

A SOCIO-LINGUISTIC STUDY OF ENGLISH AND IBIBIO IDIOMS

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Abstract

This study examined selected English and Ibibio idioms with a view to showing, through sociolinguistic tools how English-Ibibio bilinguals leverage on linguistic and socio-cultural hints in their understanding and interpretation of idioms. The study, among other objectives, sought to show how idioms can be deployed to meet specific communication needs of Ibibio-English bilinguals. It also indicated how the occupational and economic potentials of English and Ibibio people are revealed through the use of idioms, how the historical, mythical, beliefs and socio-cultural practices of English and Ibibio people are revealed through the use of idioms. The study is also to show whether there are idioms in the two languages for the expression of worldviews and whether there are English idioms that can express the same thoughts and propositions as Ibibio idioms. The data for the study comprised eight (8) extracts that contained four idioms each for English and Ibibio languages. The extracts were sourced from a combination of audience participant's Observation Method, Face-To-Face-Communication (FTFC) and data from purposive reading of online and hard copies of some Nigerian Newspapers comprising the Vanguard and the Punch, newspapers. The data obtained were analyzed following Dell Hyme's SPEAKING model and they yielded findings that showed that idioms fulfil different social and linguistic functions like, admonition, appeal, criticism, mockery, resentment, compliment, praise, encouragement, instruction, knowledge, and giving information. Findings also revealed that the interaction of idioms within a language through sociolinguistic tools can meet specific communication needs of speakers and that through idioms, the occupational and economic lives of a people can be revealed.

Keywords: Idioms, Ibibio, English, Sociolinguistics and SPEAKING

1.1 Introduction

Language is a cultural phenomenon and it differs according to society. So, with English as a second language in Nigeria, everyone who wishes to be proficient in it in addition to his/her mother tongue is expected to be familiar with its intricacies, especially in the use of idioms. Idioms are special linguistic phenomena present in every language and no one can have mastery in a second language without being familiar with its idiomatic expressions. So, how can Ibibio- English bilinguals who want to be versed in English overcome the apparent difficulty posed not just by the linguistic differences, but also by the socio-cultural differences between English and Ibibio languages?

In spite of the benefits of understanding idioms, they are often difficult to process especially with second language users. The situation is that speakers who are not versed in a second language often resort to a direct transfer of the linguistic canons and concepts of their first language into the second language. Characteristically, this is the situation of the Ibibio speakers who are not proficient in their use of English. The researcher therefore agrees with Cooper's (1998) view that, "since idiomatic expressions are so frequently encountered in both spoken and written discourse(s), they require special attention in language programs, and should not be relegated to a position of secondary importance in the curriculum" p219. And as noted by Mrowa-Hopkins and Strambi (2005):

...evidence suggests that intercultural awareness is rarely developed in the absence of specific training or personal reflection. Therefore, it is essential to make these rules more explicit through awareness raising activities in order to provide L2 learners with opportunities to fully develop their competence in the target-language culture (p.49).

It is against this backdrop that the researcher undertook this sociolinguistic study, which reiterates that linguistic context, situation, societal norms, participants, beliefs, events, environments, socio-cultural hints etc. can interact with language to enhance understanding and interpretation of idioms. Studying English idioms alongside Ibibio is beneficial because the two languages are likely going to be used for a lifetime by the Ibibio-English bilinguals. The study is also an attempt at preserving Ibibio

language and its culture in the face of minority languages' going into extinction by the day. Eight (8) extracts containing English and Ibibio idioms sourced through Participant Observation Method and Face-To-Face Communication, online and hard copies from newspapers form the data for the study with Dell Hymes' (1974) *Ethnography of Communication* and his *SPEAKING* as the analytical model. It is the belief of the researcher that this study will expose the Ibibio-English bilinguals to know how to maximize linguistic, contextual and socio-cultural hints to their advantage in their use of English idioms.

The objective of the study is to identify how the use of idioms within the language system of a society to meet specific communication needs and meaning interpretation using insights from sociolinguistics.

1.2 Statement of Problem

Over the years, considerable attention has been paid to the study of idioms. Among them, Bargmann and Sailer (2018), Dabrowska (2018), Niswati (2018), Udosen, Offiong and Ekah (2017) and Yosivofa (2013) explored the syntactic perspective. Ogunwale (2012), and Teilanyo (2014) studied idioms from the semantic level and Delano (1963) studied idioms but more or less as a review of different scholastic works, while Akpabio (1994) and Udoidiong (2007) did a compilation of idioms. Lawal (1997) did a pragma-sociolinguistic study of idioms but used Speech Act as its analytical tool.

In sum, it appears that only the linguistic branches of semantics, morphological and syntactic analyses of idioms have been frequently favoured by the studies while not much, to the best of the researcher's knowledge, has been undertaken from a sociolinguistic approach which is of the view that linguistic contexts, sociocultural factors, beliefs, events, participants, situation are factors that constrain the way language and its idiomatic expressions are used and subsequently interpreted. Also, none of the earlier mentioned studies adopted the *SPEAKING* analytical model which explains how both linguistic and nonlinguistic hints - occasion, scene, setting, societal norms, discourse type, tone, participants, level of formality, situations can enhance the understanding and interpretation of idioms. These are the gaps the present study seeks to fill.

2.1 Review of Literature

2.1.1 Sociolinguistics

Basically, sociolinguistics is the study of language behaviour due to socio-cultural effects. Bell (2013); Chambers, (2008); Crystal, (1987); Holmes, (1992); Hudson, (1996); Meyerhoff, (2006); Spolsky (2010); Trudgill, (2000); Van Dijk (2009) and Wardhaugh (2010) etc. are unanimous that the main concern of sociolinguistics is the connection between language and the society. Their assertions are with the premise that using language within a society is governed by cultural practices, norms, values, intention, expectations, belief, situation, social status, age, family, gender, ethnicity, level of education and that as society varies, so are the cultural practices including the manner of conveying information to meet their communication needs.

The study of sociolinguistics is speculated to have begun with Hudson in (1939) but currently in linguistics, it is traced to Nida (1949) and later made prominent in the 1960s through the works of Labov in the US and Bernstein in the UK. Irrespective of how it started, what is significant is that as a field of linguistic study, its content has contributed in no small measure to the development of languages. Sociolinguistics is not only concerned with the correlation between language and the society, it embraces the way certain linguistic structures like idioms are used to reflect the historical and socio-cultural experiences of its society.

Since social interactions are the hub of sociolinguistics, there must be a synchronization between the language use of the individual and the socio-cultural norms and expectations of the society (Lyons, 1981). For instance, in many parts of Africa including Nigeria particularly among the Yorubas, it is an aberration to greet an elder while standing. Also, except among the Hundus of Nepal and some parts of India and Ireland, it is derogatory and degrading in many societies to refer to a person as a “*dog*” or “*pig*” as it portends a morally reprehensible and a disgusting dirty unkempt person respectively. An African child will receive a very strict sanction for telling an adult or parent ‘*don’t be silly*’ as against what will happen in the western world.

According to Bell (1976), Hudson (1996) and Trudgill (2000), sociolinguistics also embodies the degree of formality or familiarity of the relationship between participants in a speech. While the formal forms apply to writings in formal situations and with unfamiliar people, the informal forms are used in non-formal writings and with familiar people. For

instance, in Nigerian society, “father” and “mother” are the formal forms for “papa/dad or daddy” and “ma/ mumsi/ mum / mama” as the informal forms, for mother respectively. Also, “K”, the eleventh letter of the English alphabet is now more commonly used in place of an amount up to a thousand naira and, the spices/condiment “pepper” is now understood particularly among the Yoruba youth of Nigeria to refer to money. More recent entries are *wotowoto and vawulence, sapa, promax, trenches*, for excess/plenty, to be troublesome, to be broke, extreme case, ghetto or rural area respectively.

Sociolinguistics in its wholesomeness is therefore a term that encapsulates sociology, culture and linguistics and the role languages play in the formation of social groups and institutions. Henslin and Nelson (1995); Giddens (1996); Indrani (1998); Akindele and Adegbite (1999); Trudgill (2000) and Zerihu (2005) refer to sociolinguistics as the politics of a particular community; what caused the discourse type, by whom, to whom, in whose presence, when, where, in what manner and under what social circumstances as well as what explains the laws, norms and principles governing human social interactions within a given society and their common culture.

2.1.2 Ibibio Language and its Speakers

The term, Ibibio, is an ethnoglossonym, a name used to describe the language as well as an ethnic group in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. The Ibibio people are estimated to be between three to six million people and are the fourth largest ethnic group in Nigeria after Hausa, Yoruba and Igbo (Essien, 1990). They are the dominant ethnic group in Akwa Ibom State and occupy Etinan, Ibiono Ibom, Ikono, Ikot Abasi, Itu, Ini, Mkpato Enin, Nsit Atai, Nsit-Ubium, Onna, Uruan and Uyo local Government Areas of Akwa Ibom State with Annang and Oro as their closest neighbours.

There are many but conflicting accounts of the origin of the Ibibio people. While Noah (1978) traced the root to Cameroon, Akpan (1983) and Johnson (2004) say that they came from the Central Benue Valley. And, to Essien (2001), the Ibibio people belong to the Sudanic Niger Congo group, but, Abasiattai (1991), quoted in Akpan (2000), claims the progenitors of the Ibibio had migrated from the Stone Age to settle in the Central Benue region - the home of the Proto-Bantu speaking people. These accounts are quite conflicting that scholars need to redirect their efforts toward an authentic linguistic origin.

Linguistically, Ibibio, the language of Ibibio people, is spoken in Uyo, Ikono, Ini, Itu, Ibiono Ibom, Ibesikpo Asutan, Etinan, Uruan, Nsit Ibom, Nsit Atai, Nsit Ubium, Mkpat Enin, Ikot Abasi, Eket, and Onna Local Government Areas of Akwa Ibom State. According to Greenberg's (1963) grouping in Essien (1990), the Ibibio language belongs to the Lower Cross group with variants of dialects that are mutually intelligible described by Urua (2003:p3) and Essien (1990: ix) as "Ibibiod" to indicate languages of the Lower Cross River. These groupings include Nkari, Itu Mbonuso, Obolo, Oron, Ito, Efik, Itu, Iwere/Ibuoro, Eket, Ibeno (Urua 2003). The Ibibio language is also classified into the Benue-Congo language family Connel (1994; 1995); Essien (2001); (Williamson, 1990) further classified Ibibio under the Lower Sub-Group of the Delta Group of the Cross River sub-branch of the Benue-Congo branch of the Niger-Congo sub-family of the Niger-Kordofonian language of Ibibiod comprising Annang, Efik, Ewang-Uda, Ekit Etebi, Mbo, Ekit, Iko, Itu Mbonuso, Ibiono, Ilue, Iburo, Ito, Ibeno, Oro, Okobo, Nkari, Ebughu, Ukwa of the Lower Cross (Essien, 2001). Varieties that are mutually intelligible like Annang and Efik spoken in parts of Akwa Ibom State and parts of Cross River State respectively are suggestive of a common origin with Ibibio (Urua, 2003). These are languages spoken across same geographical areas and differ slightly among neighbouring areas. They are languages Essien (1990); Connel (1994) and Urua (1995/1996) describe as "dialect clusters" though the dialect-language controversy of Annang, Efik and Ibibio has not yet been fully resolved.

Ibibio people like other ethnic groups in Nigeria have English as their official and second language and educationally, English is a major subject of study and a means of communication especially among the intellectuals - the educated Ibibios. In view of its second and official language status, attaining proficiency in it is of utmost importance. This explains why a study like this is undertaken not only to further expose the Ibibio native speakers to the tactics on the interpretation of idioms, but to improve on their overall command of English language.

2.1.3 Review on Idioms

Idioms are integral and important part of any language and a reflection of the culture, belief and custom of a people (Wright, 2002). Etymologically, an idiom is derived from two words 'idio' and '-ma' in Greek and Latin respectfully which translate to mean distinct, personal, peculiar to a language (Klein, 1966). An Idiom is usually known by its

inability to yield its meaning through knowledge of its component parts. According to Eyoh (2005: p1), idioms are “expression whose meaning is not decipherable through knowledge of the individual meanings of the constituent words, but lies subtly beyond the words and within the depth of the expression”. To Saeed (2003: p15), an idiom is a syntactic pattern peculiar to a certain language and hence often untranslatable in literal equivalents into another language while Fowler (1986: p.410) says idioms are expressions in any language whose meaning cannot be determined simply from words in them or whose component parts cannot be predicted by any rules of grammar. According to Lipka (1990: p.95), idiom is a, “formally complex lexemes that cannot be broken down into morphemes”. And to Ramachandrudu (2002: p. xxv), idiom is a “form of expression, construction, phrase etc., peculiar to a language, a peculiarity of phraseology approved by usage and often having a meaning other than its grammatical or logical one”.

Idioms therefore are eccentric and represent any expression that means something different from what the words may suggest and also violate conventional rules of grammar. Clearly, these definitions all point to a significant attribute of idiom: that whether in a single or multi-worded form, the meaning of an idiom cannot be known by knowing the meanings of the words individually. In the words of Saeed (2003: p.60) idioms are, “expressions where the individual words have ceased to have independent meaning”.

Katz and Postal 1963 In: Makkai, 1972: p.47 while differentiating between lexical and phrasal idioms, corroborate this fact and posit that, “the essential feature of an idiom is that its full meaning, and more generally the meaning of any sentence containing an idiomatic stretch, is not a compositional function of the meanings of the idiom’s elementary grammatical parts”. Their views are shared by Weinreich (1966); Healey (1968); Makkai (1972); Bolinga and Sears (1981); Palmer (1981); Fowler (1986) and others like Lipka (1990); Swan (1996); Saeed (2009) and who either see an idiom as some form of collocation, a lexeme, phrase, phrasal verbs, phonemes, and morphemes. Makkai (1972), while commenting on Hockett (1958) view of idiom in his book “*A Course in Modern Linguistics*” says that Hockett uses the term idiom as a cover for certain lexicographic and syntactic phenomena like proverbs, words, figures of speech, slang etc. saying that it is possible to treat the entire lexicon of a language as a collection of idioms. By assertion, he meant that any word or

phrase can function as an idiom depending on its usage. In the most common and traditional explanation, idioms are texts of any kind, words or expressions that are used figuratively and are understood only within a culture by speakers of the language to which that culture belongs, (Wright, 2002).

A very exhaustive definition of idiom that encapsulate the aesthetics and functions of idioms are those advanced by Smith (1925) a pioneer writer on the subject and Wales (2001), a later writer. According to Smith, idiom is, “the idiosyncrasies of our language, and, above all, those phrases which are verbal anomalies, which transgresses, ..., either the laws of grammar or the laws of logic’ (p168). According to Wales (2001), an idiom functions as, ...little sparks of life and energy in our speech; ...like those substances called vitamins which make our food nourishing and wholesome; diction deprived of idiom...soon becomes tasteless, dull, insipid” (pp. 276-277).

3.1 Theoretical Framework

This study relies on Dell Hymes’s (1974) Ethnography of Communication and his SPEAKING model as its analytical framework. The model is concerned with how to describe and analyze speech; how native speakers of a language will achieve competence during normal communication through the interaction of the participants, the subject matter, setting/scene, purpose of speech etc. (Johnson and Marcellino (2010). Hymes’s SPEAKING is a suitable model for the analysis of utterances particularly those of cross-cultural communication as in this study of English and Ibibio idioms.

3.2 Research Method

The researcher adopted the qualitative method of data analysis since the research aimed at discovering how situation and contexts aid in the interpretations of meanings of idioms made by the speakers. Data for the study were purposively elicited from online and hard copies of Newspapers, especially for the English idioms. Being purposive allows the researcher to select only respondents that are knowledgeable in the use of Ibibio idioms each containing four (4) idioms.

Table 1: Presentation of Data on English Idioms

S/N	Idiom	Pragma-sociolinguistic context	Occasion/Event	Source/Date
1.	Fanning the embers of discord	To incite people to cause trouble	Following the outbreak of the dreaded coronavirus, many people made claims, expositions and publications about it, some of which were considered inciting	Vanguard Newspaper, 26th March, 2020.
2.	Put the cart before the horse	To do things the wrong order	Tinubu's Spokesman and media aide, Mr. Tunde Rahman, condemned speculations of Tinubu's Muslim-Muslim ticket as being too early since Alhaji Tinubu is yet to declare his intension to contest for 2023 Presidential race.	Punch Newspaper, 6th January, 2022.
3.	Turn a new leaf	To make a change for the better	The Chairman/Chief Executive Officer of National Drug Law Enforcement Agency, NDLEA, Brig. Gen. Mohamed Marwa (Retd) speaks to all those still involved in illicit drugs.	Vanguard Newspaper, 2nd January, 2022
4.	Stem the tide	To stop a bad trend	Sylvester Oromoni, the JSS1 student of Downen College, Lekki died from injuries allegedly sustained from assault.	Vanguard Newspaper of 12th December, 2021.

4.1 Analysis of Data on the English Idioms

I. The Governor, however, enjoined all residents and citizens; including professional bodies, to desist from creating unnecessary panic within the state by propagating unverified news, and... *fanning the embers of discord*

for pecuniary or political gains. Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, Vanguard Newspaper, 26th March, 2020.

The socio-cultural setting of the idiom: In using firewood for cooking, air is intermittently blown into the fire to sustained the ember (heat) needed to get the food cooked. Here, instead of the fire to produce heat needed for the food to get cooked, it produces discord and disharmony. This idiom means to incite people to public violent disturbance.

Pragmatic setting - Situation: Following the outbreak of the dreaded coronavirus, Covid- 19, so many people including politicians made different claims, expositions and publications about the plague some of which were considered inciting and portrayed the government as being lackadaisical toward the safety of the people. In response, Governor Udom Emmanuel used the idiom while giving a second update to the state on coronavirus pandemic in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State capital. The speech appears in the Vanguard Newspaper of, 26th March, 2020. **Participants:** *Addressor* - Governor Udom Emmanuel of Akwa Ibom State; *Addressee* - All residents and citizens of Akwa Ibom State including all stakeholders.

End - To condemn unguarded utterances of people on the coronavirus pandemic.

Act sequence - *Fanning the embers of discord*

Key - Abhorring, appealing

Instrumentalities – Media broadcast, written.

Norms - The Governor has a clear information to pass to the citizens and all stakeholders in the state as such, there is no turn taking, hesitating, silent pauses or jokes. The situation is formal and the language used is formal also.

Genre – Editorial.

II. When he makes that declaration, other things will follow. Until he does that, I will advise that we don't speculate on his presidential pairing. To do that will be tantamount to *putting the cart before horse*.

Socio-cultural setting of the idiom: A cart is a two-wheeled vehicle usually driven by a horse. To pull the cart, the horse has to be in front and the cart behind. It is impossible for the reverse to be the case. As an idiom, to put the cart before the horse means to do things contrary to the natural effective sequence.

Pragmatic setting- Situation: There is speculation that the All Progressives Congress (APC) National Leader, Bola Tinubu, a Muslim, will be picking an equally Muslim Running mate if he emerges the APC Presidential winner ahead of the 2023 Presidential election. Tinubu's Spokesman and media aide, Mr. Tunde Rahman, condemned the speculation as being too early since according to him, Alhaji Tinubu is yet to officially declare his intention to contest for the 2023 Presidential race. The idiom is contained in a telephone conversation to Punch Newspaper Correspondent on the 6th January, 2022.

Participants: - *Addressor* - Tinubu's Spokesman and Media Aide, Mr. Tunde Rahman *Addressee* – The Christians Community in Nigeria.

End - To condemn the speculations against Alhaji Bola Tinubu.

Act sequence – *putting the cart before horse*.

Key- Condemning, assuredly, alluring.

Instrumentalities - Telephone conversation, written.

Norms - The speaker is calm but firm in debunking the speculation by the political class against, his boss, the APC National Leader.

Genre – Editorial.

III. The Chairman/Executive Officer of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency, NDLEA, Brig. Gen. Mohamed Buba Marwa (Retd) has asked all those still involved in the illicit drug business to *turn over a new leaf* or risk losing their freedom and assets in the New Year.

Socio-cultural setting of the idiom: The expression alludes to the time when pages of books were referred to as leaves. So, that each new page was a brand new clean spotless page. The idiom means to have a positive change of attitude and behaviour.

Pragmatic setting-Situations: In lieu of increase in consumption of psychoactive drugs and its attendant increase of emotional harm among the youths and other consumers, the NDLEA have been working hard to discourage the growing, manufacturing, selling, consumption or trafficking of these dangerous substances in Nigeria. The outfit's Chairman used the idiom to advise all those still involved in the illicit drug to change for the better. The utterance was contained in his New Year message published in Vanguard Newspaper of 2nd January, 2022. **Participants:** - *Addressor* -

Brig. Gen. Mohamed Buba Marwa (Rtd), The Chairman//Chief Executive Officer of NDLEA; *Addressee* - Consumers of hard drugs, drug cartels, drug barons and traffickers.

End -To advise dealers and consumers of hard drugs to stop it.

Act sequence: *Turn a new leaf.*

Key - Appeal, aggressive, forceful, hard, firm.

Instrumentalities - Verbal, Written.

Norms: The speaker is a person in authority and speaks to exerts power in addressing his subordinates and perceived offenders. The speech is formal, loaded with drug related registers. The language is formal too.

Genre – Editorial.

IV. Anti-cult experts and mentors are to be deployed in Lagos State public secondary schools from January next year *to stem the tide* of social vices ravaging schools in the State.

Socio-cultural setting of the idiom: The idiom alludes to nautical occurrences. Tide is the alternate rise and fall of the surface of the sea controlled due to elemental forces and usually, require great and conscious efforts to curtail it. The idiom means to stop or end a negative trend.

Pragmatic setting-Situation: The death of Sylvester Oromoni, the twelve years old JSS1 student of Downen College, Lekki, Lagos State, who died from injuries allegedly sustained from assault by some students for allegedly refusal to join a cult group, awaken deep concern among Nigerians. The idiom was used to call on individuals and organizations to help curb the growing trend of bullying and cultism in schools. Report from Adesina Wahap, a Correspondence of Vanguard Newspaper for 12th December, 2021.

Participants:- *Addressor* - Adeyemi Temidayo, the Executive Director/Founder of the group and the Catalyst Men International Lagos; *Addressee* - Lagos State Public Secondary Schools; **End** - To assure students, parents and all stakeholders of safety in public schools in the state; **Act sequence** - *To stem the tide* of social vices ravaging schools in the state.

Key - Assuredly, appeal, moody, unhappy.

Instrumentalities - Letter, Newspaper Publication.

Norms - The speaker is sympathetic as a result of the death of Sylvester Oronomi so, his statements are full of words depicting pity and appeal.

Genre – Editorial.

Table 2: Presentation of Data on Ibibio Idioms

S/N	Idiom	Literal Meaning	Pragmatics	Occasion/Event	Source/Date
1.	Mbòk nsuuk ke utaatan	Please drop me on the sand	A plea for mercy	A sister pleads with her brother to stop nagging over an umbrella.	Ikot Mbon Ikon village, 9th May, 2022.
2.	Ku uñkọñ ke kross akpọ iwa	Do not crucify me on cassava stem	Warning against being castigated	A woman is being castigated not participating in the weekly cleanup exercise.	Umoren's Castle, Ukpom Anwan, 23rd December, 2021.
3.	Unam afo akọrọ asippe	To wipe off (sweat)	To cause someone serious agony	A man bridged the agreement of contract with a tricycle owner and the owner threatened to get him arrested.	In the afternoon at daddy Innocent's compound, 3rd February, 2021.
4.	Afehesa ñ	Run walk	To cause an emergency	An aunty is scared of the consequence of the smell of gas in the house.	Evening of Thursday 8th April 2021,

4.2 Analysis of Data on the Ibibio Idioms

I. Enoima, Enoima, what? mbòk ensuuk ke **utatan** oh; (*Enoima Enoima, What? Please spare me the trouble oh*)

Literal meaning: Sand

Socio-cultural setting of the idiom: The speaker compares the pain of being nagged to a fall on a hard ground and therefore pleads that her brother should drop her on the sand ‘utatan’ where the pain of landing will be minimal. The idiom is a mock plea for mercy.

Pragmatic setting - Situation: A brother is nagging his sister over an umbrella then the sister used the idiom to plead for mercy. Ikot Mbom Ikono, Sunday evening, 9th May, 2022 in the veranda of a house.

Participants: - *Addressor* – Enoima; *Addressee* – Joshua.

Ends -To stop the brother from further nagging.

Act sequence - *Ensuuk ke utatan (Drop me on the Sand).*

Key – Angry.

Instrumentality – Verbal

Norms - The text is a nagging by an older child to her young sister so; it is nominated by the older one with lots of rhetorical questions. As a mere banter of words between two young siblings, abusive words are merely name calling. The situation is informal and the language very informal too

Genre – Quarrel.

II. Uñwana, nsidat ukeed mbimme ami idi? Kuuñkoñ ke **kross akpo-iwa** do. Afo ado anyineka Voltron or mme ado anwan? (*Uñwana, what brought all these questioning? Come and crucify me with cassava stem then. Are you Voltron’s sister or the wife?*)

Literal meaning: Cross cassava.

Socio-cultural setting of the idiom: The idiom alludes to the crucifixion of Jesus Christ on the cross. The cross according to bible scholars, was made of a very strong wood but the cross here is made of a cassava stem. The idiom means a warning against being castigated. **Pragmatic setting - Situation:** Women are gathered at Voltron’s Castle to receive some handouts but one of them is castigated for her refusal to participate in the weekly clean ups. In defiance, she uses the idiom to warn those troubling her to cease from it. Umoren’s Castle, Ukpom Anwan, 23rd December, 2021 in the afternoon.

Participants: - *Addressor* - Mma Jenny; *Addressee* – Uñwana; *Ends* – To mock those nagging her.

Act sequence –*ku uñkoñ ke kross akpo-iwa (Cross of cassava stem).*

Key - Defiantly, daring, challenging.

Instrumentality – Verbal.

Norms – The text is an argument against a defaulter so is laced with rhetorical questions, interruptions, silent pauses, The hesitations from Mma Jenny is due to her vulnerability in the sharing exercise. Code-mixing is very minimal because the women are not well exposed to the English language.

Genre – Argument.

III. Amesimme aboḥo, infact, mmekeme inam afo akḥḥo asippe ke police station tutu afo akpe akpatre penny mmi. (*You are very stupid, in fact, I can cause an excruciating pain in the police station until you pay me my last penny*)

Literal meaning: Clean off.

Socio-cultural setting of the idiom: Sweat indicates hard labour so, it is natural for the person sweating to wipe it off. To force someone to wipe his/her sweat is an idiomatic expression and means to inflict serious agony on someone.

Pragmatic setting - Situation: A young man defaulted in the tricycle hire purchase agreement he had with the owner who then used the idiom to mean that he can cause the rider to suffer severely. Afternoon at Daddy Innocent's compound at London Opi Street, 3rd February, 2021.

Participants: - *Addressor* - Daddy Inno; *Addressee* - Idorenyin, the tricycle rider.

Ends-To threaten and to warn the boy of the consequences of his failure to remit the agreed amount.

Act sequence – *mmekemme unam afo akḥḥo asippe.*

Key – Angry.

Instrumentality– verbal; *Norms* - The text is mainly a burst of anger from a man to a youth as shown in the sentences long and flowing sentences. Repetitions and rhetorical questions all help to show the depth to which the boy has failed in the contract promise.

Genre – Quarrel.

IV. Kase ayin ami, anie ikudoñ? Esther, *ku unşın mien ke fehesañ mbok. Akeyem isin ikañ ke ufok?* (*See this child! Who sent you? Esther, don't cause emergency please. Did you want to set the house ablaze?*)

Literal meaning: Running.

Socio-cultural setting of the idiom: Except in sport, running depicts urgency. It is used here as an idiom to mean an emergency.

Pragmatic setting - Situation: The smell of gas draws the attention of the aunty to discover that the girl had opened all the burners on the cooker. Afraid of the consequences, she used the idiom to warn the girl of trying to cause an emergency. Evening of Thursday 8th April 2021. **Participants:** - *Addressor* - Auntie Idong; *Addressee* – Esther, a maid.

Ends - To warn her of the consequence of her carelessness.

Act sequence - *ku unsiñ mien ke fehesañ mbòk.*

Key -Terror, awe.

Instrumentality – verbal.

Norms - The conversation is between a terrified adult and an equally little child. The absence of much talking in the conversation is due to the severity of the perceived consequence.

Genre – Problem talk.

4.3 Discussion of Findings

This study presents the analysis of each of the data following Dell Hymes' (1974) Ethnography of Communication and his SPEAKING analytical tool. Each analysis is preceded by an extract that contains each idiom contained in the tables above (TABLES 1 &2).

Major findings reveal that the use of idioms through the apparatus of sociolinguistics meets the communicative needs of English and Ibibio speakers. The study also shows idioms as means that reveals the occupational and economic lives of the English and Ibibio people as well as for the expression of speakers' worldviews. The study also shows that through idioms, the historical, traditional and cultural lives of the English and Ibibio people are revealed. Additionally, the study shows that like semantic compliance linguistic structures, idioms can also be used to admonish, instruct, warn, appeal, criticize, mock, inform, assert, praise, compliment and encourage.

4.4 Conclusion

In conclusion, it has been observed that the interaction of idioms through sociolinguistics and SPEAKING can fulfil different social and linguistic functions like, admonition, appeal, criticism, mockery, resentment, encouragement, praise as well as give someone compliments just like any semantic compliance structures. The study also shows that the interaction of idioms within a language through sociolinguistics can meet specific communication needs of English and Ibibio speakers.

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