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IGBO POST-CONTACT PROVERBS OF THE INYI COMMUNITY

Abstract: This article is on post-contact proverbs in Inyi community of southeastern Nigeria. Before now, there is no ethnography on post-contact Inyi proverbs. To acquire data, the researcher used 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 were 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.

Key words: Paremiology, Post-Contact Proverbs, Auto-ethnography, Social change.

Background of the Study

This autoethnography aims to study post-contact proverbs in a changing Inyi community of southeastern Nigeria in the context of a speech event. Post-Contact Proverbs are those that are created or imported by a society as a result of social contact with other cultures. 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). In line with this change, 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 white man’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 some 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.

Statement of the Problem and Relevance of the Study

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, this study identifies and studies the post-contact proverbs in Inyi town. Post-contact Inyi proverbs, when isolated, will be useful for historical studies whose 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 ethnography for equality measures in comparative studies or ethnologies.

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?

Literature Review

It is germane to look at international scholarship on post-contact proverbs and social change in order to ascertain the findings of paremiological studies that are close to this present research. Modern proverbs, sometimes, build on loan translations and

phraseological units of earlier proverbial expressions. Both the Bible and Medieval Latin 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). Hans Walther assembled approximately 150,000 Latin proverbs and their variants from the Middle Ages through the 17th century in the volumes of *Proverbia Sententiaeque Latinitatis 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).

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 (Fieder, 1999:178).

There are many more 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*).

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*. Ezeh comments on samples he collected, revealing, by subtext, the Okposi’s innate high value of the sacred body parts of wives and

mothers, of which verbal desecration can mean the destruction of the social self.

Other paremiological 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 & Belonwu (1963, 1967, 1976), Okonkwo (1977, 1979), Njoku (1978), Njoku (1990), Obi (1978), Davids (1980), Penfield (1983), Amadiume (1995), Okafor (2001), Onwudifo (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).

As expressed in 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. There are studies in Nigeria 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. 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).

Fused traits are the outcomes of 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 predi-

cated the new stance. This phenomenon introduces problems such as metamorphosis, anti-proverbs and adaptations.

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, whose 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 Agezezi, 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 when 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.

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 at 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).

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 paremiological 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 the older-localization-newer-globalization paremiological hypothesis. It remains to be verified.

Research Population and Study Area

Inyi people form the research population, especially those, who are residents within the Inyi community. Inyi town makes up a large majority of the total population of Oji River which is 82,105 as of 1991 and 126,587 as of 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.

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

benu”) trooped to Inyi during Nkwo days to purchase agricultural products from farmers who display them (Udeh, 2001:3).

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 were Participant Observation (Participant as Observer) and Structured Interview.

Method of Data Analysis

The presentation and analysis of data is idiographic. The research that was done had no need for nomothetic analysis which is suitable for such sciences as chemistry, physics or economics whose 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”.

Residence and Duration of Fieldwork

The researcher lived among the Inyi people for three months (November 2017 to January 2018), travelling out when it was 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. During the course of this research, 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 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.

Data Collection using Structured Interview and Participant Observation

The researcher was able to use the Participant as Observer variant of the Participant Observation method in six naturally situated town hall *Umunna* meetings and three traditional marriages. Altogether, there were nine events, each occurring once in the nine villages. The researcher used the Participant as Observer variant during the meetings and ceremonies because he made his presence known in meetings that he had no reason to attend, except for purposes of research. Attending meetings holding in villages that are reserved for only members of that village easily raise suspicions of espionage if the researcher did not make his mission plain to everyone. Data were collected into a tape recorder during the ceremonies aforementioned.

The structured interviews occurred at the end of these events. The researcher prepared an interview guide derived from the research questions and successfully administered it on eighteen respondents who were *okenyes* or culture bearers in the nine villages, utilizing the purposive sampling technique. The eighteen respondents represented the nine villages that make up Inyi town. These eighteen respondents were the "*okenyes*" or those **elders above seventy-five years who were very knowledgeable in Inyi culture**. They were the literate culture bearers of Inyi (literate in Inyi ways of life). They, therefore, possessed special knowledge in Inyi culture and had knowledge in the linguistic form that was being collected. They also hold the "paremiological minimum". Whatever contact proverb was obtained from them was ultimately reliable as having become part of the Inyi culture. Two culture bearers represented each of the nine villages, making a total of eighteen respondents. Thus, Participant Observation (Participant

as Observer) and Structured Interview were the instruments for data collection.

Thirty-three contact proverbs were obtained from the structured interviews 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 interviews than deciphering them from participant observation during the events.



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

Contact Proverbs in Inyi

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 article will list them alongside their meanings obtained from both participant observation and structured interviews 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 was used are also revealed. This is in line with the research questions.

1) **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.

2) **A shị na ejighi anya ọma aba ụka 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 where 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.

3) **Agbushị na- agba Ọlụ 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 from 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.

4) **A makwashị ụwa jioji, ọdụ ka ụgbiam aduhọ**

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 more dire than is being observed.

5) **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.

6) **A na ashi na ọku gbara fada i na aju ma ogbara ahụ ọnyaya****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.

7) **A na ha achi Aro achi, 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 at a strange city.

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

8) **Awusa abatagwo Oka****English Translation:**

The Hausa man has entered Awka.

Meaning: A problem has become dire 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.

9) **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.

10) **Chukwu Okike Abiama meche, ọnyị họ bekee****English Translation:**

In the end, Chukwuabiam (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.

11) **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.

12) **Ebe ọgụ jìmkpa 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.

13) Eji Igbo agwanya onye ocha?

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.

14) Fada shi mechie anya, mechie, maka na imaha ihe oheru

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.

15) 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 a 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.

16) 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.

17) 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.

18) Kamu fu Fada oku ngbara**English Translation:**

Let me see the Father who sustained burns.

Meaning: Let me visit the loo.

Occasion used: When one is pressed.

19) Kwa! Kwa! Kwa! Kobo ghụ 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.

20) Le mu, le motosaikoro/ Ogba 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.

21) Ma nwa Arọ asu họ nsu, o 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.

22) 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.

23) 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.

24) Ndu kwaya ekweheshi anyi mara ndu wu ndu grajueti**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.

25) Ndu mechaniki no na Onicha ekwehe anyi mara ndu wu ndu 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.

26) Ndu na agba aliñja, ndu ozo 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.

27) Nkita shi na eshigbo aha ya wu Job mana ndu kporo ya ashị 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.

28) 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.

29) O tegokwe anyi nhwara 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 transhuman Cattle Fulani was encountered by the Igbo and they were regarded as the Hausa who carried bows and arrows but never shot any.

30) Owu ukwu a ka nama nji eru 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.

31) Ọbaha uru mmadu 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.

32) 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.

33) 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.

34) 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.

35) 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.

36) 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.

37) Onye ara shi la nya mewe nwa nya mmiri-Chukwu nya wuọ 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.

38) 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.

39) Onye Aro anoho, 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.

40) Onye Chukwu gbara ekeresimesi, ya gbaara umunna 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.

41) Ọwụhọ na ọnụm 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.

42) 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.

43) 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.

44) 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.

Discussion

The researcher observed that more contact proverbs are obtained during structured interviews 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 is a much larger corpus of contact proverbs known to *ndikenyes* than are used during ceremonies.

All the eleven (11) post-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 the Inyi way of life. Post-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”. The researcher has heard this proverb uttered by a young lecturer in the 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, alias *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 origina-

ted 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 volumes *Proverbia Sententiaeque Latinitatis 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).

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 from 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 has been advanced elsewhere, no such African proverb yearbook, much less, Nigerian proverb yearbook, has been created in the world 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.

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