

EMOTIVE EXPRESSIONS IN THE IGBO LANGUAGE

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Abstract

Emotions are physical and mental states brought about by neurophysiological changes and are variously associated with thoughts, feelings, behavioural responses, and varying degrees of pleasure or displeasure. This paper investigates surprise and shock expressions in Igbo. All languages possess emotive interjections, that is, interjections that express cognitively based feelings. Research on emotion has shown that there is relatively little research on interjections compared with the extensive studies on facial expressions and lexical categories of emotion (Wierzbicka, 1999:276). The study randomly selected 15 native speakers (L1) of Igbo from the Faculty of Arts, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, and employed the observation method for data collection. It adopts the tone-marking convention of Green and Igwe (1963), in which high tones are left unmarked, while low tones and downstep tones are marked with the grave accent (̀) and the macron (̄), respectively. The data were analysed qualitatively using a descriptive approach. The findings reveal that shock expressions such as heì, eì, haàà, kaì, ewōō, hĩaà, and èwo exist in the Igbo language, with hewùù and ihe identified as additional expressions. Likewise, surprise expressions such as ìgbà, òkòkòbiòkò, òòoyà, egbè, ayàà, òwūyā, and ùpèè were identified as additional expressions beyond those previously documented, reflecting language growth and innovation. Furthermore, surprise expressions are used predominantly to convey positive experiences, whereas shock expressions are used mainly to express negative experiences. The paper concludes that although these forms are exclamatory words, they are pragmatically interpreted as exclamatory expressions that convey surprise or shock.

Keywords: emotions, surprise, shock, Igbo, interjection, exclamation

1.0 Introduction

Expressing emotions is a part of humanity which cannot be done without. Wierzbicka (1992) states that emotions are widely perceived as important in our life as they enable us to exist in a given culture. We think, we feel, we perceive and at the same time we want to express our thoughts, feelings and perceptions, mainly because we want to share them with other people (Wierzbicka, 1992). In the words of Rosaldo (1984: 304) emotions are “self-concerning, partly physical responses that are at the same time aspects of a moral and ideological attitude; emotions are feelings and cognitive constructions, linking person, action, and sociological milieu”. It is seen from this approach that emotions are not isolated notions but an essential part of language and culture. In the same way, Wierzbicka (1985: 145) argues that “different cultures encourage different attitudes toward emotions, and that these different attitudes are reflected in both the lexicon and the grammar of the languages associated with these cultures”. Psychologist Lazarus has brought a new approach into the spectrum of emotional expressions and used the phrase “themes central relational” to analyze the emotions that are aroused when you need to communicate with other people. This still proves that emotions are not used in isolation.

In connection to language, language and society are strongly connected to each other which entails that language cannot be separated from the society. Hence, it has been said that language is the bloodstream of the society. As a means of communication, language somehow is not uttered implicitly and always followed by the meaning itself. Language has many uses which include sharing thoughts, expressing emotions, etc. For the purpose of this paper, language which purposes to express the speaker's emotional feeling or to convey information to the listeners will be discussed. In other words, to express emotion, we can use language as a means of communication. Some emotions can be in a form of anger, happiness, surprise, shock, or frustration. The study focuses on the use of emotions such as surprise and shock as used by Nnamdi Azikiwe University undergraduate students using a qualitative approach. This paper adopts 15 students of Igbo L1 randomly at Arts Faculty, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka and through observation method as its methodology.

It emphasizes the phenomena of the use of language in the context of surprise and shock by interpreting the data. Since the research used qualitative research technique, the researcher employs elicitation method to extract the data from the respondents. This paper tends to answer the question, ‘what are the emotive expressions in the Igbo language?’ The data were analyzed using descriptive approach.

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 An explication of emotion expressions

Emotion is cognitive in nature. Goleman (1995) defines emotion as a feeling related to extra thoughts, including its biological and psychological states of mind regarding behaviors. Hence, emotion is multifaceted phenomenon,

defined as “general or specific affective status of individuals on a certain reference target” (Morris and Keltner, 2000). Emotions can refer to a general affective status of an individual, such as positive or negative moods, or to more specific or discrete affect (e.g., anger, joy, happiness, and fear) (Morris and Keltner, 2000). Discrete emotions, such as anger and joy, can be categorized into either positive or negative emotions (Diener, Smith and Fujita, 1995). Emotion can also be either intrapersonal or interpersonal (Morris and Keltner, 2000). The intrapersonal view of emotion considers an individual’s internal emotional experience, which plays within a person’s mind and influences her/his behavior (Isen, 1991). On the other hand, another stream of emotion theory considers emotion as interpersonal interaction which focuses on the role of external and observable expression of emotion in communication among people (Rafaeli and Sutton, 1991). Thus, emotion is either felt internally by one person (the intrapersonal view of emotion) or expressed to others (the interpersonal view of Emotional Experience).

Expressions of emotions in foreign languages

Emotions can be expressed in diverse forms. Communicating emotions is a crucial social activity (Fussell, 2002). There is an increasing interest in the perception and expression of emotions in a foreign language and more studies show that perception and expression of emotions in a foreign language is linked to various socio-biographical, cultural, and psychological factors (Dewaele, 2016, 2017; Ożańska-Ponikwia 2011; etc). Dewaele (2017) discusses communicating emotions in a foreign language. The author opines that multilingual people use more than one language in everyday life, whether they are learning a foreign or second language in school, or speaking two or more languages in daily transactions, or writing or publishing in a language that is not the one they grew up with; from native/non-native speaker to L1/LX user (Dewaele 2017).

In Dewaele (2016), thirty shades of offensiveness: L1 & LX English users’ understanding, perception & self-reported use of negative emotion-laden words were discussed. In the work, 30 emotion-laden words are extracted from British National Corpus that range in emotional valence from mildly negative to extremely negative 1159 English L1 users & 1165 English LX users. The words include; daft, bollocks, bugger, damn, fucking hell, lost your mind, fool, maniac, stupid, wacko, silly, wanker, thick, bonkers, bitch, lunatic, slut, shit, arsehole, cunt, fruitcake, jerk, moron, nutter, Idiot, bastard, prick, loser, weird, comedian.

In his conclusion, he states that communicating emotions in LX is not easy for it has important aspect of sociopragmatic competence and the combination of linguistic and cultural aspects

Concept of Interjection

In a simple way, interjection has to do with forceful expression of a happening. Emotional expressions can be expressed using interjection. Ameka (1992: 112) states that interjections have always been seen as formally marginal linguistic items because of their phonological aberration and syntactic independence. In addition, the author says that they have important functions in ‘express[ing] a speaker’s mental state, action or attitude or reaction to a situation’, and they have begun to receive more attention from linguists as well. Due to the complication in defining the term, several scholars have suggested interjections should be treated as a category with a prototype structure of central and marginal members (Gehweiler, 2010:315). In the words of Ameka (1992:108), the term interjection has been used both as a word-class label and as a functional description, while some prefer exclamation for the latter. Considering how interjections are ‘spontaneous, emotional reactions to a situation or to a sudden realization after internal reflection’, it makes sense that they are frequently used to express surprise (Gehweiler, 2010: 316). According to Norrick (2009), interjections often ‘signal both surprise and either positive or negative emotional involvement’.

Goddard (2014) discusses interjections and Emotion (with Special Reference to “Surprise” and “Disgust”). He uses instances from few languages to express his aims. For instance, “Surprise”-related Interjections in English is generally agreed that Wow! expresses a positive surprise reaction blended with something like “being impressed,” but previous analyses have differed in the details (Ameka, 1992a). In his analysis, in saying Wow! the speaker expresses a very positive reaction to some knowledge or experience (“I think like this now: ‘this is very good’”), registers that it goes beyond what he/she could have expected (“I didn’t know before that it can be like this”), and expresses a resulting very good feeling (“I feel something very good because of this”). The final line models the “impressed” quality by way of a visual experience prototype.

Wow!

- i. I think like this: “this is very good”
- ii. I didn’t know before that it can be like this
- iii. I feel something very good because of this
- iv. I feel like someone can feel when this someone sees something very big

Because Wow! expresses positive evaluation and good feeling, a sentence like; Wow!, ‘that’s terrible’, is odd unless it is intended sarcastically. Another indication of the positivity of ‘Wow!’ is that derived forms such as the verb to wow, and expressions like the ‘Wow’ factor and a ‘wow’ of a time, clearly imply very good feeling.

Secondly, 'Gee!' indicates that the speaker is a bit taken aback and needs a little time to absorb some new information (Goddard, 2014: 57). It is compatible with both good and bad assessments, that is, sentences like 'Gee!', that's great and 'Gee!', that's terrible are equally acceptable and well attested. 'Gee' is less acceptable with expressions of indifference or lack of interest: sentences like 'Gee!', *that's boring*, and 'Gee!', *I couldn't care less* sound odd to native speakers, unless interpreted sarcastically. Furthermore, the combinations 'Gee!', yes and 'Gee!', no are not well attested in WordBanks. This is consistent with the following explication because the component "I want to think about this for a short time" would clash with the speaker immediately offering an apparently definitive response (Goddard, 2014: 57).

Gee!

- i. I now know something
- ii. I want to think about this for a short time
- iii. I feel something because of this

Furthermore, Goddard (2014) states that 'Gosh!' indicates something like momentary bewilderment. Consistent with this interpretation, sentences like "*Gosh!, I don't know what to say*" sound natural and are well attested, but definitive continuations, such as "*Gosh!, I know exactly what to do*" and 'Gosh!', of course, sound odd and are infrequent in the WordBanks corpus.

Gosh!

- i. I now know something
- ii. I don't know what I can think about this
- iii. I feel something because of this

In another vein, Goddard (2014) discusses "Disgust"-related Interjections in English where he mentioned 'Yuck!' and 'Ugh!'. He gave a distinction between the two, while Yuck! has a stable word-like form, the pronunciation of Ugh! is both phonologically aberrant and more variable. Its final sound (rendered as gh in the spelling) is a voiceless fricative pronounced in the back of the mouth, typically velar, but sometimes post-velar or even uvular. The vowel quality also varies somewhat. One could perhaps interpret the final velar stop in Yuck! as a phonologically normalized version of the velar fricative. Yuck! and Ugh! have a broadly similar range of use (Goddard, 2014). They can be used in response to physical or sensory experiences such as tasting something very bad, confronting decaying food in the fridge, or finding vomit in a public toilet. But there are also some subtle differences. Intuitively Yuck! seems a bit less spontaneous and a bit less visceral. Consistent with this, the combination Oh yuck! is well attested in WordBanks, but not Oh Ugh! Likewise, sequences like Yuck! Yuck! Yuck! are found in WordBanks, but not Ugh!, Ugh!, Ugh! In his description, children often come out with Yuck! when rejecting the prospect of some kind of unwanted food, as if to indicate that they could not stand to think of such food entering their mouths. However, Yuck! can also sound natural in connection with real or imagined physical contact with a body part other than the mouth; for example, when some bird droppings land on one's arm or when one sees a squashed slug on the footpath.

The author states that the explication for Ugh! starts similarly, except that the aversive component is phrased in a more general way ("I don't want to be near something like this"), indicating something like revulsion. The next component offers a bodily analogy that suggests the physical reaction of retching ("when something bad happens in my mouth [m] because there is something bad in my mouth [m]").

Ugh!

- i. I think like this now: "this is something very bad"
- ii. I feel something very bad because of this
- iii. I don't want to be near something like this

Emotional expression in the Igbo language has gained few scholarly attentions. However, it is observed that Igbo expresses emotion with interjective elements.

Emenanjo (2015) has instances in his classification of the holophrases (i.e. Interjection or exclamation in traditional grammar) like;

(a) *Exclamation-words*

(H)aà	
(H)oò	
(H)eè	
(H)ewo	'GoodGod!'
Cheì	
Che	
èÀh	
aàÒ	
hoò	
Èheè	'Isee'
Olòlòlòlò(o)	'GoodGod!','Mygosh'
Tà/Taa/Taà	'Keep quiet'

Umeodinka and Nwobu (2021) view holophrases as single words which serve to convey complete idea or statement on their own. Through their deductions from the description of the characteristics of the phenomenon of holophrases, they came up with the following seven classes of holophrastic utterances in Igbo. In addition to Emenanjo's (2015) six classifications of holophrases which are: words of greeting/salutation, words of response, words of reaction, words of exclamation, words for calling/call, words for interrogation they added the following seven classifications: words of affirmation, words of blame, words of consolation, disapproval/refusal, words of condemnation, words of appreciation and words of appeal.

According to the authors, words of exclamation are words that show a sudden cry or remark expressing surprise, strong emotion or pain. Examples: (i) (H)aa, (ii) (H)oo, (iii) (H)ee, (iv) (H)ewo, (v) chei, (vi) chee, (vii) ahaa (viii) 'Ehee' (ix) 'Ololoololo(o)' as stated by Emenanjo are expressions that do not have a particular meaning but are dependent on whether what was reacted to is positive or negative. For example, 'Haa!' or 'Aa!' could mean what a mess, why now!, wonderful! and so on, depending on the situation. In analysis, Umeodinka and Nwobu (2021) state that analysis of the utterances is context based. It is the linguistic discipline that takes account of the manner in which language is employed in indicating what somebody really means in specific situations, especially when the actual words used may tend to mean something different. In pragmatics, meaning is related to the context of utterance. In it, language is seen as an action performed by the speaker. Hence, what decides the meaning of an utterance of a speaker is therefore the action and the way of the utterance by a speaker. Once a sentence is uttered, a speech act is performed, and this speech act depends on the context or conditions prevailing at the time the utterances were made. The type of utterance is determined by what knowledge the hearer has about the speaker. That is to say, the context is made up of the speaker, the hearer and the sentence. What this means is that the social context of an utterance maybe limited to social pleasantries, religious settings or to such factors like age, sex, or class of speakers.

From the classification the authors provided the context of response to a question, the context of reaction when somebody expresses an emotion, the context of affirming to a request and the context of exclamation expressing a surprise or strong emotion, the context of declaring somebody responsible for a fault. Others are the context of calling or screaming, the context of consolation, the context of disappointment, the context, of using expressions of disapproval, advice, appreciation and appeal. Each of those contexts is characterized by paralinguistic expressions (Umeodinka and Nwobu, 2021).

In the words of Honkanen and Müller (2021), surprise is the cognitive-emotional reaction to a situation that departs from one's expectations. The cognitive part is the reception of new, unexpected information. However, the emotive 'valence' of surprise can be positive, negative, or neutral (Ascone, 2015: 405). Shock on the other hand is an expression of mostly displeasure of a happening. This is also classified under interjection, but differs via the used lexicon. In their work, Honkanen and Müller (2021:5) discuss the words for surprise in several languages which is tagged the Nigerian interjections of surprise.

S/N	Interjection	Etymology	Comments
1	chai, chei, choi	Igbo	'surprise, pain and shock', Surprise, pain, shock, 'no difference between chai and chei in Igbo'
2	haba(h)	Hausa	'strong surprise linked with disbelief', Strong surprise linked with disbelief, 'strong negative emotion
3	Kai	Hausa	strong surprise', 'pity, sadness and strong surprise, pity, sadness, emotional pain
4	o(l) boy/boi, ohboi	Nigeria Pidgin	spelling distinguishes these from English oh boy spelling distinguishes these from English oh boy
5	shu(o), sho(u)	Nigeria Pidgin from Waffi and Sapele	Surprise- disgusted, amazed, or excited

From the above reviewed literature and instances, it has been observed that the concept of emotional expression, which is a cognitive concept, has channels of expression. However, this paper sets to give a holistic view on surprise and shock expressions in Igbo, and their functions.

3.0 Data Presentation and Analysis

In our data presentation, we present the Igbo surprise expressions as collected from the respondents which are the students in Arts Faculty, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka with their examples, followed by the shock expressions. This will enhance the understanding of the classification of emotive expressions using exclamatory words. Lee, Lee, Bassellier, and Faraj, (2010) classify Negative Surprise as in Shock, Disbelief, and Positive Surprise as in (Amazement, Astonishment), but for the purpose of this paper, we will classify them as surprise and shock expression. The paper adopts Green and Igwe (1963) tone marking convention which leaves the high tone (´) unmarked, but marks the low tone and the downstep tone with the grave accent (`) and macron (ˉ) respectively.

3.1 Igbo Surprise Expressions

6. ìgbà! (an exclamation expressing surprise, often used in amazement situations)

a. Lèe ndigūrū akwūkwoe à (look at educated people here)

In a scenario whereby someone was speaking a sound English grammar, and suddenly someone screamed surprisingly.

b. Foònu nkenù nyèrè ihe a chòrò (this phone satisfies its requirement)

Someone bought a new phone, and as the features of the phone are on display, a surprising expression was made.

7. òkòkòbiòkò! (an exclamation expressing surprise, often used in astonished situations)

a. A nà-èkwu nkè o mèrè, yamekwa òzò (the one he has done was still talked about, he did another)

This is a scenario of a positive happening whereby someone who is known for well-doing or philanthropist act has repeated a goodwill.

b. Èberè àlùkwaànụ di oo (Ebere is getting married oo)

An unbelievable positive happening where a lady whom people do not think can get married, suddenly gets married. It becomes a surprise to many people.

8. òòoyà! (an exclamation expressing surprise, often used in amazement situations)

a. O gòtèrè nnà yaugbòlà (he bought a car for his father)

This is a surprise expression of an amazement whereby someone was surprised that a young man bought a car for his father.

b. Ọ tūrū m n'anya (it surprised me)

A surprise expression of what one doesn't expect.

9. egbè! (an exclamation expressing surprise, often used in astonished situations)

a. Bìakwaahūrūlò (come and see a house)

An individual who has seen houses in his life, and coincidentally stumbles upon a house of a different caliber; suddenly screams out of surprise.

b. Ònyenwèkwà para para jìipunkenù? (who owns this nice jeep?)

An expression by someone who beheld a jeep of a high class, and in return, utters a surprise expression.

c. Nkè à bù lapùtòpù ògàrànyà (this one is a rich man's laptop)

This is an expression of an individual who finds a kind of laptop which he has not seen before with unique modern features. Out of surprise, expresses surprise.

Egbè seems to be more of surprise expression for non-living things.

10. ayàà! (an exclamation expressing surprise, often used in amazement situations)

a. Lègodinwaoma (behold a fine baby)

This is a surprise expression given when a man sees a pretty lady on the road.

b. Amaobisègburù ònweyā n'ìhe (Amaobi is very good at drawing)

Amaobi is an artist whose drawings have stolen the hearts of many. As someone beheld some of his drawings, came with the surprise expression.

Ayàà seems to be used when expressing features or attributes of living-things.

11. ọ wū yā! (an exclamation expressing surprise, often used in amazement situations)

a. Ùdịunòà jūrū n' Ọka (this type of house fills Awka)

When a particular house type has been seen in many parts of Awka, the individual showed it through the surprise expression when he collided with the similar type of house once again.

b. Àdanna b̀̀kwà onye egwū (Adanna is a good dancer)
 This portrays the fact that Adanna dances well as beheld by the individual.

12. ùpèè! (an exclamation expressing surprise, usually used in a sarcastic manner, and also used in extraordinary situations)

a. Ndiḡ egòàb̀̀ago (the rich people have come)

In an occasion when people are spraying money, suddenly there was a change in the atmosphere as a set of people walked in and began to spray much money in higher denomination. Someone screamed to express his uttermost surprise.

b. Nwanḡ mà aḡ akẁ̀kwò (this child is very brilliant)

A display of intelligence captures an individual who expresses the surprise in form of amazement.

This seems more of describing the degree of something.

13. ìchàkà ! (an exclamation expressing surprise, often used in astonished situations)

a. Ùgbonke à bù ìkùkù (this car is nice)

This is an expression of surprise to praise a car that has beautiful and attractive features.

b. Ñkenḡ wḡya (this one is great)

Another scenario where a new and modern car passes and an individual out of surprise made the comment.

14. èèè! (an exclamation expressing surprise, often used in unexpected situations)

a. Afò ise àgwugok̀̀tāk̀̀tā? (five years have finished now?)

This is a surprise expression a Law student received when he was telling his uncle of his graduation. In his uncle's explanation, it seems the nephew has just gotten an admission in the university. So, for him to have finished so fast was a surprise to him.

b. Ì s̀̀ kà ì b̀̀ja? (you decided to come?)

This is a surprise expression given when someone who has declined visitation, suddenly changes his/her mind and show up.

c. Anya nà ibè ya (surprised seeing you)

Unexpected visit or suddenly stumbling upon someone whom was not planned on meeting.

15. èwèè! (an exclamation expressing surprise, often used in astonished situations)

a. Àmāāḡ m nà ì gā-āpas̀̀ (I didn't know you will pass)

A student who passes an examination which was tough and lost hope thereafter, receives such a surprise expression from her friend.

b. Àmagh̀̀ m nà nnà g̀̀nò ebeah̀̀ (I didn't know your father was there)

Someone gave a report of happened in an event and added extra-happenings to the speech. The hearer then counters the lies stating that his father who was present at the occasion has given him a full story. In return, the speaker out of surprise, makes the expression.

16. ebeẁ̀! (an exclamation expressing surprise, often used in amazement situations)

a. Ngwaegwū hā zùr̀̀ èz̀̀ (their musical instrument is complete)

A musical group whose songs are sweet to the ears with well articulated instruments; hence attract such a surprise expression by a listener.

b. Mpa, k̀̀ò ìgbà ah̀̀ òzò (Man, play that drum again)

A melodious and skillful drum player has invoked the excitement in the minds of people. As the drumbeats ends, there was a surprise expression of the amazing performance, followed by a request for the repetition.

17. ègèdè! (an exclamation expressing surprise, often used in amazement situations)

a. Ùwà ̀̀mas̀̀ nà Chi oo (good life is from God)

This is a surprise expression in celebrating a good tiding.

From the above examples (6-17), it is observed that the surprise expressive words are used mostly in reacting to positive attitudes or something worth praising, emphasis laying, etc. In as much that people can use some of the words interchangeably, but it can still be within a given context which is still affected by some factors like language exposures and others. We also observed that some students were using the same expressive word for different scenario instances. This shows the level of their acquired knowledge on the content. This is in line with Barrett et al. (2011) that state that the study of emotion perception is in the understanding of how the context influences how people perceive emotional expression.

In the surprise expressions, it is also seen that some nouns are motivated by sounds (onomatopoeia) which are instances of musical instruments. For example, *ígbà*, *ìchàkà*, etc. Also, we have *egbè* which occurs as a result of its sound.

Furthermore, some are formed by vowel stretching. Examples are; *èweē*, *èèè*, *ayàà*, etc. We see that *e/a* are stretched respectively.

3.2 Igbo Shock Expressions

There are several shock expressions as observed from the respondents, with the following instances;

18. *Hei!* (an exclamation expressing shock, often used in terrible situations)

a. *Ọ dī egwù* (it is terrible)

At the sight of a terrible act.

b. *Ihe nkēnī ekwēghīm ghota* (I couldn't understand this thing)

When something that is terrible happens beyond the imagination of an individual, there is an expression of shock.

c. *À Furō onye a kòrò* (there is nobody to report to)

This is a shocking expression of an event that has kept an individual dumbfounded.

19. *Ei!* (an exclamation expressing shock, often used in unfavourable situations. Nevertheless, some use it in both favourable and unfavourable situations)

a. *Ihe ukwu mèrè* (terrible things happened)

This shows that something huge and terrible has happened.

b. *Ọ gīnī kà m nà-ànu?* (what am I hearing?)

This happens when someone hears a bad news about something, and reacts through the use of shock expression.

c. *Lèkwanū anyabikōnū* (imagine this)

The context of this statement is on the negative side.

20. *Haaà!* (an exclamation expressing shock, often used in negative unexpected situations)

a. *Lèkwaabū m, ajiadīghī yā* (see my armpit, there is no hair in it)

When there is an evil act, followed by serious investigation or suspense, an individual uses the expression.

b. *Òmumeyā riri m ọnū* (I was confounded by his action)

This is triggered by the horrible act of an individual.

c. *Ọ sī nà nneyā gbājiri ọkpà* (she said that her mother's leg was broken)

For someone's leg to be broken, it's a negative and painful happening which warrants a shock expression.

21. *Kai!* (an exclamation expressing shock, often used in painful situations)

a. *Ebenebegbūrū* (terrible thing happened)

b. *Èbēē kà a gā-èbido?* (where will we start from?)

This expression has its context in a scenario where something bad happens.

c. *Ozi à kpàrà m nkujà* (the news shocked me)

A sad or bad news has the ability to release shock on individual.

22. *Hewù!* (an exclamation expressing shock, often used in unfortunate situations)

a. *Ị sī nà Okèzienwūrū?* (did you say that Okezie die?)

Death is a shock experience which always is followed by a shock expression.

b. *Obinna sòkwù esē igbo* (Obinna is among the marijuana smokers)

Smoking marijuana is an unacceptable act in the society. Hence, the news of an individual's involvement in such brings shock especially a supposed well-behaved individual.

c. *Nsoàlà èmebigwo* (taboo has spoiled)

This happens in a scenario whereby someone committed a taboo, and nothing was done about it, unlike before when such act attracts penalty.

23. *Ewōō!* (an exclamation expressing shock, often used in pitiful situations)

a. *Ìkùkù kùtùrù osisiahū* (the wind pulled down the tree)

Destruction is a shock experience.

b. *Nwa Àmàrà nwūrū ùnyàahū* (Amara's child died yesterday)

Death brings shock in the society.

24. *Híàà!* (an exclamation expressing shock, often used in shocking situations)

a. *Ụwankeà sef* (this world really)

This expression always occurs when a terrible thing happen.

b. *Mmadū adīrōzīkwā ndū* (human is not alive anymore)

When someone was hit lightly and he fell down and died. It was shock news which triggered the statement.

c. Yabù ètuà kà òkè yàsì gá (so that's how his own went)

This happens when something bad happens to an individual.

25. ayii! (an exclamation expressing shock, often used in negative unexpected situations)

a. Ihe nkenụ àwụọ m̄ akpataoyī (this thing has given me goosebumps)

When goosebumps appear on someone's body after a news, it's a sign that the information is terrific.

b. Owùtèrè m̄ òkè ukwu (it pained me so much)

A painful news comes with shock.

26. Chai! (an exclamation expressing shock, often used in terrible/painful situations)

a. Bikō òzọemēzīnā (please, another should not happen)

Normally, people want good things to happen repeatedly to them. However, whenever one hears something like, 'another shouldn't happen', it is a sign that what happened is a negative thing.

b. Akukọ à jòrò njo (this story is bad)

Sad story or news causes shock expression.

c. Jide obi gị aka nwa m̄ (hold your heart my child)

In Igbo culture, when a person is in pain especially when he/she lost a loved one, he will be told to hold his heart in form of consolation.

27. Chei! (an exclamation expressing shock, often used in terrible/painful situations)

a. Arū mērè n'òbòdò (an abomination happened in the town)

An abominable act comes with shock when the information is circulated.

b. Kèduđiđiđiđi ihe à (what kind of sickness is that)

Sickness is a negative phenomenon, which can cause shock when the information is shared.

28. Aa! (an exclamation expressing shock, often used in doubtful situations)

a. Ha sī nà ọ naghīzī èkwuokwū (they said that he doesn't talk again)

Human is a social being with the freedom of speech. Hence, when a person is in a situation whereby he/she has lacked the capacity to talk, it becomes a terrible challenge.

b. Mmadū ànwūrū nà m̀bèrèdè à? (did someone die in this accident?)

Accident and death are sad events which cause shock to the people when such news is passed to them.

29. Ihe! (an exclamation expressing shock, often used in unfortunate situations)

a. Lèkwa ùwà mmebi (see a collapsing world)

There are many things that one can see and marvel, especially horrible things that happen in today's world.

b. Isị nà Uchè riri ùgwọkwụkwọyā (did you say that Uche squandered her school fees)

It is a sad reality for a student to squander her school fees. It is a sign of irresponsibility which is negative sign.

From the above examples (18-29), it is observed that the shock expressive words are used mostly in reacting to negative attitudes, something worth condemning, unfortunate things or painful thing. However, people tend to use some of the words interchangeably, but it can still be within a given context which is still affected by some factors like language exposures and others. This is in line with Barrett et al. (2011) that state that the study of emotion perception is in the understanding of how the context influences how people perceive emotional expression. Additionally, Dewaele & Pavlenko (2002) consider that language proficiency has an impact on the number of emotion lemmas (word types) expressed by an individual.

We can also point that tone plays a role here whereby 'ihe' means many things in Igbo such as 'ihè' (light), 'ihe' (thing), whereas we have 'ihe' as an emotive expression.

4.0 Summary and Conclusion

This paper investigates emotive expressions in Igbo showing the several surprise and shock expressions.

Firstly, there are several surprise and shock expressions in Igbo as observed from the data which are either for surprise or shock expressions. It means that many conditions have unique way of expressing them with the use of certain exclamatory elements. As the Igbo language keeps evolving as a result of language growth, there are new introduced words for expression which are rampant among the younger generation. However, the usage has gained acceptance in the language as a medium of expression with its semantics intact.

Secondly, it is observed that the nouns were all used as surprise expressions. Additionally, some nouns are motivated by sounds (onomatopoeia) which are musical instruments.

Furthermore, though it can be said that although shock and surprise expressions are exclamation words, surprise expressions point to more of positive perspective whereas the shock expressions point to more of negative

perspective. Some people might find it difficult placing which one should be where, but the context is of essence. Also, the usages also differ from individual as one might use a particular expression in a situation, whereas another person uses different exclamation for the same context.

In conclusion, it is observed that expressing surprise and shock in Igbo cuts across the use of interjective words and nouns. This means that people tend to use certain nouns to express surprise and shock scenarios which are beyond the instances given by the previous research of the scholars. Also, this paper adds to the existing identified interjections by scholars like (Emenanjo, 2015; Umeodinka, & Nwobu, 2021) such as *ìgbà, òkòkòbiòkò, òòoyà, egbè, ayàà, ọ wụ yà, ụpèè, ègèdè, ebewù, ihe*, etc which serves as the gap that the paper fills. As a result of language growth or innovation which is a feature of a language, these expressions have gained ground in their usage among the people.

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