Semantic Prosody of the Verb Root -*gbú* 'kill' in Ìgbò

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Abstract
Semantic prosody (SP) involves the typical behaviour of words in lexical patterning and its tendency to line up with either positive or negative words. This work seeks to investigate the SP of the Igbo verb root gbú 'kill' in a bid to ascertain its propensity towards its collocates. Using the AntConc software to extract the data from the Igbo version of Things Fall Apart by Chinua Achebe translated by Izuu Nwankwo, as well as adopting the Sinclarian approach/extended unit of meaning-oriented approach, the concordance result for the verb root gbú 'kill' reveals that there is preponderance of the collocates of the verb root co-occurring mostly with proper, common noun and abstract nouns with similar semantic features having negative aura of meaning such as war and suicide and things referring to related unfavourable-sounding state of affairs. The sense of negativity is retained in the compound construction that involves the verb, while the lexical environment of the verb depicts unfavourable events of fear, revenge, war, suicide, great depression. It can be concluded that, in spite of the strong negative SP of the verb gbú, it also has some positive meanings which are used in the idiomatic sense.
Keywords: Semantic Prosody, Collocation, Concordance, Lexical Semantics, Phraseology

1.0 Introduction
The concept of semantic prosody springs from studies of collocations. Collocation has to do with words that are often used together in a language. In other words, it relates to a word's selection of contiguous

words. According to Firth (1957:179), collocation refers to '…the company a word keeps'. There are some words that freely combine with other words, while some combinations are fixed as in idioms (i.e. group of words whose meaning cannot be predicted from the meanings of the constituent words). Some other combinations are explained by semantic selectional rules. The concept of SP within Sinclair's (1996, 1998) approach of extended unit of meaning proposes four types of co-occurrence relations in extended lexico-semantic units which involves four levels such as collocation, colligation, semantic preference and semantic prosody. Collocation has to do with the lexical choices of words, the colligational pattern of words refers to the "grammatical company a word keeps or maintains and the position it prefers" (Hoey, 2000:234). Colligation, therefore, is a form of collocation in which the relationship of words or phrases involve the grammatical level rather than lexical. On the other hand, semantic preference has to do with the formal patterning with a semantic field; that is to say, the relation between a word form and set of semantically related words. SP is defined from the functional perspective in this approach. It is the typical behaviour of words in lexical patterning and its tendency to line up with either positive or negative words.

This study examines the SP of the Igbo verb root *gbu* 'kill' in order to explore the lexical and/or grammatical patterns and its extended units of meaning since the study of SP has not been explored in Igbo. The motivating thought for this study is simply that the verb root under study is associated both with unfavourable and/or favourable semantic prosody. The effort is to address the fact that there is need to examine and investigate the different collocational patterns and phrasal words associated with this verb root which are mostly ignored in dictionaries. Some efforts have been made to investigate the many meanings of a verb in Igbo. These approaches range from syntactic (Nwachukwu 1983, 1984, 1987; Mbah 1999),

semantic (Emenanjo 1975, 1978, 2005, 2015; Uwalaka, 1983, 1988; Agbo, 2009, Agbo & Yuka, 2011; Obiamalu & Mbagwu, 2014; Agbo, 2015) and cognitive perspectives (Uchechukwu 2005, 2011; Mbah & Edeoga, 2012; Obitube, 2014; Ifeagwazi, 2014; Okeke, 2015). All these works are geared towards ascertaining the number of meanings that can be derived from the verb in relation to other constituents in a sentence. However, another semantic issue that has not been investigated by the above works is the fact that words do change their meanings when they co-occur with other related words and acquire the meanings of the surrounding words, which could be positive or negative. As a result, some lexical items denote positivity in one context and negative or neutral meaning in another. In addition, some cannot be inferred to have predominantly negative or positive meanings when they habitually co-occur with other lexical items. This neglected aspect in Igbo lexical semantics is best investigated as the phenomenon of semantic prosody whose existence has been confirmed in other languages but not in Igbo.

The rest of this work will be structured as follows: section 2 constitutes conceptual explication and the different perspectives on SP, while section 3 is the methodology; sections 4 and 5 form the data analysis and conclusion respectively.

2.0 Literature Review
This section discusses semantic prosody (SP) and the theoretical framework adopted for this study. The last section constitutes the empirical studies which involve a review of the works carried out in different languages on SP.

2.1. Semantic Prosody (SP)
Prosody, according to Berker, Hardie & McEnery (2006), is used to refer to (1) prosodic features of spoken language (such as speed, volume and pitch) which can be annotated in a corpus, allowing for a

more sophisticated analysis; (2) patterns in language that are revealed via corpus analysis (often via looking at concordances or collocations). This study is interested in the latter meaning of prosody, especially as it relates to semantic prosody.

The concept of SP, according to Stewart (2010), was first introduced to the public by Louw (1993) and was developed in Sinclair's (1996) later work in which Sinclair used the concept to refer to the idea that words collocate in language use with specific semantic groups as well as with individual words. Since then, it has become one of the important concepts in corpus linguistics and has attracted the attention of corpus linguists. Also, Stewart (2010) and Begagić (2013) note that the term was coined following Firth's (1957) work in "Prosodic Phonology" in which he describes the prosodic realisation of a phoneme. Prosody is used to refer to phonological colouring which spreads beyond semantic boundaries. For instance, the /k/ in *kangaroo* is pronounced and articulated differently from the /k/ in *keep* because during the realization of the consonants, the mouth is already making provision for the production of the next sound. Therefore, the /k/ of 'kangaroo' prepares for the production of /æ/ rather than /i:/ or any other sound by the process of 'phonological colouring'. This phenomenon of 'prosody' is also shared by lexical items in lexical patterning. This explains why Louw (1993:170) uses the concept of prosody to argue that some expressions prepare the reader/hearer for the production of what follows, which is sometimes something unfavourable. He illustrates SP with the expression *symptomatic of*' which he claims, prepares for the production of what follows i.e something undesirable (e.g *parental paralysis, management inadequacies, numerous disorder*). He therefore, concludes that the word has an unfavourable semantic prosody.

The SP of a lexical item is classified into three categories: positive, negative and neutral. The evaluative labels include: Stubbs (1996) "positive, negative neutral or mixed prosody"; Louw (1993)

"favourable/pleasant, unfavourable/unpleasant and mixed prosody"; Partington (2004) "favourable, neutral, and unfavourable prosodies". Elucidating on this, Zhang (2010) explains that if the collocates (i.e., the co-occurring words) that a node word (i.e., the target word is often called the 'node') attracts are mostly of strong negative semantic characteristics, the node word bears a strong negative prosody. If the collocates are mainly positive words, then the node word is endowed with a positive prosody. If both positive and negative collocates exist in the context, the node word can be said to bear a neutral or mixed prosody. Xiao and McEnery (2006:108) also point out that a pleasant or favourable affective meaning was labelled as positive, while unpleasant or unfavourable affective meaning was judged as negative. A neutral prosody simply means a context that provides no evidence of any SP from the lexical items/collocates surrounding the node word. McEnery and Hardie (2012:135) highlight that an item can have a positive or negative prosody. Also, "words or phrases are said to have a negative or positive SP if they typically co-occur with linguistic units that have negative or positive meaning". This study adopts Louw's (1993) use of the evaluatuative label: favourable and unfavourable.

In essence, Unaldi (2013) notes that the concept of semantic prosody which is a relatively new topic in linguistics, has the paradigm to move the concept of collocations a step further by determining the prosodic nature of lexical items as negative, positive or neutral. Gledhill (2012) lists semantic prosody as a type of collocation alongside lexical collocation, bound collocation, lexical phrase, lexicalization/delexicalisation, frameworks, lexical function and colligation. However, following Firth who uses the term as one of a contrastive pair: *collocation* for semantic association and *colligation* for syntactic association, Geeraerts (2010:171-72), succinctly explains that Sinclair (1991, 1996) gives the various levels at which the co-occurrence of words (and sets of words) may be defined. The four

levels distinguished by Sinclair are as follows: collocation (co-occurrence of words or word forms in a line of text), colligation (co-occurrence of grammatical choices), semantic preference (the relation between a node and a set of semantically related words), and semantic prosody (emotive or evaluative attitude expressed by the surrounding words).

The above explanations simply echo the co-occurrence and mutual relationships of words at different levels, in which SP is one of such levels. The next section explains the various perspectives of semantic prosody and Sinclair's approach which will form the basis for this current study.

2.1.1. Theoretical studies on Semantic Prosody
The different views presented in this section stem from the fact that scholars have tried to gain a full understanding of the concept of SP from functional, collocational and connotative perspectives. This section is on the different perspectives on SP and the particular perspective that shall be adopted for this study.

Various approaches have been proposed to provide insight into the ways in which words carry favourable/pleasant/negative meaning due to their frequent associations or collocations with other words. Thus, scholars have given definitions to the concept of SP such as 'an 'aura' of meaning' (Louw, 1993); 'halo of meaning', 'transferred meaning' (Bublitz, 1996); 'collocational prosody' (Louw, 2000; Stubbs, 2001a); 'evalutative intention' (Sinclair, 1996; Stubbs, 2001b); the 'property of an item' (Partington, 1998; Xiao & McEnery, 2006); and 'pragmatic and attitudinal meaning' (Sinclair, 2004). This section is an account of these different views.

Stubbs (1995) views SP as "becoming increasingly well documented that words may habitually collocate with other words from a definable semantic set". He defines SP as "a particular collocational phenomenon" and collocation as "the habitual co-

occurrence of two or more words (Stubbs, 1996:176). In discussing SP, Stubbs takes a synchronic approach, just like Sinclair, while simultaneously taking cognizance of the role of discourse. This explains why Stubbs (2001:65), uses the concept of 'discourse prosody' instead of SP to refer to "relating to the way that words or phrases, often reveal (hidden) attitudes." E.g., *happen* has a discourse prosody for unpleasant things. His emphasis is on the attitudinal quality associated with a word, that is to say, the expression of attitude of the speaker/writer towards some pragmatic situation. Thus, he defines discourse prosody as:

> The feature which extends over more than one unit in a linear string […]. Discourse prosodies express speaker's attitude. If you say that something is provided, then it implies that you approve of it. Since they are evaluative, prosodies often express the speaker's reason for making the utterance, and therefore identify functional discourse units (Stubbs 2001:65).

In his latter work, Stubbs (2009) uses the term to refer to relations that involve evaluative meaning. Partington (1998:68), however, has a slightly different view from Stubbs. Partington defines SP as "the spreading of connotational colouring beyond single word boundaries". From this perspective, a bolder emphasis is placed on the association between SP and connotations. His focus, as Stewart (2010:14) points out, is on distinguishing between similarities and dissimilarities of SP, connotations and the pedagogical issues of SP as represented in dictionaries.

According to Partington (2004:131-132), SP is a type of evaluative meaning which "spreads over a unit of language. It potentially goes well beyond the single orthographic word and is much evident to the naked eye". In other words, Partington views SP as a "type of evaluative meaning". He lays emphasis on the spreading of connotation of single words through word boundaries, since

semantic prosodies sometimes are interpretable in terms of connotations. Zhang (2013:64) explains how connotation relates to SP, according to him, connotation in its narrow sense is more consistent, obvious and often discussed in relation to individual words/items, while SP, as a product of collocation, is less consistent and likely to change with contexts as it is hidden in the collocational patterns of items and spreads over stretches of discourse.

However, Hunston (2007:257) is of the view that SP refers "not to simple co-occurrence, but to the consistent discourse function of the unit formed by a series of co-occurrences: the unit of meaning". The 'units of meaning' is the cluster of words. Sinclair (1996) refers to it as the cluster of words in a text that are bound together in a way i.e. the units of meaning are somewhere between words and sentences. He calls it: "extended units of meaning" and proposes four steps or levels to identify them.

Tognini-Bonelli argues that a unit is only truly functionally complete when the contextual and functional dimensions are merged, i.e. units where collocational and colligational patterning (that is lexical and grammatical choices respectively) are intertwined to build up a multi-word unit with a specific semantic preference, associating the formal patterning with a semantic field, and an identifiable SP, performing an attitudinal and pragmatic function in the discourse (Tognini-Bonelli, 2001:79). Sinclair's (1996) extended lexical units approach explains that "so strong are the occurrence tendencies of words, word classes, meanings and attitudes that we must widen our horizons and expect the units of meaning to be much more extensive and varied than is seen in a single word". Thus, in this approach, meaning cannot be said to belong to a single word, but to the phraseology as a whole (Hunston, 2002:141).

From a diachronic perspective, Louw (1993:164) states that "prosodies are undoubtedly the product of a long time of refinement through historical change". Louw (2000) later changed his focus from

his earlier (1993:157) article which defined SP as "a consistent aura of meaning with which a form is imbued by its collocates", but still retaining two themes in his later definition of SP. These themes according to Stewart (2010:14), are: semantic consistency of collocates and the attitudinal function of SP. According to Louw's later definition, SP is:

> a form of meaning which is established through the proximity of a consistent series of collocates, often characterizable as positive or negative, and whose primary function is the expression of the attitude of its speakers or writer towards some pragmatic situation. A secondary, though no less important attitudinal function of SPs is the creation of irony through the deliberate injection of a form which clashes with the prosody's consistent series of collocates (Louw, 2000:57).

In addition to providing an "aura of meaning" as being identifiable only by examining the repeated occurrences of a unit of meaning in corpus data, Louw (2000:57) adds that the primary function of SP is the expression of the attitude of its speaker or writers towards some pragmatic situation.

With regard to the synchronic approach, Tognini-Bonelli (2001:24 & 111) adopts the Sinclairian framework in which co-selection is the focus. She pays attention not only to the strict correlation between lexical and grammatical choices which forms part of Sinclair's extended unit of meaning, but also to the pragmatic dimension of SP that agrees with Sinclair's approach. Similarly, Sinclair (1996:87-88) explains that when the usage of a word gives an impression of an attitudinal or pragmatic meaning, it is called a SP. Alcaraz-Mármol and Almela (2016) explain that Sinclair's (1996) pragmatic perspective of SP has a pragmatic and attitudinal function, which normally constitute the speaker's reason for making the utterance.

Most scholars have adopted a synchronic approach which sees SP as an extending meaning, that is to say, as a feature which characterizes a group of items rather than a single item. Some of the definitions of SP are from this point of view such as Stubb's (2001a:65) explanation of SP as "a feature which extends over more than one unit in a linear string". In this sense, SP is described as a meaning which "belongs to or is distributed over a unit of language" (Stewart, 2010:53), ranging over several units or combinations of words (Sinclair, 2003). Thus, Sinclair (1996:94) extended unit of meaning approach holds that: firstly, meaning is typically dispersed over several word-forms which habitually co-occur in text and; secondly, these co-occurring word-forms 'share' semantic features. This study takes a synchronic approach following Stubbs' (2001:65) and Sinclair's (1996:94) approaches which see SP from the functional and collocation meaning perspectives.

2.2.   Empirical studies on Semantic Prosody

The studies on SP cut across the use of different language data such as monolingual data (Stubbs, 1995), comparable cross linguistic data (Berber Sardinha, 2000) and translational data (Ebeling, 2013) e.t.c, all of which fall under the different types of corpora: general domain corpora and technical/specialized texts and/or genre-specific corpora. This section reviews a few studies on SP that have been carried out with different types of corpora.

Studies on SP in English language and in some other languages abound, as observed by Xiao & McEnergy (2006:103). Although, a number of studies have been carried out on SP in English, fewer researches could be confirmed for other languages, especially with regard to contrasting the collocational behaviour of words and SP of synonyms.

Stewart (2010) investigates the verb *break out* in the British National Corpus (BNC) which shows semantic preference for

'situation of conflict', 'disease' or more broadly for 'problematic circumstances' and it is immediately followed by words such as *war, conflict, inflection, crisis*. He notes that since the verb cannot be classified as an item whose basic meaning is unfavourable, it is "considered to be associated with an unfavourable SP or 'aura of meaning', which is contingent upon its semantic preferences" (Stewart, 2010:3).

Sinclair (2003) uses *Naked Eye* as a core item to explain the unit of meaning. According to him, it has a semantic preference of 'visibility' since the top collocates in the third position are *see/seen* and *visible/invisible*, but verbs include *detect, apot, appear, perceive, view, recognize,* e.t.c and more adjectives include *apparent, evident, obvious, undetectable;* all combine in referring to (in) visibility and a SP of 'difficulty' as a result of frequent co-occurrence in the corpus such as *barely visible to, too faint to be seen with, invisible to, etc.* Also, for the core item *True Feelings,* Sinclair (2003, 2004: 35-36) notes that the phrase *true feelings* typically occurs in sequence such as *he may not want to admit his true feelings…,* which expresses a 'reluctance or inability' to talk about emotional matters, he notes that a colligation "possessive" is realized by a possessive adjective modifying the core in most instances, but in some cases it is replaced by the definite article *the* followed by an *of-phrase* on the other side of the core, for example, *of* is the next word immediately after the core or a few words away in some of the instances of the occurrence of *true feelings.* With regard to semantic preference, he says that a semantic preference of *'expression'* is seen through verbs such as *show, express, reveal, hide, share* and prosody of *'reluctance or difficulty'* as in *will never reveal, prevents one from expressing etc.*, which is usually placed to the left of the semantic preference. He therefore, concludes that all the phrases including verbs of expression include an element of *'reluctance or difficulty'* which he refers to as the semantic prosody. In addition, he says that English speakers use

the phrase with *true feelings* when they want to give the meaning of reluctance to express deeply felt emotions.

Contrastive studies have also been carried out in other languages using the equivalents of *cause* in English (Stubbs, 1995). Such studies confirm Stubbs' (1995) claims that 'cause' has a negative SP or 'unpleasant collocations' even in the languages compared by scholars whose focuses are on the implications of SP on translation versus language learning, for instance, Berber Sardinhas's (2000:97) study of the English-Portuguese cognates of *cause* and *causer* on the basis of comparable monolingual corpora for English and Portuguese reveals that *cause* and *causer* both share a negative SP.

A similar study was carried out with the English-Danish synonymous non-cognates 'cause' and 'forårsage' by Dam-Jensen & Zethsen (2006:1620). The study shows that there is extremely negative semantic profile of the Danish word *forårsage.*

Using the Freiburg-LOB corpus of British English (FLOB), the Freiburg-Brown Corpus of American English (Frown) and Lancaster Corpus of Mandarin Chinese (LCMC) and other supplementary corpora, Xiao and McEnery (2006) also explore the SP of near synonyms from a cross-linguistic perspective and compare the phenomenon of semantic prosodies existing in English-Chinese. The study not only observes that there are 287 instances of the word *cause* used as a verb, 223 instances where *cause* has a negative prosody, and 56 were neutral and 8 were positive; but that the *cause* group (including cause, bring about, lead to, etc. for English) has equivalents to that of Chinese. They conclude that "some close equivalents show very similar collocational behaviour and semantic prosodies in both languages" (Xiao & McEnery, 2006:120). They give examples of five near synonymous *cause*-words in Chinese that are of a negative semantic prosody and two words of a positive semantic prosody. They find out among others that, niangcheng

(酿成) 'cause' is essentially negative while zaocheng (造成) 'cause' is overwhelmingly negative. However, the latter shows such a strongly negative prosody that even an apparently neutral prosody may become negative. The study also shows that SP and semantic preference are as observable in Chinese as they are in English. While comparing the SP of near synonyms of English and Chinese, Xiao & McEnery (2006:125) note that collocation and SP may be affected by morphological variations in English but not in Chinese, which lacks such variation.

However, for cross linguistic tendencies of translation equivalents, Ebeling (2013), drawing her data from a bidirectional translation corpus using the English-Norwegian Parallel Corpus (ENPC), examines the word 'cause'. The study explores the negative SP of 'cause' in cross-linguistic perspective based on Stubb (1995) and Berber Sardinha (2000) study of 'cause'. It involves the analysis of both the noun and the verb uses of cause in order to determine their SP and lexicogrammatical patterns. Adopting the bidirectional contrastive method, the study reveals that there is no Norwegian correspondence that matches *cause* in terms of negative SP. Thus, the word *cause* offers a different kind of "real" data than monolingual (comparable) corpora, dictionaries and introspection. For instance, the most commonly used verb translation *få (x til å)* ('get (x to)') is typically used in neutral contexts in original texts of ENPC, rather than a negative prosody corresponding to that of *cause*. Although, the third most common verb correspondence, *føretil* 'lead to', has a preference for negative contexts, it is not used in such environments to the same degree as *cause*. Also, *føretil* is most commonly translated into *lead to* and not *cause*, which suggests that *føretil* and *cause* have different SPs. The study concludes that *cause* has a negative prosody in the language pair, but it has a stronger negative prosody in verb uses than in noun uses. The findings of Ebeling (2013) confirms Partington's (1998) and Tognini-Bonelli's (2001,

2002) observations that, there exist very few perfect cross-linguistic equivalents. In what follows, a presentation and analysis of the verb root *gbu* 'kill' will be discussed.

3.0 Methodology
The basic concordance tool (or KWIC index: Keyword-in-Context) used to extract the data from the Igbo novel is the *AntConc* concordance tools and a search for the verb *gbú* 'kill' gives the different morphological forms of the verb. This was sorted out and all the forms that are not relevant to the study do not constitute part of the analysis. That is to say, the study sifts out the occurrences by eliminating usages and/or concordance lines that are irrelevant to the investigation such as *nsogbu* 'problem', *onugbu* 'bitterleaf', *Ọkagbue* 'proper name', *Ogbuefi* 'proper name', *Ọkagbu* 'proper name', *ugbu a* 'now', *gburugburu* 'round' etc. The Extended Unit of Meaning approach was adopted for this study. In order to identify the lexical items in Extended Units of Meaning, all the concordance lines with the core item were scrutinized to get lexical and/or semantic patterning.

4.0 Data Analysis
This section involves a discussion of the morphological structure of the verb root *gbú* 'kill' in Igbo in relation to the approach adopted for the study.

4.1 Structure of the verb root *-gbú* 'kill' and its morphological Derivatives
The semantics of the concordance results for *gbú* predominantly involves people or things that are killed, will be killed, have been killed etc. Also, the sense of negativity in the core item is not lost even in the morphological processes. Mbah (1999) and Uchechukwu (2011) recognize simple verbs, compound verbs and verbal complex

or inherent complements verbs, while Mbah recognizes complex verbs.

With regard to the simple verb, it consists of one verb root and it has the structure of consonant-vowel (CV) e.g. of simple verbs are *-gbá* 'kick', *-gbú* 'kill', *zú* 'steal'. The affixation of any structure to the verb root does not change its category as a simple verb. It also does not allow structure in between the root consonant and the root vowels.

The above will be exemplified for simple structures with the data from the concordance lines.

A. **Simple Verb:**
1. O kwenyere   n'**igbu**   ndị   amụma Baalụ
   S/he believe-pst prep-inf-kill quant   prophets Baal
   'He believed in killing the prophets of Baal'

2. Nna   mụ o!   E   **gbuo**   fa mụ o!
   Father   my-Excl Ind.Pron. kill-imp   me-excl
   'My father! They have killed me!'

3. Ọ bụ oria   afọ   otuto   **gburu**   ya
   It is sickness stomach protruding kill-rv(pst) him/her
   'S/he died of swollen stomach'

Examples (1-3) show that the simple verbs consist of only one verb root and the addition of the prefix and suffix to the verb root as in e.gs (1) to form infinitive and in (2) and (3) respectively to form imperative and to mark past tense, do not alter its structure as a simple verb.

B. Compound Verbs

This verb structure involves a combination of two simple verb roots with no intervening linguistic structure in form of inflectional affixes occurring between the components of the compound verbs. Compound verbs also form stems for the addition of inflectional affixes. For compound verbs, we shall only discuss the verb + verb type.

The citation forms of the compound verb types found in the concordance are as follows:
-tígbú, *-tọ̀gbù*, *kwụ́gbú*, *-gbàgbú*, *-régbú*, *-gúgbú*, *-nyàgbu*, *-chágbú*, *-dọ́gbú*, *-chegbú*, *-gbútùó* etc. We shall give examples of some of them.

4. *tí* 'beat' + *gbú* 'kill' - *ítīgbū* 'to hit to death' (citation form - *tìgbú*)

   …Ọ ka **e-ti-gbu** ya n'aka ụbọchị afụ
   S/he mod. Mod-beat-kill him prep. hand day that
   '…He would have killed him that day'

   …Ka Agbala ghara iji iwe **ti-gbuo** gi
   Comp. god of Agbala mod inf-use anger strike-kill you
   '…So that the god of Agbala will not strike you to death'

5. *kwụ́* 'to strangle with rope' + *gbú* 'kill' - *íkwụ̄gbú* 'to strangle to death' (citation form - *kwụ̀gbú*)
   Kedu etu fa siri jide Anaeto **kwụ-gbuo** ya?
   How did they pass-rV catch Anaeto strangle-kill him
   'How did they catch and strangle Anaeto?'

6. *gbà* 'choke' + *gbú* 'kill' - *ị́gbàgbù* 'to choke/ suffocate' (citation form - *gbàgbú*)

Olu   ya nọ na-ama jijiji, okwu na-achọ **ị-gba-gbu**   ya
Voice pron. is tns-shake shaking word tns-trying inf-choke-kill him
'His voice was shaking; he was being choked by his words'

The above examples simply show that the verbs can be used independently but when used together, their semantics can be compositional and/or non compositional. However, with regard to – *gbú* 'kill', there is still a transfer of the unpleasant meaning in compound verbs even when they are translated.

C. Complex verbs

The complex verb comprises free verbs with at least one affix. The complex structure goes beyond the CV structure of the simple verb. It involves a combination of two simple verb roots or the combination of one simple verb root with a suffix. e.g *-gbá* 'spray/splash' + *sá* 'on/upon' - *igbāsá* 'to splash on' (citation form – *gbásá*); -gò 'buy' + té 'for' –gòté ' buy for'

7. gbunyekwuru

O   **gbu-nye-kwu-ru**   ha   otu   nwatakịrị?
S/he   kill-give-also-rV-past them   one   child
'Did they also include the killing of one child?

The suffix *kwu* adds to the meaning of the verb to show addition to the killing.

D. Verbal complex/Inherent complement verb

Verbal complex consists of a verb plus noun phrase or verb plus prepositional phrase e.g *igbā mmirī* 'to water (sth)' (cited as *gbá mmirī*). That is to say, it involves a combination of verb root and a meaning specifying noun complement which both occurs always together to form a semantic unit. Unlike, the compound verbs which

do not allow linguistic units between them because they are bound together to realize their meaning, the verbal complex are separable and other language structures can occur between the verb root and the Noun and prepositional complements.

8. Okonkwo maara   ka   e   si   ***egbu mmụọ mmadụ*** ibe ya
   Okonkwo know-rV comp pron how inf-kill mind person fellow pron
   'Okonkwo knows how to **discourage** his fellow human being.'

Example (8) gives an insight into the kind of language structure that co-occurs with the verb root –gbú *'kill'* which is mostly noun complement. It also shows that the semantics of the verb diverges in complex verbs when they are translated. Nevertheless, the sense of negativity of the verb *-gbú* is still not lost.

E. Formation of nominal
It is also important to note that even in the nominalization of *-gbú,* the core meaning is still retained as in:

9. *O + gbú = ogbú* 'killer'

A bụ m Ajọfịa, **o-gbu**   mmadụ   mgbe ndụ na-asọnarị ya
Pro am I Evil Forest, pref.-kill   person   when life AUX-sweetest him
'I am Evil Forest, a killer of person when life is sweetest to him'

The '*o*' is an agentive prefix denoting 'er' used in forming the nominal *ogbu* - killer

Having looked at the morphological structures of the verb *-gbú* 'kill' both in verb structures: simple, compound, complex and verbal complex, we shall in the subsequent sections adopt and discuss the Extended Unit of Meaning Approach in which he proposes four types of co-occurrence relations in extended lexico-semantic units in order to bring out the semantic profile of the verb under study using the four constituents of this approach namely: collocation, colligation, semantic preference and semantic prosody.

4.2 Constituents of Sinclair's approach
4.2.1 Collocation
Adopting this approach, the study tries to access our corpus data by using Stubb (2001) collocational profiles or collocates frequency table to show the semantic field of the verb root -*gbú*. Sub-components of the semantic field of -*gbú* 'kill' based on various kinds of semantic relation in a word span of about 5:5 of the node.

Category	Collocates
i) Things that can be killed:	*anụmanụ* 'animal': *eke* 'python', *ewu* 'goat'*e.t.c*
ii) People that can be killed:	*mmadụ* 'person', *ụmụọfịa* 'name of a town'
iii) Unfavourable sounding state of affairs:	*agha* 'war', *ọchu* 'suicide'

In a word span of about 5:5, the concordance results reveal frequent lexical choices with nouns (common, proper etc) such as animals, persons and name of persons such as *eke* 'python', *ewu* goat', *mmadụ* 'person', *Ikemefuna* 'name of person' e.t.c. These lexical words all share the semantic feature of living things. This explains why there are strong collocates associated with categories of living things, persons and/or unfavourable-sounding state of affairs such as wars, suicide. Hence, we have most frequently in the corpus VERB-NP patterns as exemplified in 10-12:

10. Ha   siri   na ***Okoli*** gburu   ***eke*** a   naghị egbu egbu
    They say-pst that Okoli kill-rVpst python DEM that is not   killed
    'They said that Okoli killed a sacred python'

11. Nwaoye matara   na   ha egbuola   ***Ikemefuna***
    Nwaoye know-pst that   they kill-pst Ikemefuna
    'Nwaoye knew that they have killed Ikemefuna'

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12. Ọ bụ arụ   ***mmadu*** *igbụ*   ***onwe ya***
    3sg is taboo person infl-kill himself
    'It is a taboo to commit suicide'

The highlighted words in examples (10-12) show the co-occurrences of the node with other words. Whether to the right or left of the node, the words are all animate i.e people that can kill and things that are killed. This is to say that the *gbú* 'kill' is principally used as a verb in the sense of causing harm to one's self, somebody or something which must be a living thing. This explains why the co-occurrences include mostly people and animals.

4.2.2 Colligation
Colligation is the occurrence of a grammatical class or structural pattern with another one, or with a word or phrase. In other words, it is the relation between a pair of grammatical categories or, in a slightly wider sense, a pairing of lexis and grammar. For instance, the data reveals that *gbú* colligates with mostly pronoun (possessive, reflexive and demonstrative), quantifier and determiners. The concordance with each of them is illustrated below:
Colligate (s): (A). Concordance with Pronoun such as *ya, gi, ha, anyi* as in;

(13). Ụmụọfia ekpebiena   igbu   **ya**
     Ụmụọfia AGR-resolve   infl-kill   him
     'Ụmụọfia have resolved to kill him'

There is mostly preponderance of colligates with the pronoun *ya* 'him/her', followed by *ha* 'them' and *gi* 'you' e.t.c.
(B). Concordance with possessive construction include: *nwunye ya/Ogbuefi* 'his wife or Ogbuefi's wife', *nwanna ya* 'his brother', *nne*

ya 'his/her mother', *dị ya* 'her husband', *nwada ụmụọfia* 'ụmụọfia's daughter',*etc.*

(14) …nwanyị ahụ ndị Mbaịnọ gburu   bụ **nwunye Ogbuefi** Udo
    … woman demon. Quant. Mbaịnọ kill-rv(pst) is   wife   Ogbuefi Udo
    '…the woman that the people of Mbaino killed was Oguefi Udo's wife'

Other concordance results with possessive pronoun include: *nwunye ya* 'his wife', *nwanna ya* his/her brother', *nne ya* 'his/her mother, *di ya* 'her husband', *nwada ụmụọfia* 'ụmụọfia's daughter' *nwa m* 'my child'; *ụmụnne ha* 'their siblings' *nwa ya nwoke* 'his son'.

(C). Concordance with Reflexive pronoun such as *onwe ya* 'his/herself'

(15) Ụnụ   akwanyena   ya igbu   **onwe ya**
    You (pl)   push-give-not him inf-kill   himself
    'You should not force him to kill himself'

(D). Concordance with Demonstrative pronoun such as *nwata afụ* 'that child', *nwa onye ocha afụ* 'that white man's child', *onye ocha afụ* 'that white man'

(16) …ị   na-agbagha   ife Alụsị kwuru   maka igbu **nwata afụ**
    …2sg aux-oppose   thing gods say-rv(pst) prep inf-kill child dem
    '…you are opposing what the gods said about the killing of that child'

(E). Concordance results with Determiner include: *onye ụka* 'the christian', *nwa onye ọcha* 'the white man's child'

(17) E   kwukwara   na   akwụgburu   otu nwoke gburu **onye ụka**
    they-ind say-also-rVpst that hit-kill-rv(pst) one man   kill-rV(pst) DET.
church
    '…They also said that they killed one of the men that killed a Christian'

The above colligational patterns showing the different grammatical choices are most frequent in the corpus. It should be noted that the colligates for the Igbo data is always to the right of the node i.e N+5 which is not the case in English which is to the left. This simply shows that both languages differ in their structural patterns.

4.2.3 Semantic Preference
The corpus reveals that the verb *–gbú* 'kill' has preference for nouns which is the commonest word class as there are no other collocates with other parts of speech in the concordance. Hence, the semantic preference for noun is typically words that are seen together as forming evidence of the make-up of a semantic field for kill or things reflecting an undesirable state such as *obi nkoropụ* 'heart attack'*, ọria afọ otụto* 'a type of sickness that the stomach is swollen' or shows an unfavourable-sounding situation such as *agha* 'war'*, ọchu* 'suicide' *or ọsọ ọchu*. Other examples include *arụ* 'abomination'*, nsọani* 'taboo', *osịsị* 'stick', *egbe* 'gun', *Agbala* 'god of the land', *mma* 'knife' e.t.c. All these constitute a chunk of the corpus. Also, one can also say that since the verb has a negative meaning, its preferences also whether for things or undesirable state have some sense of negativity too as exemplified in e.g. (17) below,

(17) Ọ bụ **nsọanị** mmadụ igbu nwanna ya
　　 3sg be taboo person inf-kill brother pron.
　　 'It is a taboo to kill one's brother'

4.2.4 Semantic Prosody
The semantic prosody of the verb is a feature that extends over more than one unit in a linear string. Generally, the lexical environment of the verb suggests that of melancholic attitude of hopelessness surrounded by unfavourable things such as *fear, revenge, fight,*

horror, great depression, e.t.c. contingent upon its semantic preferences.

(18) Ụmụofia **ekpebiena**   igbu   ya
       Ụmụofia AGR-resolve   inf-kill   him
       'Ụmụofia have resolved to kill him'

(19) Otu nwoke **gara   nnọọ kwenye akwa ya** n' osisi kwụgbuo onwe ya
       One man   go-rv(pst) modal hang cloth pron. on tree hit-kill   self him
       'One man went and hung himself on the tree with a cloth and killed himself'

(20) Olu   ya   **nọ na-ama   jijiji**, okwu na-achọ ịgbagbu   ya
       Voice pron. ext. aux-shake ideo, words tns-try   inf-choke-kill him
       'His voice was shaking; he was being choked by his words'

In examples (18) and (19); the words/phrases *ekpebiena* 'resolved'; *'gara nnọọ kwenye aka ya'* (depicting state of hopelessness); and *nọ na-ama   jijiji* 'shivering' (depicting fear) give an insight into the functional meaning of the verb *gbú* 'kill'. While, the former shows the semantic prosody of revenge and fear respectively, the latter of great depression.

       However, in everyday discourse, it is observed that there are usages when used in the idiomatic sense, denote positive and/or negative meaning as illustrated in (21), (23) & (24):

   (21)Okonkwo maara   ka   e   si   ***egbu mmụọ mmadụ*** ibe ya
       Okonkwo know-rV comp pron how inf-kill mind person fellow PRO
          'Okonkwo knows how to **discourage** his fellow human being.'

   (22) Okonkwo ***gbuuru***   ya   *ewụ*, iji   mezuo ọdịnaanị
          Okonkwo kill-rv(pst) pron. goat, infl-hold fulfils   traditions
          Okonkwo **sacrified** a goat to fulfill the tradition'

(23)   Ogbuefi **egbuola**   m   na ọchi
       Ogbuefi AGR-kill-tns me in laugh
       'Ogbuefi is **killing me with laughter**'

(24)   *Aṅụrị* **na-egbukwa**   ha   niile ka   mmanya
        Joy   aux-AGR-kill-ext them quant comp wine
        'They are all **overwhelmed** with joy'

Examples (21), (22) and (24) give a different semantics of the verb
which is idiomatic and not strictly described in terms of killing
something or somebody, but the contextual meanings of the verb
could be either positive or negative. (22) is a verbal complex which
takes the NP *mmadu* 'person' to realize *discourage*. Observe also that,
examples (23) and (24) denote something pleasant.

5.0 Summary and Conclusion
Using the corpus linguistics tool *AntConc* for the lexical semantic
analysis of the verb root *-gbú* 'kill', this study has shown that the Igbo
verb root *-gbú* 'kill' has a negative SP and this negativity associated
with the verb is not usually lost in the morphological structures
especially with regard to compound verbs and complex verbs.
Although, the sense of negativity is not lost in the different word-
forms of the verbs; however, it diverges in complex verbs. This study
also notes that the verb denotes some favourable/positive meaning
such as 'killing one with laughter', 'overwhelmed with joy', etc. An
additional point is that a good percentage of the collocates of the verb
share semantic feature of living things e.g. man, animal and things
referring to unfavourable-sounding state of affairs such as war,
suicide, sickness etc. which simply reflects its semantic preference for
nouns that falls in the same semantic field. In addition, the
colligational pattern is mostly with pronouns, determiner, and
quantifiers. The lexical environment is usually melancholic,
surrounded by unfavourable attitude of fear, revenge, despair and

depression which this study has considered the semantic prosody of the verb.

The foregoing, therefore, is an effort to bring to light the need for more corpus studies of SP in Igbo since meaning is not so much centered in individual lexical units but the product of extended unit of meaning which obviously is lacking in the Igbo language studies. This paper calls for further studies in corpus linguistics which will not only provide evidence for lexical semantic analysis, but also provide attested data in various forms, from a wealth of actual lexical context and for the purpose of comparative studies on the semantic profile of words in different languages. No doubt, the outcome of the nuances of meaning arising from such studies of lexical items will provide useful data not only for lexicographers, translators, and language teachers but also help learners improve their awareness of word meanings and their usages in various contexts.

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