

Ethical Analysis of Selected Igbo-English Proverbs in Adimora-Ezeigbo's *Children Of The Eagle*

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Abstract

The paper aims to identify and analyse proverbs of Igbo origin, their socio-semantic and ethical values in Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo's Children of the Eagle. The transference of sociocultural and linguistic resources of other languages into English novels is a known practice among novelists from backgrounds where English plays a second language role. Children of the Eagle is one of such novels that can be identified by the influence of the author's linguistic background; thus, the study investigates socio-semantic and ethical values embedded in selected proverbs of Igbo origin in the novel. The study used a discursive method, employing J. R. Firth's Contextual Theory of Meaning to explore the literal, figurative and contextual layers of meaning and Igbo ethical values rooted in each of the selected proverbs. Findings show that the proverbs are all sociocultural and ethically sensitive. The study, therefore, concludes that no proverb of Igbo origin exists without socio-semantic and ethical values geared towards the enculturation of the upcoming generations into the sociocultural and ethical norms; and critical consciousness of the present generation and adults towards the creation and consolidation of a harmonious society. It is consequently recommended that proverbs of ethical values should more often be incorporated into the linguistic usage of Igbo-English novelists and the linguistic performance of Igbo adults for didactic purposes and awareness creation towards a better and united society.

Keywords: *Igbo proverbs, ethical values, Igbo-English novels, Igbo origin, linguistic performance, and Children of the Eagle*

Introduction

Proverb is a linguistic phenomenon found in various languages of the world, with evidence of the people's sociocultural beliefs, for ethical conduct. They inherently have a feature of tradition employed by speakers as communication tools in most cultures and languages of the world. Proverbs are simple statements that are generally known and repeated within speech communities, reflecting values and truths based on common sense or common experience of a

people (Ekpang, Pam, and Ekwok 2020, p. 2). Proverbs occur almost everywhere in Africa, in apparent contrast with other areas of the world (Finnegan, 2012, p. 379).

This study investigates Igbo proverbs rendered in English, used as ethical strategies in Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo's *Children of the Eagle* (henceforth CotE) to portray various Igbo ethical values for moral conduct and social consolidation. Proverbs in the Igbo sociocultural worldview are tools used to accomplish various sociocultural, ethical and linguistic tasks. Igbo language, being one of the Nigerian languages, plays vital linguistic and sociocultural roles in the nation; thus, proverbs of Igbo origin are tools for moral purposes.

Igbo people constitute one of the largest populations in Nigeria, and their language is one of the three major indigenous languages. As Anokwute (1972) pointed out, Igbo people constitute one of the three largest ethnic groups in Nigeria; their primary states are: Anambra, Abia, Imo, Ebonyi, and Enugu. Due to their mobility, they constitute between 25% - 60% of the population in some other Nigerian States, such as Delta, Rivers, Lagos, Kano, to mention a few. Although Igbo people primarily inhabit the South-eastern part of Nigeria, they have, however, spread to every nook and cranny of Nigeria, Africa and indeed the globe, thriving, building and enriching themselves and their environment (p. 1). Ajani and Onah (2016, p. 137) acknowledged that the "Igbo are a highly migratory ethnic group."

Statement of the Problem

Proverbs of Igbo origin are prominently featured in many Igbo-English novels, serving as reflections of the people's sociocultural worldview and moral practices. Often, Writers from backgrounds where English is a second language incorporate elements of their native languages and cultures into their English-language fiction. This creative integration has led to the development of a distinctive literary style that resonates with both authors and readers.

The use of Igbo proverbs in these novels fulfils several functions: stylistic enhancement, cultural identity, cultural preservation, and the communication of sociocultural and ethical values. As such, these proverbs contribute significantly to the thematic and aesthetic texture of Igbo-English fiction, underscoring the need for more empirical investigations into their various roles and implications.

Scholarly attention has been drawn to this area. For instance, Asika (2012) analysed Uchenna Nwosu's *The Rejected Stone*, illustrating how proverbs are used to narrate an African story, emphasize indigenous narrative techniques. Esimaje (2017) examined John Munonye's *The Only Son*, highlighting how proverbs convey cultural elements within fictional contexts.

Similarly, Igono and Ogundu (2018) explored proverbs as instruments for addressing socio-economic issues, like economic recession.

However, while numerous empirical studies have focused on the use of Igbo proverbs in literature, few have directly addressed the ethical values embedded within these proverbs as used in Igbo-English novels. Given the rich moral and philosophical dimensions inherent in many Igbo proverbs, this study seeks to explore their ethical implications and didactic potential, contributing to a deeper understanding of their role in contemporary African literature.

Aim of the Study

The study aims to identify and discuss the ethical implications of Igbo-English proverbs in the understudied novel. The specific objectives are:

- to identify Igbo proverbs used as an ethical strategy in the under-studied novel
- to discuss their socio-semantic implications about the novel
- to classify and discuss their ethical implications in the novel.

Literature Review

Concept of Proverbs

Igbo-English novels, like other Nigerian and African novels, are rooted in oral renditions. As stated in Olaofe (2015, p. 10), “African belief systems, attitudes, modes of worship, traditional mores, communal expeditions, and cultural affinities were transmitted through oral traditional methods, like storytelling, sometimes using the ‘call-call-and-response’ narrative technique”. Proverb as a part of a communication device is an excellent strategy for interaction among members of a speech community; as a communication tool, it replicates values and portrays truth. Medier in Ehondor (2017, p. 4) defined proverb as “a short, generally known sentence of the folk, which contains wisdom, truth, morals, and traditional views in a metaphorical, fixed and memorable form and which is handed down from generation to generation”. This acknowledges that proverbs embody timeless communication strategies, conveying ethical implications.

Proverb users may not know how and when they were composed; most proverbs are anonymous but vital in various aspects of human existence: they function as a guide to life's problems, summarizes a situation, passes a judgment, or offers a course of action, a consolation in difficulties, a guide to choice making, expresses morality, for strengthening speech, influencing or manipulating other people, rationalizing shortcomings, questioning certain

behavioral patterns, satirizing social ills, and poking fun at ridiculous situations (Ehondor 2017, p. 7). This assertion summarises the roles of proverbs in various communication aspects. Proverbs are didactic and deliberately used to promote changes in society. They are sometimes used for entertainment and political campaign speeches. This study, therefore, investigates the ethical implications of selected Igbo proverbs in CotE.

Proverbs in Igbo Cultural Perspective

Various communities have their proverbs, which portray their culture. Okoye (2016, p. 55) states that “proverbs are rhetorical strategies employed by various communities in expressing their experiences in a condensed manner”. The meanings of proverbs are contextualised within the culture where they exist and can be deciphered by shared cultural experiences. From the Igbo cultural perspective, proverbs are used to cover a wide expanse of human practices, endeavours and events obtainable in the society. The scope is so wide that they could cover themes like gender, occupations, wealth, poverty, love, marriage, fatherhood, motherhood, morality, among others (Ogudu, 2018, p. 1). Ahiazunwa and Osinachi (2022, p. 2) opined, “Proverbs are found in every culture, but their frequency and usefulness are more pronounced in Africa, especially in Igbo land”. Esimaje (2017, p. 242) maintained that “While some (Igbo) proverbs serve to caution, some advise, and some are used to emphasise or reiterate a point”.

Proverbs are essential content of most Igbo-English novels. They make the novels artistic, stylistic and aesthetic. They contextualise the fiction to its background of production. As proverbs are regarded being vital in the speech of an average Igbo adult, so they are essential in novels by Igbo authors. Emenyonu (1978, p. 158) asserted, “The effective and persuasive speaker among the Igbo is usually one who correctly and effortlessly integrates proverbs, sayings and witticisms within the mainstream of his speech”. For Igbo speakers, proverbs are vital in dialogues; to comprehend proverbs calls for wisdom. One may be present at a gathering without understanding anything said, yet the meeting is conducted in his language. This reiterates the importance of skillfulness in proverbs as a speech strategy; likewise, Igbo proverbs in English fiction demand dexterity; their translation into English does not make for easy comprehension. The missing gap in these studies is adequate attention to context meaning. In proverbial language, it is often unclear how meanings should be interpreted. As a result, comprehension typically depends on either cultural familiarity or contextual clues. This study, therefore, undertakes to identify the socio-semantic implications of the ethical values of these proverbs to aid adequate comprehension.

Ethical Strategy

Ethical strategy is derived from the word "ethics", which, according to Mahapatra and Paliwal (2018, p. 4), in Latin is "ethic us" and in Greek is "ethikos" has come from the word ethos, meaning characters or manners". They went ahead to defined ethical strategy in line with Corporate World, as "frameworks and actions organizations use to ensure their activities are ethical, legal, and aligned with values, promoting a culture of integrity and responsible behavior". As stated by Madmarova, Rozykova, Abytova, Imasheva, Kadyrova, Murzakulova, Kydykeeva, Aitieva, Surkeeva & Abdullaeva

It is ethics that makes it possible to highlight the moral values of the people, which are passed on from generation to generation. Absolutely all ethical values are reflected through the language of the people, which conveys them in their proverbs, sayings, phraseological units, and catchphrases". This is to say that the proverbs constitute the ethical values of a people (2021, p. 1).

So, ethical strategy in this study refers to the cultural principles and procedures that govern what is regarded morally right and wrong, good and bad, or just and unjust in Igbo social conduct. It encompasses the study of moral values, such as fairness, justice, honesty, wisdom and integrity, among others; it helps individuals and societies decide how to act in ways that respect the dignity and rights of others. Proverbs as ethical strategies in this study are the linguistic frameworks and expressions of cultural values used by Igbo society to ensure levels of moral conduct among its people, to promote consciousness of ethical matters and encourage critical thinking about moral choices.

Theoretical framework

This study is anchored on J. R. Firth's Contextual theory of meaning (CTM), developed through 1890–1960. Firth was a British linguist who is best known for his work on the contextual theory of meaning, which emphasises the importance of context in understanding the meaning of words and expressions. The theory was developed in opposition to the then-dominant structuralist approaches, which focused on formal and abstract structures of language without considering the context of meaning language is used for (Kaiwe, 2027, p. 1).

Context of meaning is chosen as an anchor for this study because it is apt in literary texts written in a second language, like Igbo-English texts and their proverbs. Zhu and Han (2010, p. 1) opined, "It is possible for people to read and understand a text, using some principles that are labelled as 'local interpretation'. The meaning of 'local' is inclusive of features within and

outside the text”. This assertion foregrounds not only the importance of context in interaction but also its efficacy in use as a theory. J. R. Firth’s notion of social contexts evolves the ‘context of situation’ as conspicuous in his theory (Firth, 1935, p. 37). According to Osuchukwu (2022, p. 1), “the complete meaning of a word is usually contextual. This means that beyond the literal or lexical meaning of every word is contextual meaning. The context in which a word is found and used determines and influences its meaning”. These assertions portray the fact that the meaning of an expression is determined by the context or situation in which it is uttered. Being that proverb as a witty saying and culture-bound, their meanings are beyond literal; they are rather determined by society and culture than the meanings of the constituent words. Thus, CTM is apt for this study.

The theory is built on these central ideas:

Meaning is ‘context-dependent’; meaning cannot be separated from its context. The meaning of an utterance is not fixed, but tied to the social context.

Context of Situation: Situation shapes meaning; the environment, social circumstances, and purpose of communication determine meaning; a word like "bank" could have multiple meanings (a financial institution, side of a river, storage).

The Role of Use: Meaning is determined by how words are used in specific communicative situations; a word is known by the company it keeps, the collocational patterns of words.

Function of Language in Communication: Language is fundamentally about communication; words are tools for expressing intentions, actions, and relationships. The function of language focuses on the conveyance of pragmatic intentions.

Holistic Understanding of Meaning: To fully understand a word or phrase, one must consider the entire context of its use. This includes the broader situation, the speaker's purpose, and the speaker’s intentions.

Importance of Culture and Social Context: The meanings of words and expressions are not universal but are socially and culturally specific; a word or phrase might be understood differently in different social groups based on shared norms, practices, and experiences.

Concluding these assumptions, Chapman & Routledge observe that Firth saw language as “a set of events which speakers uttered; a mode of action, a way of ‘doing things’, therefore, linguists should focus on speech events themselves” (2005, p. 80). While Olanrewaju

(2000, p. 43) sums up the assumption of the theory by looking at meaning as “... a serial contextualisation of our facts within contexts, each one being a function, an organ of a bigger context and all contexts finding a place in what may be called the context of culture”.

This study is based on the assumptions, which center on the ‘Function of Language in Communication, which has to do with the common ground on which language is used as a means of communication and meaning making; and the ‘importance of Culture and Social Context’, which relies on the role of culture and society in shaping meanings. Being that the meanings of proverbs can either be universally comprehended or socio-culturally specific, the study hinges on these two assumptions for the interpretation of the Igbo-English proverbs based on shared norms, practices, and experiences to analyse their ethical values.

This analytical process agrees with Esimaje’s assertion that, “most proverbs have at least two levels of meaning; literal and figurative, and the ability to comprehend both levels of meaning is productive. The meaning of an unfamiliar proverb can be constructed through the linguistic input, at the literal level. But at the figurative level, interpretation of an unfamiliar proverb is impossible except it roughly means the same thing as its component words” (2017, p. 223). Then there is the contextual level that has to do with the cultural implications, where meaning is interpreted based on sociocultural norms.

Methodology

Thirty-eight proverbs of Igbo origin were identified in *CotE*; twelve (12) were selected for discussion in this study. Each proverb was evaluated using three meaning levels: literal, figurative and contextual. The literal level discussed the surface meaning of each proverb using the meanings of individual word components. The figurative level revealed the metaphoric meaning of each proverb, not individual word meanings, but a deep meaning level. The literal and figurative meanings are denotative and connotative, respectively. At the contextual level, meaning is assigned to the Igbo proverbs in agreement with Firth’s contextual theory, which assumes that meaning is influenced by the context of the participants, their verbal and non-verbal actions and other relevant objects of the situation. The proverbs are numbered cases 1 to 12, as used in the novel; their pages and Igbo (source text) forms are presented for logicity, flow of thought and imagination

Discussion

Proverbs on Responsibility

In Igbo culture, responsibility (*inwe-oke-n'oru*) is a virtue. It involves being accountable for one's actions, fulfilling duties to family, community and the spiritual world, and taking care of what one has created: children, work, promises, or social roles. Responsibility is seen as man's civil duty that brings freedom in Igbo society and Africa (Onebunne and Alike, 2020, p. 124). Below are Igbo proverbs on ethics of responsibility.

Case 1

The narrator tells how the Eagle woman's children visited home and at breakfast, remember how they used to watch their mother prepare breakfast as a special meal, which they learnt and practised. "...Umuga people say that when **mother goat eats grass, her young watches her mouth**" (p.52).

Source Text

Nné éwù na-átà áhìhìja, nwa ya na-èlé ya ánya n'ònu

Literal

The young goat closely observes the mother as she eats grass.

Figurative

Children learn by watching their parents or elders; they tend to imitate what they see.

Contextual

Igbo culture in this proverb portrays parents and elders' responsibility to behave well before younger ones.

Case 2

Ogonna narrates how her husband abandons his duty as a husband and a father, unlike her father, who was always responsible for such roles. "Umuga people say that **it is only the grasshopper produces children and abandons them to the grass.**" (p.309)

Source text

Náni ùkpàlà na-ámụ umụ hàpụ ha n'òhija

Literal

Grasshoppers lay eggs, have offspring and abandon them in the grass.

Figurative

Parents are expected to show care and responsibility for their children.

Contextual

Igbo culture disapproves of parents who neglect their children or refuse to care for them; raising children is a sacred responsibility of parents, extended family and community.

Case 3

Obioma narrates her past mistakes that led her to become pregnant while in secondary school. The proverb shows that she was responsible for her calamity: “In these platitudes, greed, stubbornness, inordinate pleasure, and premarital sex were roundly condemned... **It is the child that plays with fire that gets his fingers burnt.**” (p. 255)

Source Text

Nwa jí ọkụ egwu egwu kà-ókú na-ére

Literal

Any child who plays with fire gets injured.

Figurative

Individuals are responsible for their actions, especially when they act against advice.

Contextual

In Igbo culture, when you ignore elders' guidance, act recklessly or stubbornly, you bear the consequences alone.

From the discussions above, responsibility is a virtue that every Igbo person must possess. This ethical system emphasises duties individuals owe themselves, their families, their community and their ancestors (OSSAI 2020, p. 2440)

Proverbs on Patience (Ndidi)

Patience (ndidi) in Igbo cultural ethics is a core moral value that touches every part of life: family, community, success, conflict, and even spiritual beliefs. The Igbo culture has proverbs that portray patience as an ethical value, such as discussed below:

Case 4

Ogonna tells Nnenna of her experiences with her husband, who neglected his manly duties. She encourages herself to be patient using the proverb. “If a bad marriage is my lot, then I

should school my mind to do all that is necessary... **The harassed bedbug consoled her children with the comforting words that whatever is hot will be cold.**” (p. 84)

Source Text

Chìnchì sịrì ụmụ ya nọọ jí, na ihè dì oku gēmèsịa jó óyì.

Literal

Heat cools down with time.

Figurative

Life troubles are never permanent; one should not give up easily.

Contextual

It reflects a cultural mindset that sees life’s troubles as temporary and encourages people to bear suffering with courage and calmness.

Case 5

The Master of Ceremonies on the Obufofo day tells people to make noises about food to keep faith and hope alive, because there will be food for them. **“People do not die from hunger when there is hope that their hunger will be assuage.”** (p. 335)

Source Text

Ágụ à naghị agùgbu àfò nwere nchekùbé

Literal

People can endure hunger as long as they believe that food is coming.

Figurative

When one is in distress, the mind stays strong if it believes in a solution.

Contextual

The proverb teaches that mental and emotional strength drawn from patience and hope helps people survive tough times.

Case 6

Eagle woman advises her daughters not to get married during the Nigeria-Biafra war because no one knows what the outcome will be. She wants them to be patient and hopeful. **“Everything is so uncertain, “tomorrow is pregnant and no one knows what it will give birth to.”** (p.302)

Source Text

Échi dì ìmè, ò dìghì onye màrà ihé ó gà-àmụ

Literal

The next day's expectations are uncertain.

Figurative

The future is unknown, no matter how promising things may look.

Contextual

One might start a venture, a relationship, or a political move with high hopes, but only time will reveal the outcome.

In Igbo culture, patience (ndidi) is a highly regarded ethical value. It reflects wisdom, self-control, hope, and emotional maturity. The Igbo believe that good things take time, and rushing often leads to mistakes or misfortune.

Proverbs on Self-Control (ìchìkwa onwe)

Self-control (ìchìkwa onwe) represents the ability to restrain one's desires, emotions, impulses, and actions to maintain social harmony, personal integrity, and spiritual balance. It is a core ethical value deeply embedded in Igbo traditional thought and moral philosophy (Iroegbu 1994). This is expressed in some Igbo proverbs as seen below

Case 7

Eagle Woman warns her daughter, Nnenne, against things she should not write in the family book she is to write. "It is only a fool who tells the world the whole truth about himself... **it is not everything the eyes see that the mouth talk about**". (p.58)

Source Text

Ó bùghì ihè niile ánya hụrụ ka ọnụ na-ékpùtà

Literal

The mouth does not speak of everything the eyes see.

Figurative

People are expected to be discreet with what they notice

Contextual

This emphasises the value of discretion, wisdom, and self-control; just because one witnessed something doesn't mean they must voice it. Some things are better left unsaid.

Case 8

Eagle woman reprimands her daughter, Ogonna, who wants to get engaged to a Biafran soldier during the war and marry him after the war. "Hmm. After the war you said... who can say how many will survive the war... **is it not better for a person to watch what is watching the person?"** (p. 302)

Source Text

Ò kaghị mma ka mmádù lèrù ànyá n'ihè na-èlè ya?

Literal

Is it not preferable for one to look out for things that look out for them?

Figurative

People should give attention to confrontational matters.

Contextual

This proverb is deeply rooted in Igbo culture on self-awareness, vigilance, and self-control; knowing when to act, when to speak, and when to restrain oneself.

Case 9

Eagle woman reprimands her daughter, Nnenna, to be mindful of what to write in the family book. **The ears hear things and the nose smells things, but the mouth does not talk about all of them.** (page 58)

Source Text

Ntị na-ànyị ihè niile, imị na-ékùrù ihè niile, mà ọnyị à naghị ékwùtécha ha niile

Literal

Although our senses constantly gather information (hearing, smelling, observing), the mouth remains discrete.

Figurative

Not all knowledge should be shared; being loquacious can bring trouble, break trust, or escalate conflict.

Contextual

Igbo culture teaches the importance of discretion, wisdom, and most importantly, self-control, a core ethical value among the Igbo.

The proverbs discussed under self-control showcase one of Igbo cultural ethics on the expectation of personal response, especially in speech and conduct when dealing with challenging situations.

Proverbs on Wisdom (amamihe)

Wisdom (amamihe) is one of the core ethical values in Igbo philosophy and worldview. It goes far beyond just intelligence or cleverness; it is the foundation of right living, good judgment, and harmonious social conduct. The importance of wisdom, an Igbo ethical value, is seen in proverbs (Isidienu n.d., p. 3).

Case 10

Ogonna wonders concerning the family book Nnenna is about to write.” Will she expose the grey and painful areas of our family history? **The mouth in its wisdom does not give the legs away by voicing the secrets that the eye sees.”** (p. 89)

Source Text

Ọ̀nụ̀ nwere amamihe anaghị ekwùchá ebe ụkwụ́ gara nke anya hụrụ

Literal

The mouth should be wise enough to stay silent about things the eyes observe, to protect the legs from troubles.

Figurative

Knowing when to speak and when to stay silent is a mark of wisdom.

Contextual

In Igbo culture, proverbs of wisdom encapsulate control and often mind social behaviour, discretion, survival and the right use of words to avoid problems.

Case 11

Nnenna advises her sister not to hold firm on a toxic marriage, that there might be better opportunities. “Nnenna understands that there are facts of life that only an individual has to discover for himself/herself... **it is after a woman has tasted two marriages that she is in a position to say which is better.”** (p.125)

Source Text

Nwányi lụọ di abụọ ọ maara nke ka mma

Literal

After experiencing two marriages, a woman knows which one was better.

Figurative

One can truly evaluate or compare two situations after experiencing both.

Contextual

It portrays Igbo culture where women are encouraged to keep their marriages. It is a subtle reminder for women to appreciate what they have and a caution to weigh decisions wisely.

Case 12

Eagle Woman narrates to her daughters an experience that almost ruined her marriage when they were living in the town; as a total stranger, she had to apply wisdom to save her marriage. "But my Chi was too strong for them... **A person who visits a town does not know where abomination was committed.**" (p.155)

Source Text

Onyé ọbịà amaghị ebe emèrùrù àlà.

Literal

An alien in a town cannot identify places where forbidden things occurred.

Figurative

It is unwise to judge people, situations, or customs without understanding their history.

Contextual

In Igbo culture, some truths are not spoken openly. Elders, priests, and those who have lived through events carry the memory of past "abominations" (forbidden or shameful acts). A visitor lacks that depth of insight. Wisdom respects that gap.

The dissuasions on proverbs of wisdom portray Igbo culture as a way to pass across and recognise wisdom. In essence, wisdom in Igbo ethics is about living thoughtfully and responsibly. The twelve cases of proverbs discussed above portray four Igbo ethical values conspicuous in *CotE*. Although the proverbs were translated into English in the novel, their Igbo origin is never in doubt.

Summary of Findings

From the three stated objectives above, the following findings are made.

In line with the first objective, thirty-eight proverbs of Igbo origin were identified out of forty-five proverbs used in the novel. These proverbs are used to portray various Igbo ethical roles among the characters in the novel. The novelist used them to depict the fact that every Igbo proverb is geared towards moral values.

In line with the second objective, the proverbs are recognised to be socio-semantically inferred. There are three levels of meaning inferred from the proverbs: literal, meaning of words that make up the proverb; figurative, deeper or metaphorical meaning; and contextual, which is culture-specific. At the contextual level, meanings are assigned according to the factors of context, the participants, and their verbal and non-verbal actions, and contribute to the meanings. These levels of meaning enable even non-Igbo speakers to understand the proverbs.

In line with the last objective, there are four classifications of Igbo ethical values depicted by the selected proverbs: responsibility, patience, self-control and wisdom. Under each of these classes, three of the proverbs were discussed. Findings show that all the Igbo proverbs used in the novel portray various Igbo ethical values drawn from Igbo socio-cultural and religious world views. Proverbs are seen as tools for correcting various social issues and stability of moral lifestyle in Igbo society.

Conclusion and Recommendations

As a window to Igbo ethical values, selected Igbo-English proverbs from the studied novel are discussed under their literal, figurative, and contextual meanings; in the light of the Igbo socio-cultural world view and beliefs that gave rise to them. This revealed the rich sociocultural meaning placed on the proverbs. It is therefore concluded that Igbo proverbs are associated with rich ethical values with which children are brought up as well-behaved and patriotic people in the society, and adults are also encouraged to be responsible and productive members of their society. Based on these, it is recommended that:

Modern parents should understand the ethical implications of Igbo proverbs and use them for their children's upbringing.

Younger generations should begin to pay attention to proverbs, learn and use them for their ethical benefits.

Adults should communicate more in proverbs to make their messages authentic and discussions enriched with cultural values.

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