LITERATURE, LINGUISTICS & CRITICISM | RESEARCH ARTICLE

On the semantic-pragmatic interface of Igbo verbs of perception

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Abstract: This study examines some semantic-cum-pragmatic issues in realising the senses of the Igbo verbs of perception. The specific objective of the study is to find out how the gap between linguistic meaning and speaker’s meaning is filled and enriched through the context; and how the contextual features underpin what an utterance communicates using some Igbo verbs of perception. The verbs involved are ū(see), lé(listen), ngú(hear), gê(listen), métú(touch), ngú(útô) (taste) and ngú(isi) (smell). By adopting a combination of the Cognitive Semantics approach and Neo-Griceanism, a corpus-based analysis of the Igbo verbs of perception was carried out in different contexts of usage. An audio text was transcribed, and the Antconc concordance software was used on the transcribed text for this purpose. The study’s findings indicate that the senses of Igbo verbs of perception depend significantly on some pragmatic features of the verbs’ contexts of usage. This is because the pragmatic features determine the verbs’ referents, which are established only in specific contexts. However, without the establishment of these contexts, the utterance would not make sense.

Subjects: Language & Linguistics; Linguistic Theory; Semantics

Keywords: Cognitive semantics; linguistic interface; verbs of perception

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PUBLIC INTEREST STATEMENT

This article focuses on the semantic-cum-pragmatic issues in realising the senses of the Igbo verbs of perception. The specific objective of the study is to find out how the gap between linguistic meaning and speaker’s meaning is filled and enriched through the context, using some Igbo verbs of perception such as ū(see), lé(listen), ngú(hear), gê(listen), métú(touch), ngú(útô) (taste) and ngú(isi) (smell). The study adopts a combination of the Cognitive Semantics approach and Neo-Griceanism, by transcribing an audio text and subjecting the transcribed text to the Antconc concordance software. The study finds that the senses of Igbo verbs of perception are not only syntactically determined, they also depend significantly on some pragmatic features of the verbs’ contexts of usage. This is a pointer to the fact that in other languages, the pragmatic features are most likely to be determined by the verbs’ referents, which are established in specific contexts.
1. Introduction
There has been a great revival of interest in the interface between semantics and pragmatics in recent times. Traditionally, semantics focuses on compositionally construed sense(s) in a sentence, in which the senses of words and structures in which they occur are combined to realise the meaning. Conversely, pragmatics is regarded as the study of utterance meaning based on the speaker’s motives; hence language in use and senses in context are its focus.

The present study, therefore, engages the interface between semantics and pragmatics. It emphasises the senses of Igbo verbs of perception from the lexical-semantic approach on the one hand and context based-pragmatic analysis, on the other hand, using the theoretical frameworks of cognitive semantics and neo-Gricean pragmatics, to fill the gap between linguistic and speaker’s meaning. So, “How does the semantic contents of words interact with the pragmatic contents?” needs an answer.

However, contrary to the above view, many linguists (especially syntacticians) are more interested in constructing formal models that explain how sentences carry information about the world and predictions of these models with linguistic means without so much interest in the basic cognitive models whose interaction makes it possible for sentences to carry information about the world (Rabagliati et al., 2010).

According to Preyer and Peter (2007, p. 29), three systems are distinguished concerning words/sentence sense—(a) syntactic representation of a sentence (b) its semantic meaning (which is obtained by applying it to specific roles of linguistics that relate to its truth condition in various contexts and finally (c) its pragmatic meaning (which is obtained by further reasoning on the speaker’s motives for uttering a particular sentence in a particular situation. The interrelationship among these three components is also of great interest to this study. This paper is not interested in the controversy over the distinction between semantics and pragmatics. Instead, it adopts the cognitive semantic and neo-Gricean pragmatic theories to ascertain whether contextual effects are derived from the truth-conditional meaning and further by the compositional context of the linguistic units that make up the utterance at the appropriate levels of representation.

2. Theoretical frameworks of cognitive semantics and neo-Gricean pragmatics
Cognitive semantics deals with meaning and conceptualisation. Specifically, it seeks to integrate various parts of linguistic structure and offers a new approach to the conceptual system of figurative language and meaning relations in words. According to Langacker (1991, p. 295), cognitive semantics “presumes that language is compositional and regards motivatedness as a key issue in language use.” In other words, Langacker says that cognitive semantics do not separate performances from competence. The determination of word meaning is by the interpretation of the whole structure where one finds the word.

On the other hand, Mey (2006, p. 4) says, “The study of pragmatics, unknowingly to scholars started when linguists tried to overstep the narrow boundaries of syntax and later semantics, especially the linguists that disagree with Chomsky’s ideas that language is formal and purely homogenous or monolithic; and semanticists that are of the opinion that language and logic are not the same.” Mey concludes by saying that pragmatics is “… a shift from the paradigm of theoretical grammar (in particular syntax) to the paradigm of the user” (4). In other words, pragmatics is interested in producing language and its producers, together with the domains (contexts) in which the interpretation of the language is based, and on the speaker’s cultural background. Mey (2006, p. 5) further says that the proper domain of pragmatics is what Chomsky calls performance (that is, concrete linguistic practice, which is different from an abstract competence, which is the user’s knowledge of the language and its rules). In line with Grice’s (1975) view, Katz (1977, p. 19) says that pragmatics “… explicate the reasoning of
speakers and hearers, not the theories about the structure of sentence types, which is grammar.”

Generally, Paul Grice is seen as the pioneer figure of the theory that utterance meaning is analysed based on the speaker’s intention. Neo Griceanism borrows its basic approach and theoretical assumptions from Grice’s (1975) conversational maxims below:

(1) Maxim of Quantity: One tries to be as informative as possible and gives as much information as is needed.
(2) Maxim of Quality: One tries to be truthful and does not give false information or information without evidence.
(3) Maxim of Relation: where one tries to be relevant and says things pertinent to the discussion.
(4) Maxim of Manner: when one tries to be as clear, as brief, and as orderly as one can in what one says, and where one avoids obscurity and ambiguity.

Note: Neo-Griceanism is a theory of pragmatics that dissolves from Grice’s (1975) conversational maxims and cooperative principle; where some scholars, Travis (2008) Contextual theory, Reconati’s (2010), Truth-conditional pragmatics; Sperber and Wilson’s (2002) Default theory, Horn’s (1984) Maximization of information content; Levinson’s (1995, 2000) Three heuristics), after 1975, formulated various pragmatic theories following Grice assumptions. Krnol (2011, p. 4) aptly summarizes the basic approaches and theoretical assumptions of neo-Griceanism.

(1) In Neo-Griceanism, a distinction is drawn between natural meaning and non natural meaning. According to H.P. Grice (1957, p. 371) “… some things which can [non-naturally mean] something are not signs (e.g., words are not), and some are not conventional in any ordinary sense (e.g., certain gestures); while some things which mean naturally are not signs of what they mean.”

This distinction is necessary to divorce pragmatics from semiotics. According to Grice, the focus of meaning is the explication of what an utterance entails, which means something non-naturally. This is because what a particular speaker [non-naturally] means by a token of the utterance of a particular word may diverge from the standard meaning of a word. As H.P. Grice (1957, p. 219) puts it, “A meant NN Something by ‘X’ is roughly equivalent to ‘A’, uttered by X with the intention of inducing effects by means of the recognition of this intention.” It means that what is meant by an utterance is dependent upon some specifics of the tokens of utterance and the speaker and that what is meant by an utterance may deviate from some established “standard” meaning of the words uttered.

(1) A distinction is also drawn between “what is said” and “what is communicated”. Krnol (2011, p. 4) summaries this by saying that “what is said” relates to the conventional meanings of words in the sentences uttered. The “said” content, according to Krnol, is of two parts. One part is available through the knowledge of the language spoken and the second part is having the knowledge of the circumstances of the utterance. The knowledge of the language has to do with the comprehension and competency of the lexical meanings, morphology and syntax of the language, while the knowledge of the circumstances is available through the contributions of the context of utterance which are necessary to achieve disambiguation and establish the reference of deictic terms such as time, referent, and tense.
By extension, conventional meaning in (2) above implies that meaning relies upon the uses and practices of the language community in which it is used. It is also worth noting that sentences/utterances do not implicate; speakers do by flouting conversational maxims, the words chosen to express an idea (Grice, 1975).

Furthermore, neo-Griceanism modified the Gricean theory in some other aspects; for example, Grice maintains that “saying something” entails “meaning it”, hence, his use of “make as if to say” in non-literal uses of language such as metaphor (Grice, 1989, p. 41). However, according to neo-Griceanism, specifically (Horn, 2006), “what is said” does not always entail speaker meaning. It leads to the rejection of entailment relations between saying and meaning because it does not allow for the accommodation of metaphorical and ironic speech. For example, if one says:

(1) Yea, how nice you are (in ironic sense) when actually, the addressee is cruel and irritating.

Likely, the speaker does not “mean” that the addressee is nice; probably, the speaker means the opposite. However, because the speaker has said it, the Gricean theory will not allow the speaker to say this without meaning it. This part of the Gricean theory is abandoned in this study. So, neo-Griceanism is committed to the existence of a metaphorical dependence between semantics and psychology. We determine the facts about semantic content by facts about the minds of people who speak that language. Therefore, this present study adopts the neo-Griceanism with the above pointed out modifications but tilting more towards contextualism because “… without contextual modulation, no proposition could be expressed …,” Recanati (2005, p. 179-180).

In summary, this study sees semantic meaning as interested in how truth-conditions are associated with sentences systematically depending on the lexical meanings of their parts and their mode of combination. On the other hand, we see pragmatic meaning as the study of how semantic meaning, the mental states of the speaker(s) and hearer(s), their motives, and other contextual features underpin what is communicated by utterances. The main aim of this study, therefore, is to see the semantic-pragmatic interface in arriving at meaning.

3. Methodology
With the use of the Antconc software (whose work was to identify and pull out the verbs in their various contexts, in isolation and in construction), the carefully transcribed tape-recorded utterances of five hundred Igbo language speakers from the University of Nigeria, in various conversational contexts were subjected to corpus analysis. The above representative population covers the five core Igbo states in south-eastern Nigeria, including students, teaching and non-teaching staff within the University community. Cluster random sampling was employed in the selection of the respondents. The target population was clustered around the ten faculties in the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, and proportional purposive random sampling was used to select fifty respondents from each faculty, whether male or female. The representative population was selected according to their states, by purposive random sampling in proportion to the number of people from a particular state in the faculty. The manifestations and uses of all the Standard Igbo variants of Igbo perception verbs: hú(see), lé(look), nú(hear/smell/taste), gé (listen), and métú(feel/touch) were precisely analysed as designated.

According to Sheel (2002), the application of the Antconc method of data collection and analysis are commonly used by corpus linguistics to analyse utterances, which according to him, is through a combination of concordance and analysis of construction, by identifying the different contextual manifestations of the verb root in them. Furthermore, documented materials were critically studied in lexico-syntactic and pragmatic contexts using Levinson’s (2006) “interaction engine” to determine how words expand their semantic and pragmatic range. The
data were analysed qualitatively and arranged in groups based on different sense modalities in Igbo (lexico-semantically and sense relationally), indicating their cognitive domains.

4. Data presentation and analysis
It is pertinent at this juncture to provide brief background information of Igbo around which the analysis revolves. The word Igbo refers to the people, as well as their language. It is the dominant language in the South-eastern part of Nigeria, spoken mainly in the five core Igbo states, namely: Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo. Igbo is also spoken in some parts of Delta, Rivers, and Benue states, which are neighbouring states. Also, in some parts of Equatorial Guinea, Igbo speakers are spotted. In 1961, Igbo had the revised orthography committee, headed by Dr. Onwu. The committee reviewed the old orthography and included other Igbo dialects and later came up with the unified orthography known as the Standard Igbo (SI). The Standard Igbo is enriched from all Igbo dialects, and it is used in all official settings. In the classification of world languages, Igbo belongs to the New Benue Congo language family.

Some of the Igbo perception verbs have dialectal variants from the data gathered, as presented in italics in Table 1 below. However, they all have the same semantic and contextual imports, hence, using the SI variants in the analysis.

In this section, therefore, some representative data from over 30,104 manifestations of Igbo verbs of perception fished out by the Antconc software in the tape-recorded utterances in different contexts are presented and analysed.

The data analysis is tailored along the five sense modalities: vision, hearing, touch, smell and taste, but where there is a need to point out the importance of inflexion or complementation in meaning determination and distinction, inflexion and complementation are given special attention.

4.1. Sense modality of vision
According to Viberg’s (1984) survey of verbs of perception, sense of vision is always a dominant and objective sense compared to other senses, suggesting a pan-human pre-occupation with visual phenomena. In the visual system, the eyes are the focus. They capture images and interpret them as perceived. The sense of vision generally falls under the semantic components of inner perception/experiences and activity (see, Gisborne, 1996; Viberg, 1984). Activity refers to a process that the perceiver controls, for instance, lé (look), while inner perception/experience refers to the state that the perceiver does not control, as in hú(see). Let us begin with hú(see), which has the semantic component of inner perception/experience. Hú(see) is a verb of vision that involves something coming to the eyes, which does not necessarily mean that one is paying attention. In other words, one can see something even if one does not want to. Observe example (2).

| Sense modality | Experiencer | Activity | Percept  |
|---------------|-------------|----------|----------|
| Vision        | hú/ú        | lé/né    | lé       |
| Hearing       | nú/          | gê/ná    | nú (uda) |
| Touch/Feel    | métú         | métú     | métú     |
| Smell         | sì           | (nú)isi  | (nú)isi  |
| Taste         | tò           | (nú)uto  | (nú)uto  |

Adapted from Gisborne (1996, p. 1) but modified to suit Igbo verbs of perception by Okeke & Okeke (2017, p. 5)
(2a. Ọ bụrụ onye ara gba oto
pro see-pst rel-pro madness sta-verb nakedness
“S/he [saw] met a naked mad person.”

b. Ọ bụrụ ekwenị ya n’oche
pro see-pst phone pro prep-chair
“S/he saw his/her phone on the chair.”

c. Uche na Obinna bụrụ n’agbamakwụkwọ
Uche conj Obinna see-pst prep-wedding
“Uche and Obinna [saw] met at the wedding.”

d. Okn. Okafo kpebi-ri i-ụ bụ isi ya
Prof. Okafo decide-pst inf-see head pro
“Prof Okafo decided to [see] get to the root of it.”

e. O ri-ri nri i-ji bụ ike/ume o ji agu akwụkwọ
pro eat-pst food inf-with see energy pro with read book
“S/he ate to [see] get energy with which to read/study.”

f. O so na ndị bụrụ uzọ n’obodo
pro follow prep pl-marker see-pst road prep-town
“S/he is one of the people that [see road] are smart/fore sighted/enlightened in the town.”

g(i) Amaka bụrụ ọ bụ i-kwụ okwu
Amaka see-pst mouth inf-talk talk/speech
“Amaka [saw the mouth] has the effrontery/audacity to talk.”

g(ii) Amaka bụrụ aka i-ti m ihe
Amaka see-pst hand inf-beat pro something
“Amaka [saw the hand] has the courage/effrontery to beat me.”

g(iii) Amaka bụrụ ụkwụ o ji apụ n’ulo ọgwụ
Amaka see-pst leg pro with go prep-house drug
“Amaka [saw the leg] has the courage to walk out of the hospital.”

h(i) Obinna a-ụ bụghị ọ bụ i-kwụ okwu
Obinna part-sec-neg mouth inf-talk talk/speech
“Obinna [did not see mouth with which to talk/speak] was dumbfounded.”

h(ii) Obinna a-ụ bụghị aka i-ti m ihe
Obinna part-sec-neg hand inf-beat pro something
“Obinna [did not see the hand to beat me] out of pity could not beat me.”

h(iii) Obinna a-ụ bụghị ụkwụ o ji pụọ n’ulo ọgwụ
Obinna part-sec-neg leg pro with go/leave prep-house drug
“Obinna [did not see the leg] could not just walk out of the hospital [out of pity, disappointment, grief, etc].”

i. Emeka bụ uzọ, o ga-apụ-riji n’obodo
Emeka see road pro aux-go-must prep-town
“Emeka must leave town if he [sees road] has the opportunity.”

j. Ọ cho-ọ i-ụ onye isi n’galaba
pro want-rv inf-see pro head department
“S/he wants to [see] discuss with the HOD for the examination. Or S/he wants [see] to bribe the HOD for the examination.”
k. Ọkwụ ya na-ahụ peri peri
leg pro aux-shake ideophone
“His/her legs are trembling.”

l. Govanọ Ugwuanyị hụ-ru ndị Enyimba anya
Governor Ugwuanyị see-ev pl-marker Enyimba eye
n’ọzọ pu-ru ihec. Mana mgbe ha toğhe-re ngwugwu
pre-part-see special but when pro open-pst parcel
o ji hụ ha anya, ha a-hụ-ghị oku. wọ%
pro with see pro eye pro part-see-neg mouth talk/speech
“Governor Ugwuanyị [saw] appreciated/thanked Enyimba in a special way but when they opened the thank you parcel/gift, they were dumbfounded/astonished.”

m. Obinna hụ-ru nna ya n’anya
Obinna see-pst father pro prep-eye
“Obinna [sees his father in the eyes] loves his father.”

The analysis of (2) is in two parts: hụ bearing physical and conceptual meanings and hụ with different complements, bearing various figurative senses. A look at 2(a-j) shows hụ having physical and/or conceptual meanings. In (2a & b), especially (2b), hụ refers to physical vision. Obinna saw his phone physically lying on the chair. In (2a & c), the meaning can be physical and also conceptual. If it is taken physically that Uche and Obinna saw each other at the wedding or that s/he saw a naked mad person, then the meaning is physical. Note: (2a) shows one seeing something without one’s volition. Conceptually, (2a & c) mean that Uche and Obinna met at the wedding or that s/he met a naked mad person. In (2d-m), hụ takes different complements which are inherent. The complements are inherent in the sense that naturally, for the senses to be realised, according to Okeke & Okeke (2017), hụ must take the complements indicated in bold prints in (3).

(3)a. hụ isị yá - get to the root of an issue/find a lasting solution
b. hụ ụké/ümē - have/get energy
c. hụ ọzọ - being smart/fore sighted/enlightened
d. hụ ọnụ - have effrontery/audacity
e. hụ ọkà - have courage
f. hụ(ghị) ọnụ - dumbfounded
g. hụ(ghị) ọkà - did not do (out of pity)
h. hụ ọzọ - opportunity
i. hụ ọnụ - bribe/discuss
j. hụ ọnụ - thank/appreciate
k. hụ peri peri - tremble
l. hụ n’anya - love

In (3), without the complements, the different senses will never be realised and changing the complements amounts to having different senses. Furthermore, the number of words that come between hụ and its complement will still not change its figurative sense; observe (2j), (2l) and (2m). The role of pragmatics cannot be overemphasised in arriving at the above figurative/metaphorical senses, hence rejecting Grice’s (1975) entailment relation by neo-Griceanism (see, section 2). Furthermore, a close look at (3c) and (3h) shows no morphological difference between the two. They have the same spelling pattern and tone marks. The same thing applies to (3i) and (3j). What is pragmatically implied is that only the contexts of use can disambiguate the various senses.

Therefore, in line with Cappelen and Lepore’s (2005) view, this paper posits that in certain instances, as in (2), the semantic contents of well-formed sentences are not truth evaluable without the addition of the pragmatic content. In short, apart from (2b), only the semantic contents of the perception verb hụ in relation to other words in the utterances failed to provide the truth-contents of the utterances. The role played by the intonation and context provided the metaphorical senses, which are the actual senses contained in the utterances.
In Igbo, just like in English, *hụ*(see) with the semantic component of activity has a different morphological form which is *lé* (look). As earlier pointed out, it is a process controlled by the perceiver. Here, the person involved is deliberately directing his/her sense to attend to something. For instance, *ilé* (to look at) is to direct one’s eyes to see something. Because of the deliberate nature of *lé* (look at), it has a different nuance of meaning from *hụ*(see). Below in example (4) are some utterances pulled out by the Antconc software for the activity verb of vision *lé* (look at).

(4).a. Ọ na-ele m anya
pro aux-look pro eye
“S/he is looking at me.”

b. Ijeoma le-re ya anya gba nkịtị
Ijeoma look-pst pro eye keep quite
“Ijeoma looked at him/her and kept quiet.”

c. Ijeoma le-re ya anya n’ihu gba nkịtị
Ijeoma look-pst pro eye prep-face keep quite
“Ijeoma [looked at] his/her face and kept quite. Ijeoma kept quiet out of respect.”

d. Bia, le-e ihe Chineke me-re m
come look-imp thing God de-pst pro
“Come and [look at/see] observe what God did for me.”

e. Emeka, le-e m anya n’ihu
Emeka look-imp pro eye prep-face
“Emeka [look at] my face/observe my countenance.”

f. Obinna, le-godu m anya site n’isi ruo n’ụkwụ
Obinna look-at pro eye from prep-head to prep-leg
“Obinna [look at] me from head to toe/Obinna, assesses me/Obinna, checks me out.”

g. O le-re ya anya n’ihu hụ na iwe na-ewe ya
pro look-pst pro eye prep-face see that anger aux-angry pro
“S/he [looked at] observed his/her face and [saw] discovered that s/he is angry.”

h. Le-e anya ka m gwa gi
look-imp eye comp pro tell pro
“[Look, listen attentively let me tell you. [Calling one’s attention to listen attentively based on
the seriousness on one’s face].”

i. Uche na-ele umụnụ nwaanyị anya n’ihu
Uche aux-look pl-marker women eye prep-face
“Uche [looks at women] considers women’s feelings.”

j. Le-gharija anya nke ọma
look-round eye very good
“[Look] around very well/Survey properly (with the eyes).”

k. Le-zie anya maka ndị nduha
look-properly eye because pl-marker deceiver
“[Look properly for deceivers] Be careful of deceivers.”

l. Le-kwasi Chineke anya
look-upon God eye
“[Look up to] God/Trust God/Have faith in God/Put your faith in God/Trust in God.”

m. O na-ele m ajo anya
pro aux-look pro evil/bad eye
“[S/he is looking at me with evil/bad eyes] S/he is planning evil against me.”

n. Eze na-ele moo (ka atụru)
Eze aux-look idiophone (like sheep)
“[Eze looks moo like a sheep] Eze looks sheepishly/foolishly (like a sheep).”

o. Gini ka o le-putara na ya
what comp pro look-out-pst from pro
“[What did s/he look out of it] What did s/he make/get out of it.”
Lé also bears both physical and metaphorical senses but with its syntactic pattern. In (4a), the meaning is physical. The agent was looking at the object. In (4b), the meaning is physical but can be extended to the intellelction. In which case, Ijeoma “observed” him/her by looking at his/her face. However, in (4c), we have the addition of a phrase n’ihu (in the face), which makes the meaning of (4c) figurative. Le anya n’ihu (look at the face) is a clause that has different meanings in different contexts of discourse, as shall be observed later. However, in the context of (4c), ile anya n’ihu (to look at the face) stands for “respect”. In (4d & e), lé means “observe”. Here, the sense is metaphorical, based on the native speaker’s conceptualisation of the Igbo language.

An interesting observation from (4a-c, e-m& p-s) is that we have the frame le... anya (look... eye), which can accommodate various affixes and other lexical items for meaning distinction. This feature is lacking in hú. The verb root lé can combine various suffixes with the complement anya (eye) and other adjuncts to produce different figurative senses in different contexts. However, like hú (see, Okeke & Okeke (2017), the basic underlying sense “look (at)” remains unaffected. In (4e), lé takes an imperative marker ewith the complement anya to mean “observe my countenance”. Native Igbo speakers use this expression to make the addressee understand how serious s/he is, and only the pragmatic content of utterance can achieve this. The same applies to (4f-m) and (p-s), where various figurative senses are realised by adding different suffixes to lé in combination with anya and other lexical items. Specifically, in (4j-l, o-s) the eyes go in a specific direction indicated by the verb, or extensional suffixes (-gharia, -zie,-kwasi, -putara, -feré-ghara,-dara, -nye and mie) attached to lé, whose interpretations give the meanings to the entire expressions. The meaning is metonymic, part of the meaning standing for the whole meaning in the expression.

Furthermore, le anya n’ihu (look at the face) appeared in examples (4c), (4e), (4g) and (4i), but only the contexts of use disambiguate the senses. In (4n), what provides the sense in the utterance ismô (idiophone), although the presence of dîrî (sheep) can still produce the same sense. From (4), the semantic-pragmatic interface is also apparent. Without the addition of the pragmatic component of meaning, the utterances are not truth evaluable. In hú (see), the combination of hú with various complements, plus the context produce the figurative sense. However, in lé, various suffixes and the complement anya contribute as much as the context to realise the figurative senses. Note: This paper did not discuss hú in relation to various affixes it takes, but according to Okeke & Okeke (2017), no figurative sense of hú in combination with affixes was observed in their study. The addition of affixes to hú only extended the basic meaning “see”. Nevertheless, the reverse is the case with lé in this present study.
4.2. Sense modality of hearing

Hearing or audition is the sense of sound perception. It is the ability to perceive sound by detecting vibrations through the ears. The sense of hearing involves two entities—the speaker and the hearer. Both can be persons, objects, spirits, which can be known or unknown. Here, the verbs to be analysed are *nụ*(hear) (as an experience/inner perception verb) and *ghị* (listen) as an activity verb of hearing. The following physical and extended senses of *nụ* are found in our corpora (5a-p).

The physical meaning is “hear”, while the metaphorical senses are: “heed”, “obey”, “understand”, “be informed”, “imagine”, “does not obey”, “get information (ordinary information or weird/unbelievable information)”, “bear witness”, “ask after somebody”, “get one’s opinion”, “face punishment”, “being stubborn”, and “belonging to the upper class”.

5a. *Emeka* ụnụ ọlu akwa ya
Emeka hear-pst voice cry pro
“Emeka heard his/her cry.”

b. *Eze* a-chọ-ghị ịnụ ndumodu m nye-re ya
Eze part-want-neg inf-hear advice pro give-pst pro
“Eze does not want to [hear] heed my advice.”

c. *Uche*, ginji me-re na ị ụnụ-ghị ihe naa gi kwu-ru?
Uche why do-pst that pro hear-neg what father pro say-pst
“Uche, why did you not [hear] obey what your father said?”

d. *Eji* m n’aka na ị ụnụ ụrụ ile m kwu-ru?
hope pro prep-hand that pro hear-pst what pro say-pst
“I hope you [heard] understood me?”

e. *Oge* m ụnụ ụrụ na Mz. Obi nwu-ru...
when pro hear-pst that Mr. Obi die-pst...
“[When I heard that Mr. Obi died…] When I was informed that Mr. Obi died…”

f. I ụnụ kwa-ra Uche ị-si na m na-apụ ara?
pro hear-also-pst Uche inf-say that pro aux-run mad
“[Did you hear Uche saying that I am mad?] Could you imagine Uche saying that I am mad?”

g. *Ọ* na- bụ kwa-ụrụ ihe mma ndụ kwu-ru?
pro aux-hear-also what people say-pst
“Does s/he [hear] obey anyone? Does he obey what anyone says?”

h. Uwa bia-kwa ụnụ ụrụ ọlu m
world come-also hear-pst voice pro
“Let the world hear me. Let the world hear me witness! Let me make it known to everybody.”

i. *Asị* m ka m ụnụ ọlu gi
want pro comp pro hear voice pro
“I want to hear your voice] I want to know how you are/I want to ask after you.”

j. *Achọ-ọrọ* m ịntụ ọlu gi n’okwu a
want-pst pro inf-hear voice pro prep-case dem
“I want [to hear you in this case] your opinion on this case/matter.”

k. *Ọ* ụnụ ụrụ ọdụ ya mgbe ndị uwe-ọjị bia-ra
pro hear-pst sound sound pro when pl marker police come-pst
“Heard it got the punishment/repercussion when the police came/S/he faced the music when the police came.”

l. *Obi* a-na-ghị ụnụ ntị
Obi part-does-neg hear ear
“Obi [does not hear] is stubborn.”

m. *Ndị* a na-ụnụ ọlu ha a-bia-la
people imper-pro aux-hear voice pro part-come-perf
“[The people whose voices are heard] The prominent/elite/prestigious people have come.”
The perception of hearing in (5a) is physical. Emeka physically heard the cry of somebody, but (5b-o), present different metaphorical senses of nụ in various contexts. In (5b), nụ stands for “heed”. The speaker laments over Eze’s obstinacy in heeding to advice. The sense in (5b) can further develop in some contexts to mean the speaker demanding obedience from the hearer as in (5c) or concluding that the hearer obeys nobody as in (5g). So, a semantic shift from hear-heed-obey shows the interpersonal relationship in the verb of hearing (see, Ibarretxe-Antuñano, 1999, p. 66). Naturally, the verb of hearing nụ does not mean pay attention or obey. It acquires the sense only in context.

Another metaphorical sense of nụ is “understand” as in (5d). According to Okeke & Okeke (2017), it is used in the interrogative form in Igbo to determine whether the hearer is following the discussion or at a loss, especially when the hearer is behaving contrary to the discussion. In (5e), the figurative sense is “be informed/told”. Here, the hearer gets the information indirectly. S/he was informed or told about the death of Mr. Obi; in other words, it is indirectly reported (Willett, 1988). A look at (5f) reveals another interesting metaphorical extended sense of nụ in context. In (5f), the hearer is full of surprise and imagines (from Uche’s utterance, which s/he heard) that Uche thinks s/he is mad. It comes in the form of a rhetoric question. Other instances of nụ taking a complement and/or a suffix to express figurative sense are seen in (5b), (5c), (5h), (5i), (5k), (5m) and (5l). In the just-mentioned examples, we have

(i) nụ ihé/ndumôdù—heed advice, obey, pay attention
(ii) nụ ólù—bear witness, ask after, get one’s opinion/view
(iii) nụ udà—face the consequence/repercussion or punishment
(iv) a(nu)ntị—being stubborn vs nụ nti—obedience

The figurative sense in (ii) as in (5h) is for everybody to bear the speaker witness that s/he did what s/he was supposed to do before the problem started. In other words, the speaker sounded a note of warning beforehand. Furthermore, in (5i), it is believed in the Igbo worldview that to hear one’s voice (especially) in the morning shows that one is okay. Therefore, (i) nu olu—“(to) hear a voice” in the context of (5i) is used “to ask after somebody”. Likewise, in (5j), nu olu also means ‘getting one’s opinion on an issue, where “olu” stands for “voice”. It can also be observed that (5i) and (5j) are the same. The figurative senses can only be disambiguated in the contexts of use. In (iii) as in (5k), nụ udà literary means “hear sound”, but the extended metaphorical meaning is “face the music/punishment” (see, Okeke & Okeke, 2017 for details).

Another extended meaning is “being stubborn”. But for this meaning to be realised, nụ must take the participle marker a, plus the complement nti (ear). The agives nụ the negative interpretation that gives the meaning “stubbornness” or “not wanting to heed”, while the absence of amakes the sense positive—“obedience”. Finally, in (5m), the literal meaning is “… those whose voices are heard…” Figuratively, it stands for “the elite”, “rich”, “powerful”, “prominent”, “high class in the society”. The sense is also figurative because “the poor”, “uneducated” etc., have no voice in most societies. So, those whose voices are heard because of their political, economic, religious and/or educational background are termed “the upper-class citizens” as seen in (5m).

For the activity verb of hearing, gè (listen) is used. Note: gè has another dialectal variant which is ndà; both are acceptable in Standard Igbo (SI). Observe example (6) below.
(6a) Emeka na-ege/ọha ntị na klas
Emeka aux-listen ear prep class
“Emeka [listens] pays attention in class.”

b. Ge-e/ha-a ntị
listen-imp ear
“Listen”

c. Ge-e ya ntị.
Listen-imp pro ear
“Listen to him/her”

d. Ge-e okwu ya ntị
listen-imp talk pro ear
“Listen to his talk”

e. Ge-e m ntị
listen-imp pro ear
“Listen to me”

f. Okn. Obika so na ndị a na-ege ntị n’olu n’obodo.
Prof. Obika follow conj people pro aux-listen ear prep-voice prep-town
“Prof. Obika is one of the people [who are heard] whose words are taken seriously in the community.”

g. Amaka na-ege ntị olu di ya.
Amaka aux-listen ear voice husband pro
“Amaka is expecting [to hear] to receive a message from her husband.”

h. O na-ege-bi ntị
pro aux-listen-stop ear
“S/he is eavesdropping.”

From (6), ge also bears both concrete/physical and metaphorical meanings. In (6a), the sense can be concrete and also conceptual. It could be that Emeka “listens” to the teacher’s voice in the class (physical) or that he “pays attention” when the teaching is going on in the class (metaphorical sense). However, it is noteworthy to point out a semantic shift, which is in a hierarchical chain from listening → paying attention → heeding → obeying. Because to listen fully means to pay close attention to what is being said beneath the words one is listening to; in other words, listening skills start with paying attention. No wonder in almost all the examples in (6), we have this underlying sense of listening and paying attention. The above hierarchical chain manifests clearly in (6b-d). (6f) is slightly different from (5m) in the sense that in (6f), the person has already established confidence in the people based on his/her wise talk(s) that his/her words are taken seriously. Unlike in (5m, where the people in question are famous/prominent, but not necessarily that what they say matters. Another extended meaning of ge is “being expectant to ‘hear from or receive a message from somebody’ as in (6g). Finally, in (6h), the sense is also figurative. The domain of use and the interlocutors” knowledge of the Igbo language provide the sense.

It is also important to observe that in (6), we have ge taking some complements as in:

i. ge ntị (n’olụ)

ii. ge ntị ọlụ

iii. gebi ntị
4.3. Sense modality of taste

According to Ibarretxe-Antuñano (1999), the physical sense of taste is generally linked to personal likes and dislikes in the mental world. In other words, the sense of taste is the faculty that enables us to distinguish sweet, sour, bitter and salty properties in the mouth through the taste receptor cells in the taste bud, mainly on the tongue. It explains the precise nature of the sense of taste from the descriptive point of view since it allows us to express ourselves precisely when describing a taste. As Okeke & Okeke (2017) rightly pointed out in the Igbo language, the primary perception verb of taste is to, but it is not always used conceptually. Conceptually, what is used is nụ, together with the complement ụtọ (taste/sweetness). The meaning of nụ ụtọ (perceive taste) is more profound than to ụtọ—(taste good/sweet) based on the Igbo conceptualisation of the two. To ụtọ is physical. It involves an entity giving out/emitting its tastiness, while nụ ụtọ means “perceiving the tastiness in an entity”. Example:

7a. Nri a ụtọ food ụtọ dem ụtọ taste-sta sweet/taste
    “The food is sweet/tasty. [Meaning is physical, achieved with the taste buds]”

b. Anya m ụtọ nri a ụtọ hear-pst pro sweet/taste food dem
    “I [heard] perceived the sweetness/tastiness of this food. [The meaning is conceptually derived as if one can hear the taste of the food using one’s taste buds]”

In support of Okeke & Okeke (2017), nụ encodes the sense of inner perception of hearing and that of taste. From our data, the sense of taste falls within two domains—physical and metaphorical. Observe example (8) below:

8a. Ekwe nụ ụtọ osikapa ahu Ekwe hear-pst taste rice ụtọ dem
    “Ekwe [heard] got/perceived the tastiness of the rice.”

b. N’eziokwu, Uche nụ ụtọ ahụghu n’ụlọ nga/mkpọọ prep-truth Uche hear-pst taste suffering prep-house prison
    “In truth, Uche [tasted/perceived suffering] really suffered in prison.”

c. O nụ ụtọ ego mgbe ọ bu ụganọ, pro hear-pst taste money when pro be governor
    “S/he [perceived the taste of] enjoyed money when s/he was the governor. Or S/he enjoyed the pleasure money can buy when s/he was the governor.”

d. Ana m anụ ụtọ Jehovah na ndụ m be pro hear taste Jehovah prep life pro
    “I perceive [the taste of] the goodness of God in my life.”

e. Emeka a-nụ-la ụtọ nwaanyi/uwa Emeka part-hear-perf taste women/world
    “Emeka has [perceived the taste of] enjoyed women/Emeka has enjoyed the pleasures of this world/life/the pleasure women can give.”

f. Ana m anụ ụtọ n’ụwa na ose na nri a be pro hear taste salt conj pepper prep food dem
    “I [can hear] perceive both the taste of salt and pepper in this food.”
The only physical sense of *nú* in relation to taste is illustrated in (8a & f), wherewith the taste buds and the people involved perceived the tastiness in the rice, salt and pepper in the food. Other instances are metaphorical senses. Generally, *nú ọtọ* means “to perceive something”, conceptually. What makes what one perceives positive or negative is the adjunct that follows. In other words, the direction of the experience is indicated by the adjunct that comes after *ọtọ*(taste), and its interpretation in context gives the meaning to the entire expression. In (8b), *dhụhụ* (suffering) shows that the experience is negative, and as such, it overrides the positive implicature. In (8c -e), the experiences are positive because of the presence of *égô* (money) in (8c); Jehovah in (8d); and woman/world/life in (8e), so they mean “to enjoy” or “have pleasure”. Nevertheless, in (8e), the connection with the real physical sense of taste is more dominant, triggered by the word “pleasure”. Another extended meaning can also be generated from (8d), “to produce a feeling”. In other words, “I feel good because of God’s presence in my life.” Finally, we have the physical discretion of taste in (8f), where the person involved, using the taste buds, could distinguish between “salt” and “pepper” in the food. It supports the claim that the faculty of taste allows us to express ourselves very precisely when describing a taste.

Pragmatically, we could discover these metaphorical meanings through the various contexts of use. It is also evident that the semantic contents of the verbs, their complements and adjuncts played significant roles in providing the direction of the various metaphorical experiences in (8). Secondly, the discovered metaphorical meanings are acceptable in all the above-stated contexts because, in the Igbo man’s intellection, the senses of the verbs are conceived acceptable by the native speakers. So, an Igbo child growing up acquires these utterances and figurative meanings in language acquisition as communicatively acceptable structures and meanings in the culture.

4.4. Sense modality of smell
The sense of smell, also known as olfaction according to Viberg (1984), comes from specialised sensory cells, known as olfactory neurons, which are found inside the nose. The information realised through the sense of smell when compared to other senses like the eyes, is not reliable, according to Sweetser (1990). It does not also have many metaphorical senses when compared to other senses. In Igbo, the physical perception verb of smell is *sì* (smell), which usually goes with its complement *isi*—“smell”. However, as pointed out earlier in taste, *sì isi* is not as deep as *nú isi*—“(hear) perceive smell” (see, Okeke & Okeke, 2017 for details). Our Antconc software pulled out some physical and metaphorical senses of *nú isi*, which are analysed below. Example 9:

(9)a. A-**nụ-ru** m *isi* ofe egwusi.
   Be-perceive-pst pro smell soup melon
   “I perceived the aroma of melon soup.”

b. … oge ahụ ka m mata-ra na ndị …time dem comp pro know-pst that pl-marker
   mmụọ na-**anya** isi mmadụ
   spirits aux-hear smell human
   “… that was when I realised that spirits perceive the presence of humans”

c. Ana m **anya** isi ọnwụ
   Be pro hear smell death
   “I [smell] perceive the presence of death.”
"His/her behaviour [smell] stinks is despicable."  

In (9a-b), there is evidence of physical meaning. Physically in (9a), the person involved perceives the aroma of the melon soup and in (9b), spirits perceived the presence of human beings in the vicinity. In Igbo philosophy, one believes that spirits perceive just like human beings. Apart from this physical meaning, the verb of smell nú(ysi) also has metaphorical senses like “to suspect” as in (9c); “to guess” as in (9d; Okeke & Okeke, 2017); and “intimacy” as in (9e). In (9c-d), one’s intuition is extensively involved because it is the intuition that triggers the suspicion or guess. The senses in (9c-d) are implied, not by the verb, but based on the unforeseen meaning content triggered by the context of use. Furthermore, in (9e), closeness leads to intimacy, and the conceptualisation of nú in the context of use played a vital role in realising the sense; if not, it translates into negative meaning.

For the physical sense of smell, si isi, two metaphorical senses are fished out from our corpora, which are “to foresee/prophesy” as in (9f) and “despicable” (9g). (9f) is more implied than (9g). Nú-ési—“is smelling/smells” stands for “foreseeing what may happen in the future” based on the rate at which the couple exchanges words. Nevertheless, in (9g), his physical behaviour is mapped onto the cognition and likened to something that “stinks”, “very contemptible”.

4.5. Sense modality of touch

The sense of touch involves the mechanical disturbances of the skin when in contact with another entity. The stimulus of touch, therefore, has the property of contact between the skin and another object. No matter how minimal or brief the contact is, it is registered in the brain by the stimulus stimulated by contact pressure. Metaphorically, the sense of touch has a strong relationship with emotions, and as such, métú (touch) is also used in realising emotional senses in Igbo. It involves the transfer of meaning from cognition to emotion. This is possible because the two domains—cognition and emotion share similar feelings. Observe example (10)

(10)a. Ahụ Uche métú-ru m body Uche touch-pst pro

“Youche’s body touched me.”

b(i) Okonkwo c-métú-ghi nri ya aka. Okonkwo part-touch-neg food pro hand

“Okonkwo did not [touch] eat his food.”

(ii). Emeka ekwe-ghị c-métu nwunye ya aka. Emeka refuse-neg part-touch wife pro hand

“Emeka refused [touching] making love to his wife/Emeka refused to beat his wife.”
(10a) involves physical touch perceived by the skin. In (10b), we have the meaning “not partaking in something” or “partaking in something”. If méto takes the negative suffix -ghí/ghí as in (10b), it means “not partaking in”. So, in (10bi), Okonkwo did not eat his food. Furthermore, in (10bii), Emeka refused to touch his wife. The sense is more metaphorical than physical. The sense of physically touching the wife is not usually portrayed in the Igbo man’s worldview. The two senses usually derived from (10bii), with the help of contexts of use, are:

(1) That Emeka refused to make love to his wife

(2) That Emeka refused to beat his wife

However, it is the context of the discussion that can disambiguate the two senses. Another physical extended meaning of méto involves a change of state through touching. Observe examples (10c - d) where physical contact leads to the original state or an entity changing. In (10c), the touch changed the state of the book. Nevertheless, in (10d), the speaker did not want anything to be changed from its original state, hence, the warning. In (10e), Jehovah gave the speaker a new life. In other words, the spiritual life of the person involved is now affected (maybe, from a sinner to a delivered person). Likewise, in (10f), the death of somebody affected the speaker’s feeling from maybe happiness to sorrow, compassion, and pity among others. The same goes for (10g), where the appeal was quite emotive, and the person in question was moved to give out something. In (10h), we have a physical contact situation that affects the emotions. Uche touched the speaker physically, but the contact had a strong emotional effect on the speaker's cognitive domain to the extent of inability to sleep. Metaphorically also, (10i) means “closeness”. When people are close to one another physically, conceptually, it gives them a sense of togetherness and a common goal. Finally, another metaphorical meaning is “not to get involved” as in (10j)—refusal to be part of something triggered by context.
5. Summary of the findings
In section 4, we presented and analysed many utterances bearing the physical meanings and metaphorical senses of the five sense modalities of Igbo perception verbs. Generally, each of these five senses has a prototypical physical meaning because it is the primary or central meaning that the perception verb conveys. This finding is also in line with Sweetser’s (1990) observation when she posits that the meaning’ vision’ is primary in the verb “see”. Likewise, the meaning “hear” is the primary meaning of “understand, obey,” among others. The prototypical meanings fished out in the present study are: see, look, hear, listen, smell, taste, and touch. However, in the sense modality of vision, involving hö(see) and lé(look at), the metaphorical senses are: meet, discover, visit, make sure, thank, respect, observe among others, (see, section 4.1). “To pay attention”, “heed”, “obey”, “be informed”, “get absurd information”, “bear witness”, “get one’s opinion”, “hear someone out”, “being expectant”, “eavesdropping” among others are the metaphorical senses observed and discussed in the sense modality of hearing involving nú (hear) and gè (listen).

In the sense modality of taste nú útò (perceive taste), the three metaphorical senses discovered and discussed are: “experience something”, “enjoy” and “produce a feeling”. For the sense of smell, nú isì (perceive smell), “guess”, “suspect” and “foresee” are the metaphorical senses identified and discussed. Finally, in the sense modality of touch métù, the metaphorical senses “partake” or “not partake in something”; “change the state of something”; “be close” and “not getting involved,” are fished out and discussed.

Our data analysis shows that senses of the Igbo perception verbs evolve from a physical domain to a more abstract domain, hence, the semantic extension of meanings. The five Igbo perception verbs treated, fall within two domains, physical and conceptual. In other words, these verbs do not only encode the acquisition of sense data through the eyes, ears, tongue, nose and skin but also the mental manifestation of information gathered physically by these organs, conceived and carried out based on contexts of use. In some utterances (4f, j-l), the extensional suffixes attached to the perception verbs trigger the semantic extension. In contrast, in example (3), the complements taken by the perception verbs become responsible for the extended meaning. Nevertheless, in all the extended metaphorical senses presented and discussed, the contexts of usage play a vital role (either with the extensional suffixes attached or with the complement taken by the verb); hence, the vital role of pragmatics in the conceptualisation of senses of Igbo perception verbs.

Based on the study’s findings, the role of pragmatics in meaning realisation cannot be over-emphasised in the Igbo language. This is because our assessment of what someone means in a particular situation, that is, the actual senses in our utterances, depends not only on what is said. It also depends on aspects of the context of its saying and assessing the information and beliefs we share with the speaker as members of a speech community. Again, it is evident from the findings that the differences in meaning do not come only from the content of what is said but also from the operation of general pragmatic principles acting on the utterances. The findings are also in line with Grice’s (1989) remarks that pragmatic processes of disambiguation and reference assignment to indexical expressions must be considered before the sentence’s truth conditions can be assessed.

Our findings also support Recanati’s (2005, 2010) contextualism view that semantic analysis takes us only part of the way towards the recovery of utterance meaning, and pragmatic enrichment completes this process. In other words, the logical form becomes enriched as a result of pragmatic inference and the entire semantic-pragmatic product becomes subjected to the truth-conditional analysis. Moreover, from close observation of the presented and analysed, the entire conceptual/metaphoric and figurative senses realised support the above claim.

In summary, cognitive semantics and pragmatics are two sides of the same coin. Both focus on language, language use, the users, and their conditions of language use. According to Mey (2006, p. 290), “the language user is not just one who possesses certain facilities (either innate or acquired or both) to be developed mainly in individual growth and
evolution.” In the semantic-pragmatic approach, such development depends on specific social factors like the family, the church, school, peer groups, educational institutions, cultural groups etc., that influence the use of language at both the primary acquisition stage and later in life. According to mentalism, it is not just the development of language faculty stimulated during the critical period of language acquisition. The social aspects of language use are also in-built on the very foundations of language acquisition and use. It is difficult to draw a neat line of demarcation between the purely mentalistic viewpoint and pragmatics or detect and determine the quantity of each that affects language development and use.

Therefore, the determining factors in the senses of Igbo perception verbs are the semantic content of the verbs, their pragmatic properties, and the primary cognitive modalities whose interaction gives birth to the truth conditions, which express how sentences relate to circumstances in the world. Also, the introduction of pragmatics in the study of meaning unconsciously resolves the ambiguity problem that usually crops up in the study of senses of words and expressions.

If we then consider the Igbo perception verbs: hú, lè, nú, gè, nú(òtò), nú(òsù) and mé, their uses from our findings appeal to some contextual features of the domains in which they are used to establish the referents. Without the verbs having an appeal to some pragmatic features of contexts of the utterances, the referents of the verbs cannot be established; without the establishment of the referents, the utterances where the verbs occur are not truth-evaluable.

Again, since meaning is one of the essential components of linguistic analysis, communicative competence and pragmatic competence are involved. In communicative competence, according to Nordquist (2017), emphasis is on both the tacit knowledge of languages and the ability to use them effectively, which reflects the shift from form to function. However, in pragmatic competence, which Chomsky (1980, p. 225) even accepts when he says that language is used purposefully, in his later studies, is the knowledge of how language is related to the situation (context) in which it is used. Specifically, Chomsky says that pragmatic competence “ ... places language in the institutional setting of its use, relating intentions and purpose to the linguistic means at hand.” Therefore, when the semantic and pragmatic contents of languages are analysed, we discover the realities expressed in human language through the study of meaning.

Furthermore, the argument for or against the transitivity, complementation or ergativity of Igbo verbs is resolved (see, Nwachukwu, 1987 & Emenanjo, 2005). This is because it is the pragmatic content of the verbs when added to the semantic and cognitive contents that provides the actual senses in the Igbo verb roots. Hitherto, the pragmatic aspect of Igbo verbs was neglected by previous studies. Finally, our findings have shown that the semantic-pragmatic approach to handling the meanings of words and expressions is more ambitious and promising than previous approaches.

6. Conclusion
Two things (at least literally) are evident from the findings of this study. The first is that some utterances are fished out and analysed from our corpora, and these utterances are made up of words. Secondly, the utterances have meanings (physical and metaphorical). Now, the question raised in this study is how does the semantic content of words interact with the pragmatic content to arrive at the sense of words? In other words, is there any relationship between the semantic content of words in an utterance and the conceptualisation of the words by Igbo native speakers in various contexts of use?

In order to answer this question correctly, it is pertinent to know that: (1) words in an utterance are used by members of a speech community to express happenings around them in the form of language. So, words are not mere tags on entities; instead, they are arranged and used based on their interaction with the environment; (2) these words are used by human beings in their
environment. Hence, they are called language users through the social use of language. Based on this analogy, it then means that society will not be in existence without words because there will be nothing to showcase society and express things that happen in society. On the other hand, without society, the words will have nothing to express.

Therefore, the answer to the question raised in this study is that words and the social environments they express cannot do without each other. Again, human beings, whose activities in the world the words express, are thinking beings that understand one thing by way of another, not just one-way thinking beings. In other words, human beings, through words, try to conceive happenings in their social environment based on analogies (as thinking beings). So, they assign meanings to words. These words provide utterance meanings that could be physical/concrete or metaphorical/figurative, depending on the human analogy of the social activity the words are expressing in different social environments. Therefore, in this study, psychologism is seen as part of pragmatics, and metaphor, which deals with language conceptualisation) cannot be divorced from cognition.

In this article, therefore, we have re-oriented the study of senses of words and expressions in Igbo linguistics, using the Igbo verbs of perception. We did this by showing that structurally, the senses of Igbo verbs as single roots that occur primarily as parts of ultimately expressed sentences have both formal and contextual characteristics. This is because the restrictions under which these verb roots are combined with affixes and complements are not definable by syntax or selectional restrictions alone; pragmatics plays a vital role. It buttresses the point that knowledge is socially construed within particular contexts rather than only as a sequence of verbs, adjectives, adverbs, and nouns to be learnt. In other words, meanings of words are understood “by first understanding the background frames that motivated the concept that the word encodes.” So, “… word, and word senses are not related to each other directly, word to word, but … by way of the links to common background pragmatic frames and indications of how their meanings highlight particular elements of such frames (see, Fillmore & Atkins, 1992, pp. 76–77). Meaning in Igbo, therefore, is not arrived at by analysing only the linguistic properties of language. It has linguistic, cognitive and pragmatic explanations, which are built in the language.

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List of abbreviations
1. PRO - pronoun
2. PST - past
3. CONJ-conjunction
4. PL-plural maker
5. PREP-preposition
6. AUX-auxiliary
7. NEG-negative marker
8. IMP-imperative marker
9. COMP-complementiser
10. DEM-demonstrative
11. A-agentive
12. STA-stative morpheme
13. INF-infinitive
14. PART-Participle
15. IMPR-PRO Impersonal pronoun
16. PERF-Perfective marker
17. REL-PRO Relative pronoun
18. V-Igbo past tense marker
(where r is constant and V may be any of the eight Igbo vowels)

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