proverbium* yearbook (Mieder, 1995:1-12).

Ironically, there is strong awareness and study of the proverbial status of newer simple oft-repeated utterances which are perverbs or “anti-proverbs”, a phrase coined and examined extensively by Mieder Wolfgang (Mieder and Litovkina, 2002) (Doyle, Mieder and Shapiro, 2012). These are twisted or bent older proverbs, for a variety of literary effects. The decisive volume, “Twisted Wisdom: Modern Anti-Proverbs” (Mieder and Litovkina, 1999:1-254) treats many modern anti-proverbs. They include “Time is honey” (found in a German postcard from around 1993), “Clarity begins at home”, “Expedience is the best teacher”, “Necessity is the mother of tension”, “A condom a day keeps the

doctor away” etc. There are also many variants of traditional proverbs. For example, “A barking dog seldom bites” (which means, people making threads seldom carry them out) has the following modern variants: “A barking dog seldom bites. But a lot of dogs don’t know this proverb” (Safian 1967:19). “A barking dog never bites; that is, he never barks while he’s biting” (Safian, 1967:14). “Remember, a barking dog never bites – while barking” (Metcalf, 1993:63).

In the Harry Potter novels, J. K. Rowling reshapes a standard English proverb into “It’s no good crying over spilt potion” and Dumbledore advises Harry not to “count your owls before they are delivered” (Haas, 2011:38).

In a slightly different use of reshaping proverbs, in the Aubrey–Maturin series of historical naval novels by Patrick O’Brian, Capt. Jack Aubrey humorously mangles and mis-splices proverbs, such as “Never count the bear’s skin before it is hatched” and “There’s a good deal to be said for making hay while the iron is hot.” (Jan, 2004:152).

Much as there are published and internationally-circulated collections of proverbs in other continents in the world, there are proportionately less collections for African proverbs that are globally circulated or accessible to Western scholars. Kuusi (1970:13) admits that his references to African parallels are limited. To Mieder (1997:404), there is a yawning need for assembling major comparative proverb collections based on the numerous previously published collections of small linguistic groups in Africa. He admonishes that research teams need to work on this major task making use of computer technology. Through such work, questions regarding the geographical distribution and commonality of African proverbs are likely to be answered. “What proverbs are known

throughout Africa? How old are they? Are they indigenous to that continent? How do they relate to the common stock of European proverbs that were disseminated by missionaries etc?” (Mieder, 1997:404).

Utilizing his paremiological experiment conducted in Moscow in 1970, Permiakov was able to establish the general currency of 1, 494 phraseological units among modern inhabitants of that city. Included were 268 proper proverbs, and many proverbial expressions, proverbial comparisons, wellerisms, fables, anecdotes, riddles, slogans, weather signs, superstitions, fairy tales, oaths etc. Permiakov’s list shows clearly that many long folk narratives have currency as short phraseological remnants or allusions (Permiakov, 1971).

Paremiological minima of the most frequently used phraseological units of all national languages in the world are desirable pursuits that are less imbibed by paremiographers. Two noted examples of attempts to establish a paremiological minimum in America are those by Haas (2008) and Hirsch, Kett, and Trefil (1988). Studies of the paremiological minimum have been done for a limited number of languages, including Hungarian (Katalin & Litovkina, 2007: 135-155); Nepali (Valerie, 2010: 389-490); Gujarati (Doctor, 2005) and Esperanto-planned languages (Fielder, 1999:178).

Many authors have used proverbs in their writings. Probably the most famous user of proverbs in novels is J. R. R. Tolkien in his *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* series (Stanton, 1996:331-345) (Trokhimenko, 2003:368). Also, C. S. Lewis created a dozen proverbs in “The Horse and His Boy” (Unseth, 2011:323). These books are notable

for not only using proverbs as integral to the development of the characters and the story line, but also for creating proverbs.

Among medieval literary texts, Geoffrey Chaucer's "Troilus and Criseyde" plays a special role because Chaucer's usage seems to challenge the truth value of proverbs by exposing their epistemological unreliability (Richard, 1997:31).

Wolfgang Mieder's latest work *Behold the Proverbs of a People: Proverbial Wisdom in Culture, Literature and Politics* (Mississippi: University Press, 2014) reaffirms the importance of proverbs as a formulaic verbal device to add authoritative weight through tradition, convention and wisdom.

2.3 Nigerian Scholarship on Proverbs, with Emphasis on the Igbo

This section presents a bibliographical survey of paremiographies and paremiologies concerning Nigerian proverbs in tandem with exploring various approaches by authors.

There are many paremiographies than there are paremiological essays on Nigerian proverbs. Ironically, these paremiographies are not as accessible to Western scholars as the paremiological articles are (courtesy of such international proverb journals as *Proverbium*, *Paremia* and *Folklore*).

The impressive array of important Nigerian paremiological publications circulating globally include the article in volume 30 of *Proverbium*, "In Capsule: Saws and Sex Mores Among the Igbo of Nigeria" (Ezeh, 2013). In this important work, the career anthropologist, Peter-Jazzy Ezeh, examines proverbs and related forms on sex and sex-related matters as part of the emic of the Okposi, an Igbo of Nigeria's glottocultural

group. Using participant observation in the autoethnography, he listed and explored “plains”, proverbs, idioms and *Ncha*. By plains, Ezeh meant any expression of the Okposi which is denotatively clear and not used in a figurative sense. The *Ncha* is a word game or invective which Ezeh reveals is likely not known in other languages excepting the Igbo. Interestingly, no other work has studied the *Ncha*, which closely resembles the American *Dozens*. It is usually a verbal spar or vibe between two youths, with spectators or a posse ready to laugh or applaud the winning side. It has been discontinued in most of the 300 odd communities that make up the Igbo culture area. It consists of two rhythmic lines of highly offensive, even taboo statements, mostly bothering on sex and gender, designed to shock or hurt opponents. Ezeh comments on samples he collected, revealing, by subtext, the Okposi’s innate high value of the sacred body parts of wives and mothers, which verbal desecration can mean the destruction of the social self.

Another work in global circulation is the “Language and Igbo Philosophy: Towards an Igbo Phenomenology of Language” in *Philosophy Today* (Chukwulobe, 1995); “The Concept of Chineke [the creator] as Reflected in Igbo Names and Proverbs” in *Communio Viatorum* (Ifesieh, 1983); “Towards a Hermeneutic Re-creation of Igbo Proverbs on Human Destiny”, in R. Madu. *African Symbols, Proverbs and Myths: The Hermeneutics of Destiny* (Madu, 1992); “On the Structure of Aniocha Igbo Proverbs” in *Proverbium* (Monye, 1993); “The Use of Proverbs in Ola Rotimi;s *The Gods Are not to Blame.*” In *Proverbium* (Monye, 1995); “The Nature of Speech in Igbo Proverbs” in *Proverbium* (Opata, 1992); “Personal Attribution in Wellerisms” *International Folklore*

Review (Opata, 1988); “Characterization in Animal-Derived Wellerisms: Some Selected Igbo Examples” in *Proverbium* (Opata, 1990) etc.

In contrast, paremiological publications or studies dealing specifically with post contact Igbo proverbs are almost non-existent. There are snatches of such studies hidden in paremiographical books of other matters. An example of such books is Nwadike’s *The Igbo Proverb: A Wider Perspective* (Nwadike, 2009). This desideratum of post contact proverb scholarship is not limited to Igbo proverbs. Just as there is the need for a compendium of modern Igbo proverbs, there is also the need for a dictionary of modern African proverbs, that is proverbs which originated within the 20th and 21st centuries.

Available mostly for circulation in Nigeria are many published Igbo paremiographies and short notes in published works by writers. These publications focus more on comprehensive ethnic proverbs but write little on post contact proverbs, indicating that there is limited availability of or accessibility to such contact proverbs. Amongst these works is Thomas W. Northcote’s paremiography, *Anthropological Report on the Ibo-Speaking Peoples of Nigeria, Part III, Proverbs, Narratives, Vocabularies and Grammar* (London: Harrison and Sons). It presents more than 1000 proverbs in Igbo. The book was printed before the Onwu Commission rules of spelling, so it is a bit hard to read. Literal English is given, in addition to interpretations (Northcote, 1913).

F.C. Ogbalu’s *Ilu Igbo (The Book of Igbo Proverbs)* presents over 1000 Igbo proverbs, grouped by topic, some with English translations (Ogbalu, 1965). Other paremiographies include Ogbalu (1974), Basden (1966), Carnochan & Iwuchukwu (1963, 1967, 1976), Okonkwo (1977, 1979), Njoku (1978), Njoku (1990), Obi (1978), Davids

(1980), Penfield (1983), Amadiume (1995), Okafor (2001), Onwudufo (2007) and Duru (2014) etc.

The gathering of data for a comprehensive dictionary of Igbo proverbs, part of an Igbo Salvage Ethnography project, was began around 1973 championed by Prof. Donatus Nwoga in the Institute of African Studies, University of Nigeria, Nsukka (Nwoga, 1984). About 2000 proverbs were collated by student field workers in exercise books and tape recorders but the transcription and organization of the data appears to be at a rudimentary phase and requires a sustained full-scale approach for its completion (Onuigbo and Unaegbu, 2013:27).

The ability of the Igbo to speak in proverbs is quite unlimited. According to Nwadike (2009:33), if it is possible to collect these proverbs together, “they are capable of making up a volume thrice as large as the *Complete Works of Shakespeare*”. An ethnography of the Igbo asserts that “some hundreds of proverbs are in constant use” in Igbo land (Basden, 1966).

2.4 Proverbs and Social Change

Social change in more recent times is characterized by information sharing roundabout the globe at the speed of light. Communication is vital for social interaction, hence social change. Being part of human interaction, the medium and mode of communication change as changes occur in social life. It has been asserted that all known human societies, no matter their autochthonous social structure, are affected directly or remotely by the media of mass communication (Ezeh, 2004:1). It is through such media

that most pieces of information are shared in the world of today. Thus any change in their contents affects the worldview of their recipients. This affectedness contributes to the process of acculturation and assimilation.

As expressed in many ethnographies of Nigerian ethnic groups, western colonization and the proselytizing effects of Christianity and Islam have created the regression of autochthonous practices and institutions as extraneous ones are being substituted (Ezeh, 2004:96). Ethnographers such as Basden (1983:285-296), Meek (1931) and Harrison (2001) found such similarities of cultural change in their ethnographies.

Fused traits are the outcomes of these cultural changes. Such fusion or syncretism is often more influential than cargo cult restraints. Proverbs are an integral part of worldviews and cultures the world over. The availability of fused traits in proverbs is, therefore, not surprising.

The emergence of a new proverb to contradict an older one demands research into the change of circumstance which predicated the new stance. This phenomenon introduces problems such as metamorphosis, anti-proverbs and adaptations.

2.5 Inyi Community and Proverbs

It is germane to state who the Inyi people are. The name “Inyi” denotes a metaphor, a critical element in the formation of proverbs. It is the Igbo name for the red water tree. Because of historical circumstances involving the tree and the founder of the town under study, the name was given to him and it later became the name of the town. Some literature on Inyi, which means of data collection is based on oral tradition, support

the pattern that he was born to a couple living in Agunese near Umueji in Uvume's settlement, but, because his upper baby teeth appeared first before those in the lower jaw, he was thrown into Aguezi, an evil forest near the Mmamu River. This forest was charged with deposits of uncontainable charms and catacombs of forgotten life (Onwumechili, 2006:4) ("Inyi, Nigeria," 2015) (Mberedeogu, 2009:103).

Records vary from the point where the baby progenitor was abandoned in the forest. There are different accounts on the circumstances of who found him. There are pointers to an Nkwerre man (Onwumechili, 2006:5), Ji-Ala ("Inyi, Nigeria," 2015) or Ezeodiri (Mberedeogu, 2009:103). The baby was named Inyi because he was found near the Inyi tree, after he was exiled as a youth for sleeping with an *ajadu* (widow) on mourning (Onwumechili, 2006). No one knows what his former name was before that time. Upon tracing both the botanical and English names for the Inyi tree, the researcher found out it is *Erythrophleum Suaveolens* and "red water tree" respectively (Akinpelu *et al.*, 2012:447) or sassy, or sasswood, or ordeal tree (Burkill, 1985: 118). There are different accounts on how Inyi grew into adulthood and the women who gave birth to his children (there are mentions of Inyi having two wives, or one wife called Ukagbantu. He was also said to have fathered a son with Ji-Ala's daughter) ("Inyi, Nigeria," 2015). All investigated accounts agree, though, that his five sons had families which formed the Inyi settlement. Other adopted children also had their families. Migrant families morphed into settlements also and soon the town grew into nine villages. The villages, in order of seniority in some accounts or accepted precedence in others, are: Umuome, Enugwu,

Obule, Amankwo, Agbariji, Arum, Umuagu, Nkwerre and Akwu (Onwumechili, 2006) (“Inyi, Nigeria,” 2015) (Mberedeogu, 2009).

Early proverbial expressions abound in Inyi. One of them is, “Ukagbantu mmu Inyi” (Ukagbantu that procreated Inyi). This saying refers to the origins of Inyi, showing that Ukagbantu gave birth to Inyi people being the wife of Inyi. It is a conscious attempt to preserve that bit of history by Inyi people. Another saying that touches on Inyi history is also prevalent. It is “Inyi nese omire” (five sons of Inyi of great prowess). This saying preserves for history the accurate number of the direct sons of Inyi. It came about from the prowess of the sons. For as the five sons of Inyi grew into manhood, they exhibited the character inherited from their father. They became renowned and acquired recognition as “umuinyi nese omire”. Another saying strives to preserve another part of Inyi history. It is “Agbariji na Arum wu nwanne” (Abariji and Arum are brothers). An ethnographic report has it that a direct son of Inyi, Agbariji, had an unmarried daughter that procreated Arum (Onwumechili, 2006:9).

The proverbial expression, “Inyi ji ofu iko anu mmanya” (Inyi people are comfortable with drinking together from one cup of wine) and “Inyi nw’ochucho” (the sweet ambiance of Inyi/ pax inyi) came about because of a time the people of Inyi lived together in peace (Mberedeogu, 2009:175).

Wellerisms also abound in Inyi. One developed around the investiture of the Emume Inyi abia title (or “Igba abia” in Igbo) on qualified men of Inyi. The investiture is usually done on an Nkwo market day. It is the ultimate traditional title in Inyi which was permitted by the deity of Inyi town, Ajala Inyi. The wellerism that showed how the

people regarded the abia title is: “Obuako nwa Ezechineke shi na ihe nya jiri mara ma Inyi na agba Abia wu na nya turu okuahu, ashi na obiaha na ahia maka nowu Nkwo Abia” (Obuako the son of Ezechineke said that the reason he knew that Inyi celebrate Nkwo Abia was that when he ordered earthenware bath basin, he was told there was none in the market because it was Nkwo Abia day). Obuako was a historical figure, a sage from somewhere around Ndikelionwu to whom several wellerisms and quotations like the one above are attributed (Onwumechili, 2006:24).

Post contact proverbs exist in Inyi. The purpose of this research is to locate as many of them as possible. One of them already common is one that came with the peregrinating Aro who had first contact with the Inyi between 1690 AD and 1902 AD. It goes: “Ana ha achi Aro achi, ana eso ha eso (you don’t lead Aro, you, instead follow them in accordance with their wishes).

Another post contact proverb goes: “Ebe ogu jimkpa nno, ogu pam no ebeahu lawu” (Where there are twenty young men, there are twenty Pounds Sterling). This means that teamwork is important. The Pound Sterling was an introduction by the British into Inyi and other Igbo-speaking areas.

2.6 Review of Theories

The theories used for the theoretical framework in this study are:

1. “Paremiological Minimum” advanced by Grigorii L. Permiakov (1919-1983). He developed the theory of the core set of proverbs that full members of a given society know. This he called the "paremiological minimum" (Permiakov, 1979). For example, an adult Igbo man is expected to be familiar with “Egbe bere, ugo bere, nke si ibeya ebele,

nku kwaya” (Equivalent to the English: “Live and Let Live”). This Igbo proverb is thus part of the Igbo paremiological minimum. Proverbs that are not widely known in a community by adults would not be part of the paremiological minimum. Thus, the paremiological minimum is not the total number of proverbs in a community, but the small set of proverbs that are widely known across the community by most adults.

2. The Colour Theory of Culture:

While exploring the existence of the Supreme Deity concept in Igbo pre-missionary contact religious thoughts, Unaegbu and Ezeigbo (2013:54-55) came across evidence of cultures overlapping each other and forming synthetic and syncretic amalgams. The evidences appeared in differing views about which deity was supreme between *Chukwu* and *Ala*. In Nri-influenced cultures, *Ala* was preeminent having become more emphatic than *Chukwu* with the growing importance of agriculture. In Aro-influenced cultures, which came later, *Chukwu* was preeminent. This overlapping of values, also hinted by Kalu (2002:365) led to the assertion below by Unaegbu & Ezeigbo (2013:55), relevant for folklore studies as well as paremiology:

Culture ... is like a colour in a larger river of other colours. It has shallow hues outwards and deeper hues inwards. And time pulls the penumbral hues into the umbral heart. Just like a painter moves his paintbrush to mix a red colour with a green colour to produce yellow, so also two cultures mix to produce a novel hybrid. The more ideas and people move around like the hand of the painter, the more a culture adopts new modes and abandons old ones or allow them to go into

desuetude like the colours. In modern times, therefore, the pull for this adoption and abandonment is more intense than ever.

This colour concept of culture has an ally in the **theory of Dialectic**. This theory of Dialectic was propounded by the German philosopher, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel. It was his philosophic system created to explain the growth of ideas. Hegel believed that the evolution of ideas occurs through a dialectical process—that is, a concept (or thesis) gives rise to its opposite (antithesis), and as a result of this conflict, a third view, the synthesis, arises. The synthesis is at a higher level of truth than the first two views. Hegel's work is based on the idealistic concept of a universal mind that, through evolution, seeks to arrive at the highest level of self-awareness and freedom (“Dialectic”, 2009).

2.7 Theoretical Framework

1. Paremiological minimum (operationalization).

This study is guided by the paremiological minimum theory by Grigori L. Permiakov. It is anticipated that while some form of paremiological minimum exists for users of core Inyi proverbs, loan translations of general Igbo contact proverbs may be seen as modern Inyi proverbs by adult users and thus these may exist as paremiological minimum for users of these modern Inyi proverbs or Inyi contact proverbs which originated within the 20th and 21st centuries. The relevance of evoking this theory in the present essay is for its operationalization in the repertoire of loan translations which are highly expected to occur, given the high rate of interpenetration of different cultures, including other Igbo cultures within Inyi community in recent times. This theory will

show clearly if the general Igbo proverbs are becoming part of the Inyi proverbs as to be the paremiologica minimum of Inyi proverbs in modern times.

2. The Colour Theory of Culture (Operationalization)

This study, utilizing the colour theory of culture, understands that even though the same contact proverbs may be spoken in other Igbo communities, they are done with a distinct dialect. Their penetration into every Igbo land occurs through admixture as explained in the Colour Theory of Culture. This is because of the particular nature of the dispersal of knowledge in the 20th and 21st centuries, which crosses over barriers of community, sometimes, even languages. Thus, the peculiar nature of contact proverbs which are used within these modern centuries is such that a new hypothesis of the origins and dispersal of these newer and even older proverbs is needed. In view of the theories hinged upon, the researcher hypothesizes that while older known proverbs originate within an old community and remain within it, without many outlets to travel out with its users, newer modern known proverbs (or contact proverbs) travel away from their source communities and become glocalized in other nearby communities. This may be seen as older-localization-newer-glocalization paremiological hypothesis. It remains to be verified.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

The method for data collection is qualitative. Inyi has a preponderance of semi-literate people. Inyi has a preponderance of illiterate people as its ethnics living within the town. The illiteracy is understood as regarding to Western education. On matters of Inyi culture, the ethnics are quite literate. The use of qualitative method of data collection is preferable in studies such as this present one, whose objective is to make specific descriptions of specific phenomena.

The type of qualitative research design utilized are Participant Observation (Participant as Observer) and Structured Interview.

3.2 Research Population

Inyi people form the research population, especially those, who are resident within the Inyi community. Inyi town makes up a large majority of the total population of Oji River which is 82, 105 as at 1991 and 126,587 as at 2006 as revealed in the Nigerian census carried out by the National Population Commission of Nigeria. This means that in fifteen years, the population rose by 44, 482 people at approximately 2, 965 people every year. From 2006 to 2018 is twelve years. Thus, $12 \times 2, 965$ people will be 35,580. If this figure is added to 126, 587, this means that in 2018, the population of Oji River is approximately **162, 167** people.

3.3 Study Area

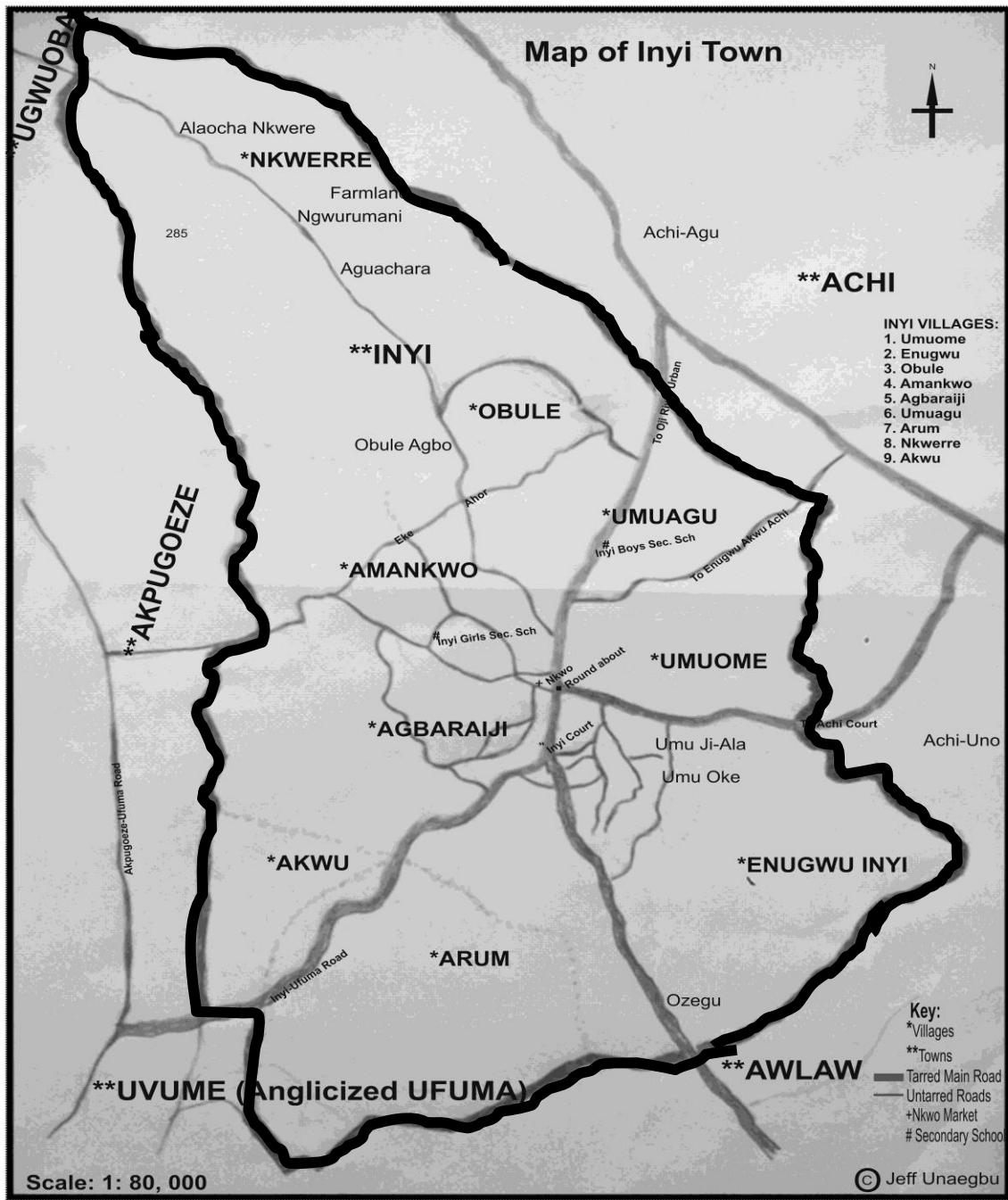


Fig. 1: Map of Inyi Town in Oji River LGA, Enugu State of Southeastern Nigeria
 (Boundary lines are darker in shade than the tarred main roads)

Inyi is a town in Oji River Local Government Area of Enugu State. Because of the arterial network of nine roads which radiated from a nexus or junction at the centre of Inyi town (See Figure 1), the people were influenced immensely by the nearby Nri and later Aro people. This junction was so unique that during the Nigerian Civil War, the British Broadcasting Corporation Radio announced to the world that “the strategic junction of Inyi has fallen to the federal troops” (Udeh, 2001:2). Advanced spiritual consultations and concoctions were done by the Nri people for Inyi even as recent as the mid twentieth century (Madu, 2010:114). This interaction with the Nri facilitated social change in Inyi during pre-contact times. The situation of Nkwo Inyi market near the junction aforementioned catalyzed and still catalyzes social change. From pre-contact times, traders from the direction of Umuleri, Umunya, Agukwu-Nri amongst others (who Inyi people call “Agbenu”) trooped to Inyi during Nkwo days to purchase agricultural products from farmers who display them (Udeh, 2001:3).

3.4 Sample and Sampling Technique

The researcher will gather data from eighteen respondents to the structured interview utilizing the purposive sampling technique. These eighteen respondents are the “*okenyes*” or those **elders above seventy-five years who are very knowledgeable in Inyi culture**. They are the literate culture bearers of Inyi (literate in Inyi ways of life). They, therefore, possess special knowledge in Inyi culture. The eighteen respondents will represent the nine villages that make up Inyi town. Using this technique, the researcher will gather data from two respondents chosen from each village of the nine villages of

Inyi (making up eighteen respondents). The Structured Interview is done at the end of naturally situated town hall meetings and marriage ceremonies.

3.5 Method of Data Collection

Using the Participant as Observer variant of the Participant Observation method, the researcher will collect data into a tape recorder during the ceremonies.

At the end of the ceremonies, the researcher will commence the Structured Interview, using the same tape recorder to gather data from respondents (“*Okenyes*”) who have knowledge in the linguistic form that is being collected.

3.6 Instruments for Data Collection

Participant Observation (Participant as Observer) and Structured Interview.

As explained already, the participant as observer method of participant observation is to be used during the ceremonies. This is because the researcher has to make his presence known in meetings that he has no reason to attend, except for purposes of research. Attending meetings holding in villages that are reserved for only members of that village may easily raise suspicions of espionage if the researcher does not make his mission plain to everyone.

The researcher will also utilize the Structured Interview instrument of data collection for obtaining data from the *Okenyes* who are the culture bearers of Inyi. These respondents hold the “paremiological minimum” as have been defined in Chapter Two. What contact proverb that is obtained from them is ultimately reliable as having become part of the Inyi culture.

3.7 Method of Data Analysis

The presentation and analysis of data is idiographic. The research to be done has no need for nomothetic analysis which is suitable for such sciences as chemistry, physics or economics which purpose is to create principles which are to be universally applied. Thus the more practicable analytic style or method is idiographic, which is pertaining to the case study. The term “nomothetic” comes from the Greek word “nomos” meaning “law”. Psychologists who adopt this approach are mainly concerned with studying what we share with others, that is to say in establishing laws or generalizations. The term “idiographic” comes from the Greek word “idios” meaning own” or “private”.

3.8 Residence and Duration of Fieldwork

I plan to live among the Inyi people for three months (November 2017 to January 2018), travelling out when it is necessary and making adjustments depending on conditions in the field. The reason for restricting the duration to three months instead of a year or more is because, normally, the researcher is supposed to spend some months learning the language of the community. He will also have to make adequate arrangements for taking up residence. These are herculean obstacles to a researcher who is not a member of the Inyi community. These two limitations are however non-existent for this present researcher. He is a member of the Inyi community and has stayed for short periods within the community that could easily accumulate to more than five years. Thus, he is a language and culture bearer. Furthermore, he has an inherited residence, which is his father’s compound or homestead. He will stay here for three months during the course of the research.

CHAPTER FOUR

FIELDWORK AND FINDINGS

4.1 Residence

During the course of this research from November 2017 to January 2018, the researcher lived in his own house within the John Unaegbu's compound at Amankwo village of Inyi community. John Unaegbu is the researcher's father. Thus, naturally, the challenges of paying rent and integration did not arise. Amankwo is one of the nine villages that make up Inyi community. The nine villages in order of seniority are Umuome, Enugwu, Obule, Amankwo, Agbariji, Arum, Umuagu, Nkwerre and Akwu.

4.2 Data Collection using Structured Interview and Participant Observation

The researcher prepared an interview guide derived from the research questions (see Appendix One) and successfully administered it on eighteen respondents who were *okenyes* or culture bearers in the nine villages. Two culture bearers represented each of the nine villages. The researcher was able to use participant observation in six *Umunna* meetings and three traditional marriages. Altogether, they were nine events, each occurring once in the nine villages. The structured interviews occurred at the end of these events. Thirty-three contact proverbs were obtained from the structured interview while only eleven contact proverbs were obtained from participant observation. A total of forty-four contact proverbs were obtained. It was easier distilling the meanings of the contact

proverbs obtained during structured interview than deciphering them from participant observation during the events.

The researcher used the Participant as Observer variant of the Participant Observation method and collected data into a tape recorder during the ceremonies aforementioned. The researcher also utilized the Structured Interview instrument of data collection for obtaining data from the *Okenyes* who are the culture bearers of Inyi. These respondents hold the “paremiological minimum” as has been defined in Chapter Two.



Plate 1: An *okenye*, Mazi Forster Okonkwo of Umuowara, Amankwo, Inyi (Right) and the researcher (Left).

4.3 Overview of Findings

Forty-four contact proverbs were obtained. What distinguished them from other kinds of proverbs is that they contain subjects and objects which came with the white man or with other cultures outside Inyi. This chapter will list them alongside their meanings obtained from both participant observation and structured interview. The occasions when they are used are also mentioned. This is in line with the research questions.

4.4 Contact Proverbs in Inyi

The 44 contact proverbs are listed in alphabetical order. Each is presented first in the Inyi language, and then an English translation is provided. The meaning follows and the occasions when it is used are also revealed.

A na eji añuro anara ngozi?

English Translation:

Does one receive blessings (suggestive of Holy Communion) while having snuff in his palm?

Meaning: It is not good to do the right thing at the wrong time or to approach a good opportunity with kid gloves or the wrong gloves.

Occasion used: When trying to motivate the right action.

A shi na ejighi anya ọma aba ọka mmụọ nsọ

English Translation:

Our people say that one who joins a Pentecostal church is compelled by bad circumstances.

Meaning: This means that someone looking for help can go to places he or she will not normally be found. Desperate situations require desperate measures. A drowning man catches at a straw.

Occasions used: During situations in which people go to unlikely lengths or unlikely places in order to get solutions to their problems. It is also used to motivate people to take bold actions to end a bad situation.

Agbushị na- agba Olu nọ ha n'akwa

English Translation:

The ant that stings Olu people is hidden in their clothes.

Meaning: People are sometimes the cause of their problems.

Occasion used: When a person is suffering what he has brought upon himself.

Note: The Olu people are generally the riverine Igbo (Ogbaru, Onitsha, Oguta etc), riverine Igala and Niger Deltans living in riverine or coastal areas.

A makwashị ụwa jioji, odu ka ụgbiam aduho

English Translation:

When one ties the George wrapper, it appears as if he has no pact with poverty.

Meaning: Appearances could be deceiving.

Occasion used: When one suspects that another person is hiding his real self or situation. Or when one is trying to explain that his situation is dire than is being observed.

A na apatchi, ọna eliki

English Translation:

While we patch a section of a tyre, another area leaks.

Meaning: This means that while one is trying to solve a problem, another problem arises.

Occasion used: During an avalanche of problems that the speaker meets.

A na ashị na ọku gbara fada i na aju ma ọgbara ahụ ọnu ya

English Translation:

It is said that a Reverend Father suffered burns, and you are asking if his beard got burnt too.

Meaning: Seeing is believing. It is better to see for oneself even when an eyewitness tells one what had happened.

Occasion used: Used by a speaker to question the doubt arising from a person as to the veracity of a situation.

A na ha achị Aro achị, ana eso ha eso

English Translation:

It is obvious you don't lead the Aro, you, instead, follow them in accordance with their wishes.

Meaning: This means that when you come to a place, you behave according to their customs/ You follow a ruler according to his rules. When in Rome, behave like Romans

Occasion used: During a delicate situation in which a ruler demands obedience or in which a person arrives a strange city.

Note: This came with the peregrinating Aro who had first contact with the Inyi between 1690 AD and 1902 AD.

Awusa abatagwo Oka

English Translation:

The Hausa man has entered Awka.

Meaning: A problem has become direr and would likely overwhelm the speaker./ A target is about to be captured.

Occasion used: When a situation would consume the speaker if he does not act fast./ When a goal is about to be achieved or has just been achieved.

Beta anụ, beta anụ, owụ kwanu na ahụ nama

English Translation:

Cut more meat! Cut more meat! It is even from the body of a cow.

Meaning: When it comes to squandering other people's properties no one considers the waste.

Occasion used: During a situation in which people are threatening to surround a benefactor with problems.

Note: "Nama" is a Hausa word for meat. Cow meat was usually referred to when the Hausa Fulani had contact with the Igbo. Thus, the proverb came after contact with the Hausa word.

Chukwu Okike Obiama meche, ɔnyị hɔ bekee

English Translation:

In the end, Chukwuabiamama (Ibini Ukpabi) could not withstand the white man.

Meaning: This means that no matter what a challenger does, the speaker would defeat him.

Occasion used: During a bout or challenge.

Note: This refers to the defeat of the Aros in 1902 by a British expedition.

E jì he enyo achọ ihe agba n'aka

English Translation:

You don't need a mirror to see what is worn on the hand.

Meaning: What is in plain sight and understandable by all needs no explanation./ A gold fish has no hiding place.

Occasion used: In describing a situation that is understandable and seen by all.

Ebe ọgụ jimkpa nnọ, ọgụ pam nọ ebe ahụ lawụ

English Translation:

Where there are twenty young men, there are twenty Pounds Sterling.

Meaning: This means that teamwork is important. .

Occasion used: During a situation where there are many hands that could help.

Note: The Pound Sterling was a monetary introduction by the British into Inyi and other Igbo-speaking areas.

Eji Igbo agwanya onye ọcha?

English Translation:

Can you use the Igbo language to explain something to a white man?

Meaning: What is in plain sight and understandable by all needs no explanation./ I don't need to tell you what I can do, you should know.

Occasion used: To explain that a challenge is easy for one.

Fada shi mechie anya, mechie, maka na imaha ihe ọhuru

English Translation:

If the priest says, "close your eyes", do so, for you don't know what he saw.

Meaning: Succumb to the suggestions of the wise and experienced ones.

Occasion used: During an advice.

Hafu ihe edere na moto, banye moto

English Translation:

Ignore the inscription on a vehicle and enter the vehicle

Meaning: This means that you should ignore the discouraging appearance of a person or situation and utilize the advantage that person or situation can offer.

Occasion used: During a situation in which you are sure a person is able to perform a feat but another person doubts it.

Ichie nwanyi eze, okpoga gi n'eligwe:

English Translation:

If you crown a woman, she will take you to heaven.

Meaning: A good deed will trigger better responses.

Occasion used: in giving advice.

Igote nwaro ike aduhọ anwu, igudowe na ka ghụ

English Translation:

If you engage a weak Aro for an ambush, you get involved in catching the target of the ambush yourself.

Meaning: You hire people who are fit to do a job else you end up doing it yourself.

Occasion used: In utilizing the services of an expert.

Kamu fọ Fada ọkọ ngbara

English Translation:

Let me see the Father who sustained burns.

Meaning: Let me visit the loo.

Occasion used: When one is pressed.

Kwa! Kwa! Kwa! Kọbọ ghọ sokwee

English Translation:

Ha! Ha! Ha! Your kobo goes with it!

Meaning: Remember that as you smile and enjoy the company of a girl, you will eventually pay for it./ Nothing goes for nothing.

Occasion used: When one is being carried away by the presence of a lady.

Note: Kobo is the smallest coin in the Nigerian currency.

Le mu, le motosaikọrọ/ Ọgba tum tum

English Translation:

It is obvious to you how I strain to maintain this motorbike.

Meaning: This means that a given situation is threatening to subdue the speaker.

Occasion used: During a calamitous situation that the speaker finds threatening.

Ma nwa Arọ asụ họ nsu, ọ gbaa ama

English Translation:

If the Aro man does not stammer, he will divulge a secret.

Meaning: One needs discretion in handling delicate situations.

Occasion used: As advice to a person who is too hasty.

Mmadu ańubehe tii ọchọwa ovatii

English Translation:

One has not taken tea, yet he is looking for ovaltine.

Meaning: One has not achieved a goal, he or she is looking for a higher one.

Occasion used: As advice to a person who is too eager to accomplish a high goal.

Mmanwu anawa gwo Idah

English Translation:

An inactive masquerade has gone back to his Idah ancestors.

Meaning: A situation has ended. A great person is dead.

Occasion used: To announce a funeral or end of an activity.

Note: This proverb originated from Anam but had become loaned into Inyi. Idah is the ancestral home of many Anam people of Anambra.

Ndụ kwaya ekweheshi anyị mara ndụ wụ ndụ grajueeti

English Translation:

Choristers do not allow us to distinguish between them and university graduates.

Meaning: A situation in which two people are silent and respectful such that you don't know who the trouble-maker between them is.

Occasions used: In situations where two people behave wisely yet it is suspected one of them is mischievous.

Ndụ mechaniki nọ na Ọnicha ekwehe anyị mara ndụ wụ ndụ ara

English Translation:

It is hard to differentiate the mechanic at Onitsha from the madmen because of their appearances.

Meaning: This means that when two people behave in a rowdy manner, it may be difficult to differentiate which of the two is the foolish trouble maker and which is the wise person who had fallen for his bait.

Occasion used: During situations in which a well-respected person fights verbally or physically with a known and disrespected trouble-shooter.

Ndụ na agba aliñja, ndụ ọzo a na agba Ikoru Bende.

English Translation:

While some people are dancing Alija, some others are dancing Ikoru Bende.

Meaning: People in the same situation, behave differently.

Occasion used: To show how two people are not the same.

Nkita shi na eshigbo aha ya wu Job mana ndu kporo ya ashi na-akpo ya dogo

English Translation:

The dog said that its proper name is Job but those who hate it call it dog.

Meaning: If you want to destroy a person, you spread a false propaganda against that person. Give a dog a bad name to be able to hang it.

Occasion used: To show that a campaign of calumny is afoot.

Nwata na ata akara na-ata ego nya

English Translation:

The child who eats bean balls, known as akara, spends his own money.

Meaning: Nothing goes for nothing. You can't eat your cake and have it. Every action has its consequences.

Occasion used: When one is being carried away by a situation that is making him spend some money.

O tegokwe anyi nhuwara Awusa na uta.

English Translation:

We are used to seeing the Hausa with arrows.

Meaning: We are used to this seemingly dangerous situation. / Or we are used to empty threats.

Occasion used: In calling someone's bluff.

Note: The transhumant Cattle Fulani was encountered by the Igbo and they were regarded as the Hausa who carried bows and arrows but never shot any.

Ọwụ ụkwụ a ka nama nji erụ Umuahia?

English Translation:

Is it at this pace that this cow will eventually get to Umuahia?

Meaning: A man should not dilly-dally when he has work to do.

Occasion used: To motivate someone to be faster.

Ọbaha uru mmadụ nta nshị aboki.

English Translation:

It is not necessary for a person to eat the excreta of a Hausa peasant.

Meaning: It is not important to stoop to attend to trivial matters.

Occasion used: To dissuade someone from doing something unimportant.

Ọna eme ghụ ka filmu.

English Translation:

It will pass you by like a film.

Meaning: You may realize late the consequences of your actions.

Occasion used: To call someone's attention to a dangerous eventuality.

Ogbenye dū be onye ọcha.

English Translation:

Poverty can be seen even in the home of the white man.

Meaning: The rich also cry. Bad things can happen to anyone.

Occasion used: To call someone's attention to the equality of life's circumstances.

Ọwụ mụ ka Aba na amụrụ ọkpọ?

English Translation:

Are Aba people learning how to box by challenging me?

Meaning: Am I being challenged by a weaker person to a bout?

Occasion used: To disregard a person's challenge.

Onwehe ụzọ ejiri ga Chukwuabiana du nfe

English Translation:

There is no short route to Chukwuabiana (Aro Oracle at Arochukwu).

Meaning: There is no short cut to success.

Occasion used: To show the enormity of a project or an assignment.

Onwere ihe Kalu nla achọ na obu engine

English Translation:

There is something Kalu is looking for in the heart of the engine.

Meaning: People will go to all lengths to get the truth.

Occasion used: To show that something demands scrutiny.

Onye ara shi la nya mewe nwa nya mmiri-Chukwu nya wuḡ mmiri n'ihu na azu nihi la omaha ebe Christ ga eshi abia.

English Translation:

The mad man says that when baptizing his child, he pours water on him both front and back because he does not know which direction Christ is coming from.

Meaning: Anyone planning anything has to look into all aspects of it and make room for eventualities.

Occasion used: To show that something demands scrutiny.

Onye Aro anagha ashi nwa Aro ibe nya na Ibun Ukpabi shi shi kele nya.

English Translation:

An Aro man does not tell another Aroman that Ibini Ukpabi greets him.

Meaning: You don't deceive a person who knows what you know.

Occasion used: To show that someone knows what one knows.

Onye Aro anḡho, onye Nnewi arua agwu

English Translation:

If the Aro man is not there, the Nnewi man conducts the cleansing rituals.

Meaning: No one is indispensable.

Occasion used: To show the indispensability of individuals.

Onye Chukwu gbara ekeresimesi, ya gbaara ụmunna ya

English Translation:

He whom God has given a Christmas gift should also do the same for his kinsmen.

Meaning: Remember others when things are good for you.

Occasion used: To remind people of helping one another.

Ọwụhọ na ọnum ka ina anu na ụkọchukwu vu amụ

English Translation:

It is not from me you will hear that a reverend father has a penis.

Meaning: Everyone is human.

Occasion used: When showing that a person is also human.

Ọwu kwanu maka mmadụ ka eji aga Ibadan

English Translation:

It is because of human beings that one sets for a journey to Ibadan.

Meaning: No man is an island.

Occasion used: When showing that people need to associate with one another.

Ozu nwa bekee, e vulie nya enu, wa, wa, wa; e vude nya ala, wa, wa, wa

English Translation:

When the white man's body is carried up, you'll hear "no, no, no!"; When it is brought down, you'll hear "no, no, no!".

Meaning: This proverb points to the insatiable nature of many people despite all well-meaning efforts to satisfy them.

Occasion used: When showing that some people are insatiable.

Note: The Igbo people encountered the British, experiencing their modes of transportation which included bicycles, horses palanquins and hammocks. Important Britons were usually carried on palanquins and hammocks by ethnics. The Inyi community encountered this proverb from other Igbos.

Voom ka mma karja statimentị.

English Translation:

It is better to run away from the police when one is guilty, than to face the stress of making a statement.

Meaning: It is better to run away from a situation that could consume one.

Occasion used: When warning someone of danger.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Effects of Cultural Contact

The researcher observed that more contact proverbs are obtained during structured interview than during participant observation. Thirty-three contact proverbs were obtained from the *Okenyes* during the structured interview while only eleven contact proverbs were naturally situated utterances that occurred during the events in which the researcher used participant observation. This shows that there are a much larger corpus of contact proverbs known to *ndikenyas* than are used during ceremonies.

All the eleven (11) contact proverbs obtained during participant observation were utilized by Inyi indigenes who were younger than *ndiokenye*. *Ndiokenye* were men above seventy-five years and who are versed in Inyi way of life. Contact proverbs are used more readily by the younger generation than by the older generation as is observed in this work.

All the culture bearers interviewed have traveled out of Inyi to communities other than Igbo communities before coming back to Inyi.

The researcher had encountered some of the post contact proverbs obtained in this research in previous chance discussions and events outside Inyi community. For example, a particular post contact proverb that was uttered by an *Okenye* was “Mmanwu anawa gwo Idah”. It is entered as entry 7.4 in this report. The researcher has heard this proverb

uttered by a young lecturer in Political Science Department of the University of Nigeria, a community which is a confluence of many Igbo cultures from the standpoint of an anthropologist. The young lecturer, Mr. Darlington Okoye, alia *Anunkankankpi* hails from Nri in Anambra State. His own version encountered was “Mmanwu anaba go Idah”. This shows that post contact proverbs can spread through loan translations into vernacular languages. Upon further enquiry through Internet search, the researcher discovered that the post contact proverb in question was said to have originated from Anam in Anambra State. Idah is reported as the ancestral home of many Anam people of Anambra. Thus, the variants also show that connections and loan translations are happening as part of the origins of proverbs. This has been demonstrated by Hans Walther in his collection of approximately 150, 000 Latin proverbs and their variants from the Middle Ages through the 17th century in the volume *Proverbia Sententiaeque Latinitaris ac recentioris aevi*. As has been reported, his assemblage revealed that many of the proverbs were common throughout Europe either in the Latin original or through loan translations into the vernacular languages. The variants also indicated that connections and loan translations are also happening as part of the origins of proverbs (Mieder, 1997:402).

5.2 Conclusion

The problem which the researcher encountered was the lack of awareness of the proverbial status of post-contact proverbs in Inyi community. The situation was worsened by the dearth of focused research or ethnography on post-contact Inyi proverbs, which

resulted from social change coming from external influences on Inyi, especially from Western education. Thus, the problem of the study was identifying and studying the post-contact proverbs in Inyi town.

While carrying out documentary research for the literature review as part of solving the problem, the researcher discovered that paremiological publications on post contact Igbo proverbs were almost non-existent. The only encountered study which dealt with this type of proverb in passing is Nwadike's *The Igbo Proverb: A Wider Perspective* (Nwadike, 2009:18-22).

Aside this dearth of scholarship on this anthropological linguistic form (post-contact proverbs), there are, at present, no comprehensive paremiographies or compendia of post-contact Igbo proverbs. Only seven (7) post-contact proverbs are present in the aforementioned Nwadike's paremiology.

Furthermore, there is no dictionary of post-contact African proverbs. In this age, ideas for proverb yearbooks in every country in the world have been advanced (Mieder, 1997:399). But as have been advanced elsewhere, no such African proverb yearbook, much less, Nigerian proverb yearbook, has been created in the world as at the time of this study. If these lapses are covered, then there will be chances for increased paremiology of such specialized forms as post-contact proverbs.

The researcher was able to distil forty-four post-contact Inyi proverbs, thereby helping to increase knowledge and literature about Igbo post-contact proverbs. When such

findings are eventually published, there would then be published literature on post-contact proverbs.

The researcher concludes that a wider research on post-contact proverbs in Igbo cultures is necessary to ascertain properly the corpus of this type of new proverbs and their influences in Igbo life and customs.

Appendix 1

Interview Guide

- (i) What is your name?
- (ii) How old are you Sir?
- (iii) Which community are you an indigene of?
- (iv) Which is your village?
- (v) What proverbs do you know that came after the white man or other people who are not from Inyi had contact with Inyi?
- (vi) What are their meanings?
- (vii) On what occasions are these proverbs used?

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Oral Respondents

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