

**URBAN YOUTH LANGUAGE OF ONITSHA, AN EMERGING SPEECH STYLE**

**BY**

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**NOVEMBER 2022**

## **APPROVAL PAGE**

I certify that this research was carried out by **ANACHUNA IFUNANYA THERESA** in the Department of linguistics studies, faculty of Arts University of Benin under my supervision.

This also certifies that the content embodied in this project work is original and has not been submitted in any other degree or diploma programme or any other university

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## **PLAGIARISM CERTIFICATION**

I, **ANACHUNA IFUNANYA THERESA** with the matriculation number **ART 1709191** declare that the title **The Semantic Analysis of the Concept URBAN YOUTH LANGUAGE OF ONITSHA, AN EMERGING SPEECH STYLE** has successfully passed the anti-plagiarism and so does not violate copy right regulation.

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Date: 29/11/2022

## **DEDICATION**

This project is dedicated to The Almighty God for his Unending mercies and grace who has guided me from my freshman year to period, to my wonderful parents and siblings. Finally, I dedicate this project work to those who are not opportune to pass through formal education.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## ABSTRACT

This study examined the emergence variety of Igbo in Onitsha and the study focused on the speech style of Urban Onitsha youths. The emergence of globalization in the 21 century has made the youth to employ language in a remarkable way to shape and advance to new Identity for urban youth language, emerging speech style of youths which may be regarded as a new dialect and every day, it continues to experience and go through innovations. The major focus of this research work is to analyse where and how the the emerging speech style affect the lives of the youth and Igbo people as a whole. The research questions are, who are the speakers of youth language in urban Onitsha and how the urban youth language develop. The features of youth language in urban Onitsha, Is urban Onitsha youth language an anti-language? And how the urban language contribute to communication among the youth and the older youth?.

The objectives of this study are to identify the speakers of youth's language in Urban Onitsha. To find out how youth language develops in urban Onitsha, Examine the features of the youth language of urban Onitsha, to determine the status of the youth language in the society and examine how the youth language of urban Onitsha contribute to the mutual understanding and communications among the youths and other members. This research employs both the primary and secondary method of data collecting needed for this research, since the main focus of this research work where youths, particularly youth who are fans of Onitsha language. Part of the data were collected from prominent speakers of Igbo language from the department of Linguistic studies were also used as a method of data collection. It was found from the study that Youth language emerge from the mainstream language and has slangs, heavy vernacular, pidgin, non standard vocabulary, style shifting, and other host of linguistics and others as it's scope and features. Youths as one of the most influential social groups has employed their own language in a remarkable way to shape and advance to new Identity for themselves.

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **1.1 URBAN YOUTH LANGUAGE OF ONITSHA, AN EMERGING SPEECH STYLE**

Urban youth languages represent a particular type of speaking, a performance register which contains languages with much slang and many lexical manipulations. In this perspective there are youths who distinguish themselves from others, in a given anthrop-social space (neighbourhood, City, region, country) by the particular way they on which they speak. These ways of speaking have specificities that adhere to Linguistics processes common to other youth languages e.g. (Morphological and Semantic manipulations, Significant borrowing, etc.) irrespective of their inception.

The emergence of globalization in the 21<sup>st</sup> century has attendant challenges on language especially among youths. Youths have employed language in most remarkable way to forge new identification for themselves. Youth's language are used by adolescents, young artist, business men and some area boys or touts in a speech community. The youth language is not a formal language but it can be used on some formal settings such as schools, churches and other places but it is widely used in markets places, business vicinities, in the streets, in music industries and in talk shows for entertainment.

The youths language varieties have closer affinities with the mainstream language as most of lexical collections are derived from the language vocabulary. In description terms, the youth varieties represents a more informal and colloquial style of urban speech

laced with slang, unusual use of lexis and frequent borrowing or code switching. The youth speech style of language community should not be conceived of a distinct linguistic variety, but rather as related to an urban variety, especially in terms of syntax and grammatical morpheme.

Some authors stress that urban youth varieties are based on identifiable mainstream urban varieties. The implications here is that although those varieties are socially unique, their structures cannot be expected to be radically different from the mainstream varieties on which they are based.

Historically, the varieties that we now placed under the cover terms “Urban youth language” which is also associated with “Anti languages” owing to the fact that they were initially associated with people on the margins of society such as, prisoners, ex – convicts, gangsters and some street wise youths ranging from 16 years to 48 years old. However, the youth’s language have certain attributes of reasons for development apart from secrecy which is initially one of the main development of the youth’s language. “Secrecy in the sense that people belonging to one particular groups like artists would want to have their own code of interactions, youths languages is not static rather dynamic in nature as the youth of today can be the elders of tomorrow and as new generations elopes, the youth brings up new methods and style of their language use.

## **1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

The major problem of this research work is that there is a negligence of the study of youth language in Igbo, therefore, this study is an attempt to fill that gap by studying the ‘Urban youth language in Onitsha’.

### **1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

1. Who are the speakers of youth language in urban Onitsha?
2. How does the urban youth language develop in Onitsha?
3. What are the features of youth languages in urban Onitsha?
4. Is urban Onitsha youth language an anti – language?
5. How does the urban youth language contributes to communication among the youths and the older?

### **1.4. OBJECTIVES OF STUDY**

1. To identify the speakers of youths language in urban Onitsha
2. To find out how youth language develops in urban Onitsha
3. To examine the features of the youth language of urban Onitsha
4. To determine the status of the youth language in the society

5.How does the youth language of urban Onitsha contributes to the mutual understanding and communications among the youths and other members of the society?

### **1.5 METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION**

This research employs both the primary and secondary method of data collecting needed for this research. The main focus of this research work where youths, particularly youth who are fans of Onitsha language. Part if the data were collected from prominent speakers of Igbo language from the department of Linguistic study and those students were Chidiebele, (25yrs), Ebube, (23yrs), Chiamaka (24yrs) and I am also a source of data collection as a competent speaker of Onitsha language . Participant observation in-depth recorded interactions with the indigenes of Onitsha and youths residing around Onitsha with their age ranging from (18-36).

### **1.6 THE IGBO LANGUAGE, PEOPLE AND CULTURE.**

Igbo is used to refer to both the people of the Eastern part of Nigeria and their language. They are the people living chiefly in south-eastern Nigeria who speak Igbo, a language of the Benue- Congo branch of the Niger Congo family. The Igbo may be grouped into the following main cultural divisions : Northern, Southern, Western, Eastern.

Before European colonization, the Igbo were not limited as a single unit but live in autonomous communities.

Most Igbo traditional have been subsistence framers, their samples bring yam, cassava and taro. The other crops they grow includes corn (maize), melons, okra, pumpkin and beans. Land is own communicably by kingship groups and is made available for individual for framing and building. Some livestock, important as a source of prestige and for use in sacrifices, is kept. The principal exports are palm oil and palm kernel, trading local crafts, and wage labour also are important in Igbo economy and high literacy rate has helped many Igbo to become civil servant and business experts.

Traditional Igbo religion includes belief in creator god (chukwu or cheneke) , an earth goddess ( Ala), and merinos dirties and spirit as well as belief in ancestors who protect their living descendants. Revelation of will of the deities is sought by divination and oracles. Many Igbo are now Christians practicing a syncretic version of Christianity intermingled with their indigenious beliefs.

The Igbos, their language and culture are interwoven. It cannot exist on isolation because and culture is their source of identification and Igbo communities are enriched with different significant culture. Most of this culture includes, chieftaincy, titles, festivals such as ofala festivals, New yam festivals etc. ceremony rites which includes burials, married ceremony, naming ceremony and so on.

## **1.7 ONITSHA AS A CITY**

Onitsha is a city located on the Eastern bank of Niger, River, in Anambra state, Nigeria. A monopolization city. Onitsha is known for its river port and as an economic hub for

commerce, industry and education. It host the Onitsha main market, the largest market in Africa in terms of geographical size and volume of goods and services rendered there.

Onitsha is a melting pint, all people from all parts of Igbo land live in Onitsha and so because of so, the kind of youth language in Onitsha is the original Igbo youth language, and that is why I am choosing Onitsha has a case study as well as a people who loves that as my source of data collection.

As a result of the multi-ethnic nature of Onitsha city, there is an emergence of a number of social cultural formations which share a common set of perspectives, create antonomy and maintain identification, one of theses subcultures is the notorious Nkpor boys and obosi boys which is defined around gangs and has it's own symbolic language. Other such, groups includes the existing Nigerian university cult group( like Red devils, Buccaneers, kkk etc.) and a number of traditional youths initiation groups like the Kagite ( Popularly known as palm wine drinkers club) and the National Association of seadogs (Pirates) they are all associated with a particular location, innovation of spiritual powers and physical violence. There is a common goals that unites all the subcultures, specifically to guest for collectivism and individualism. There is sharing of common set of objectives, special language , unique style, distinct values, norms and a sense of belongings

## **CHAPTER TWO**

The Chapter is aimed at examining the already existing or few documented works which are related to youth languages across the world. They would vividly be examined and discussed. This chapter is divided into different parts

### **2.1 CONCEPTUAL REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

#### **2.1.1 Youth Language**

The concept of youth in contemporary African parlance has become a form of exclusion but youth is a complex fluid and permeable category which is historical and socially situated. The youths has been identified as a marginal, deviant and potentially violent group due to the socio-economic potential of some African countries, it has magnetically attracted people, especially youths, from far and wide in search of employment and educational opportunities given the presence of some universities around some countries in Africa

Given the multilingual landscape of Nigeria, English Nigeria pigin, Efik, Ibibio, Annay, Yoruba, Hausa and igbo constitutes the linguistics and social background. Atimes most of the youth languages are referred to as tiguage of the wayward (youths), which depicts the character of being street like ,dirty or gutter language that is invariably outside the norms of societal ideologies and expectations. Albrecht (1993:25) maintains that these deviants' languages forms often refer not to the speech of the whole age group but rather ways of speaking which are judged deviant and exotic

### **2.1.2 Antilanguage**

The term “Antllanguage” was created by British linguist M.A.K Halliday. Antilanguage is a minority doaked or method of communicating within a minority speech community that excludes members of the main speech community. Anti-language maybe understood as extreme versions of social dialects they tend to arise among subcultures and groups that occupy a marginal or precarious position in society, especially where central activities of the group place them outside the law. Most of the youth languages across Nigeria has some biases of anti-language. An example of how anti-language may apply can be seen in the language used by thugs and street gangs members, they may use different words to refer to something completely alien to the word for instance they may refer to a gun as a banana or any other word of their choice.

Cryptolect is also a type of anti-language but much more coded and secretive. It is the jargon or argot of a group, often employed to exclude or mislead people outside the group. It is strictly a proper language with its own grammar, used to prevent understanding by outsiders. Some scholars indicate that anti-language is a special lexicological variety or code created and used by certain groups of interlocutors and embodied by an anti-society by this way, anti-language is only communicated and understood within one particular group and it categorically excludes outsiders from such communications

### **2.1.3 Language Attitudes and Sterotypes**

Youth languages is often commented upon by adults, and it's frequent topic in the media. Parents and teachers often have a critical and negative attitude toward adolescents mixing and youth language, judging its as "sloppy" and attempting to correct vernacular features such as local accents, slang words, discourse particular, or code mixing. Youths themselves are quite concerns of these attitudes as well as of generational differences on their speech

According to schlobinski et el. ( 1993:169-203) youths evaluates their speech positively, but at the same time hold it to be inappropriate for group external purposes e.g for a job interviews. Many Media refers or reports on youth languages are ambivalent, oscillating between stigmatization and acceptance; moreover, they tend to exaggerate its difference from adult speech

## **2.2 EMPIRICAL REVIEW**

For over a decade, publications has been appealing to the nation of "Urban Youth Languages" across the world .Androutsopoulos and scholz 1998, Bulot 2004, Combet et el 2004, Norman Jorgenson 2010, Kies ling and mous 2004, in their perspectives sees urban youth languages speakers as "youth" who distinguish themselves from others in a given anthropo-social space ( Neighbourhood, city, region country) by the particular way in which they speak, these ways of speaking love specificities that adhere to linguistic process common to other "Youth languages" e.g ( Morphological and semantic

manipulations, significant borrowing etc ) irrespective of the languages that contributed to their inception. Boyer et al (1993) states that in some francophone African countries, language practices that have been categorized as “parlers Jeunes / youth languages for example, camfranglais / Francanglais spoken in Cameroon involves francophone “Youth socialized in an Urban- and consequently plurilingual- environment, whatever their social membership a level of education.

Paul Kerswill (University of New York) says that youth language in London is labile, contingent and transit, subject to fashion, serving as a badge of nonconformity, but above all, constructing for its speakers a set of complex identities for deployment as markers of different stances in relation to varying interlocutors and shifting conversational context. He further stated that a major strand of youth language research concentrates on those new urban London ways of speaking as markers of identity : they are seen primarily as registers, or styles reflecting young people’s particular communicative choices. As Svendsen and Poyneland (2008) and Quist’s (2008) point out at least in European, urban youth languages Basted and is seen as varieties or lists , distinguishable from other varieties or list by applying descriptive Linguistic techniques. North European and Sub – Saharan African urban youth languages has quite detailed lists of this kind for Dutch which end up resulting to tabulated list of highly desperate features which may be Syntactic, Morphological, phonological, Supra segmental, lexical or discourse pragmatic.

Nigeria being a multi-lingual society, youth languages exist in all parts of the major languages groups in Yoruba a prominent youth language exist in Oyo/ Ibadan state in the East, Onitsha has a well-developed youth language also in South- South, an hybrid street language exist among Agaba Boys in Calabar.

Uter Reuster- Jahn's essay from slang to sleek changing language attitude of urban youths in Tanzania question the changing attitude of urban youth on Tanzania towards the use of their Kiswahili based youth language. A popular musical environment Bogo flawa used music to spread the use of this youth language until it transformed into a commercial proper music band. This brought about decrease in the prestige and use of language in question among the people of Tanzania.

### **2.2.1. Slang**

Slang is a common sociolinguistic feature found in every speech community.

In the past, it was viewed as informal and associated with the less privileged and with persons of a low or disreputable character (cf. Bussman, 1996; Crystal, 1997; Johnson and Shirley, 2005; McGregor, 2009). According to Johnson and Shirley (2005), slang can be described as “informal, nonstandard words or phrases (lexical innovations) which tend to originate in subcultures within a society”. For Crystal (1997:53), it is “A colloquial departure from standard usage; it is often imaginative, vivid, and ingenious in its construction – so much so that it has been called the ‘plain man’s poetry’.”

Presently, slang has taken another form. Slang expressions could add new meanings to existing words, thereby, enriching the lexicon of any given language (cf. Jowitt, 1991).

Harris (1994) defines slang expressions as “Terms that are made up or are given new definitions [by a social group] in order to make the terms novel or conventional [such that people outside the social group are excluded from the group’s discussions]”. No wonder Winkler (2007: 142) says, “Slang often originates in a particular group and then may spread out to parts of the general population...Some slang words even become part and parcel of the common lexicon and may no longer be considered slang...”

Onitsha is located in Anambra State, and it is one of the major commercial cities which attracts the presence of people from various cultures across Nigeria, including Igbo speakers with different dialects. Igbo is the mothertongue and the dominant language of the people of Anambra State. However, Otu-Onitsha dialect is spoken predominantly by the non-indigenes of Onitsha. The title, Otu-Onitsha, is based on the heterogeneity that is implicit in it. ‘Otu’ is the name of the main Onitsha market which accommodates people from other dialect and areas of Igbo (Ikekeonwu, 1987:186). This particular study is basically on the use of slang by Otu-Onitsha speech community. It should be noted that some of the Igbo slang expressions in use in this speech community are gradually penetrating into Enu-Onitsha speech community. Enu-Onitsha is the abode of the indigenes of Onitsha, and the place accommodates people from different dialect areas.

### **2.2.2 Ambiguity**

This work deals with ambiguity manifestation in the youth language. Ambiguity is one of the features of natural languages. It is a situation where a word, phrase or sentence is prone to different interpretations.

From klineFromklin et el.(2003:574)states that 'ambiguity' is the term used to describe a word,phrase or sentence with multiple meaning. Fromklin further stated that Syntactic knowledge is not just only about determining which words or sentences or phrases that are combined together to make complete sense or the sentences that are not grammatical. The youth language contains ambiguity in the sense that it bear both the meaning of the mainstream variety and the intended meaning of the speakers.

Crystal (1985) states that 'ambiguity ' is the reference to a word or sentence which expresses more than one meaning and this reference has to do with linguistics. Hartland and Stock (1961:11) states that ambiguity in natural languages is a construction which allows more than one interpretation. An instance is this:

"Nkata ikpara ga ekpudo gi"

This utterance can be used by both the youths and adults of the urban Onitsha and it bears different meanings which are:

Literal meaning \_\_\_ The basket you make will cover you

Youth's meaning \_\_\_The arrangement you make would scatter

Other meaning \_\_\_The discussion you have will catch up with you.

### **2.3 CONCERN OF PRESENT STUDY.**

Having inspect critically the works of other scholars, this work therefore set out to examine and analyze the Urban Onitsha youth speech style as an emerging variety of Igbo.

This present study constitute five chapter. Chapter one gives a general introduction of the study. Chapter two reviews literature relevant to our study. In chapter three, data are presented as well as the theoretical methods adopted for the study is also revealed. Nevertheless in chapter four, the analysis of data is discussed critically while chapter five give the conclusion, findings and summary of the study so far.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **DATA PRESENTATION**

#### **3.0 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter presents the body of data which comprises the different categories of Onitsha Urban youth speech style that will be analysed. This is relevant because this study analyses the different possible speech style that can be employed in the formation of various Igbo social, economic and other functions while discussing.

The emerging youth speech style used in Igbo land can be formed or expanded by various social factors and events in order to perform certain functions like esthetic or withy function, comic functions, social function ,etc.

There are several manifested slangs and emerging youth languages in Igbo land as a whole but this study is restricted to an analysis of the data that time permits the research to gather for the study within Anambra as an Igbo speech community.

#### **3.1 DATA PRESENTATION**

This section presents the list of data used in our chapter four. It is being arranged in the order in which it is to be analysed on the functions of youth speech style in Anambra axis.

Table 1: social context

1	Bee n' igwe	Cry on iron	To call on phone
2	M' ga emere ya ji na aja	I will prepare yam and sand for him	To deal with somebody
3	Ụmụaka highway	Children on a speedy road	Wayward youth/arm robbers
4	I bụ onye mgbu	You are someone who goes through pain	Someone who messes up
5	Ọ bu onye mgbaji aka	He is a breaker of hand	He is a back stabber
6	O wulu nna ya n'ala	He pour his father on the ground	He disgraced/insulted his father
7	The nwa alala assi	The child has	The child is a

		gone to asylum	wasted one
8	Ati gị na awu n'ala	Your attire is pouring on the ground	You dress well/you look good
9	Onye imi	Nose person	Someone who is a betrayer
10	Ka anyị bubazie the matter	Let's carry the matter Inside	Let's forget about the matter
11	I ga anụ ụda egbe ndị nso	You will hear the holy sound of gun	You will hear from me unexpectedly
12	Biko gbadokwa ányá	Please shoot hold eyes	Please be very careful
13	Nwoke anaghị ezo ọnụ	A man does not hide his mouth	A real man does not suppose to be afraid
14	Hapụ ihe edere n' ugbo banye	Leave what is written on the vehicle and hop in	You shouldn't be judge a book by it's cover

15	Gbanye torch n'ime your face	On torch on your face	Put on a smiling face or a nice expression
16	Ndị Jụ ga apia gi oku	Jew people will flog you light/fire	People you underestimate will deal with you
17	Jee gbawa door	Go and break the door	Go and do your worse
18	Ka m ga tachie ulcer	Let me go and close ulcer	Let me go and eat
19	Kpaputa ya ka ọ sie	Bring it out let it smell	Release the money or something
20	Omela m handicap n' okwu ọnu	He has handicapped my speech	He silenced my own opinion

Table 2: Economic life context

1	O butego ike penticost	He has carried the power of	He has hit big money
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		pentecost	
2	Ka m ga Kota ego	Let me go and harvest money	Let me go and earn money/hustle
3	A nọ m n'ihu oru	I am in the face of work	I am in a business transaction
4	Ka anyị jee tọ Ludo na obodo oyibo	Let's go and play Ludo abroad	Let's go and try today's business luck
5	Ka anyị kwuo ya two by two	Let's break it two by two	Let's divide it equally
6	Nyem red	Give me red colour	Give me ₦10 currency
7	White	Asin colour	₦50 currency
8	Ree ya n'uma green	Sell it at the rate of green	Sell it at the rate of ₦20
9	The guy ma ihe orụ nyelu	The guy knows what work give	The guy knows how to do business
10	Anaghị akpọ aga na express	They don't play at the express way	They don't joke with business hour.

11	I na awum n' ala	You are pouring me on the ground	You are disgracing and embarrassing me
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Table 3 : Social evil context

12	Ọ bu onye afia-ike	He is a strong market person	He is a drug dealer
13	O na akpọ oko	To call rise	Someone who takes cocaine/hard drugs
14	Ntụ/oko/afia	Ashes/rise/market	Drug/cocaine
15	O na atụ afia mkpu	He import seeds	He import bullet
16	Ịpia igwe	To flog iron	To shot
17	Ita aki onu	To eat mouth kola	To kiss
18	Ịpia ọkụ	To flog fire	To have sex
19	Onye nrụtu aka	Person who chucks hand	A lesbian/ guy
20	Ha bu umu ọma ọsịsọ	They are good fast children	They are prostitute

Table 4: Social -cultural/post proverbial context

1	Anaghị akpa matches n' okwu mmuo	Matches are not lit up in hell fire	In abundance of things, little amount added would not be noticeable
2	Anaghị enyi trouser agba egwú egedege	One does not wear trousers in dancing traditional music	When you are in Rome, behave like a Roman/Respect people's traditions
3	Tinye onwe gi n' chain	One should chain himself/herself	One should be guided/caution himself/herself
4	Nwa a bu onye ótí	This child is a beater	This child is a son of the soil
5	Anyị ga a wunyere gi ọnođụ	We would pour situation on you	We would host you
6	O bughị mmiri nílé zoro ezo ka a na echekeo	Not all the rainfalls are being fetched	Not every insult or abuse thrown at one that one should take to heart.
7	Edi tará ya aki ọnu	The deer kissed his mouth	He is a foolish person
8	Ọ na étiri okuko aki na	He feeds the chicken in	He is not doing well in

	nkịtị	vain	his business
9	Ime ala ya bu ozara	Her inner land is a desert	A barren or an unfruitful women
10	Gbára ọgwụ gị nuo	Take your pills and drink	Mind your self.

### 3.2 METHOD OF DATA ANALYSIS

The major framework for our data analysis is Basic Linguistics Theory. Also, insights from other sociolinguistics theories would be used where necessary. However, some comments need to be made on certain elements of the framework. We observe that the context of use is important in a bid to deduce the linguistic errors in the movie. The context of use also gives an insight into the type of speech style and its intended meaning. On instrumentality, all our data belong to the spoken (oral) medium. All the data analysed belong to the different types of linguistic and language meaning based on Johnson and Shirley (2005) concept of slang.

In all, fifty (50) of the Onitsha youth speech style have been selected above and will be analysed using Dryer's Descriptive analysis. The analysis of the datas are done based on how they relate to meaning, which caused for the productions of these speech style and how they come about, the cultural meaning in Igbo language, the literally meaning and the meaning in use, which further shows the purpose of the speech style.

### 3.3. BASIC LINGUISTIC THEORY

Basic linguistics theory is a traditional grammar modified in various ways by other theoretical framework encompassing different points of view, and criticisms of specific practices within basic linguistics theory can be often be constructed as theory-internal disagreement as easily as criticisms of basic linguistic theory itself. The improvement in basic linguistic theory over the past twenty-five years have not been promoted by specific attempt to improve it. Since most linguistic have failed to recognize its status as a theoretical framework. Developments have been the side effect of work in typology and there is every reason to believe that further development will continue in coming decades, both because of work in typology and quite possibly from new ideas from some other quarters. However further improvement might develop if more functional, typological or descriptive linguistic theory as a theory.

The basic linguistic theory has emerged as the dominant theoretical framework for describing language although there is a widespread failure of linguists to recognize its stature as a theoretical framework. There are many ways; however, in which the field has suffered from this failure to recognize the need for both descriptive theory and explanatory theories. In an apparent retreat from his position in some of his earlier work, emphasizes the need to recognize

linguistic structure independent of function: if there are functional explanation for why languages are the way they are we need to have some way of describing the things that are being explained.

There is another negative consequence of the failure to distinguish descriptive theory from explanatory theory and recognize basic linguistic theory as a theory. Because of the false contrast linguists see between descriptive and theory, and because of the higher prestige associated with what is called theory work in basic linguistic theory is often dismissed as merely "descriptive. Thus if a linguist analyzes a set of data using some transient theory like minimalism, or optimality theory or head-driven phase structure grammar, the analysis will be characterized as ' theoretical ' but if a linguist analyze a set of data using basic linguistic theory, the analysis will be characterized as descriptive'. But this is simply confused.

The analysis assuming basic linguistic theory is just theoretical in the sense that it assumes a theoretical framework just like the other analyses. And the analysis in the transient theory is also descriptive in that it provides a descriptive of the data. Now it is true that analyses in other theoretical framework often do more than describe the data; but make some additional theoretical point that the fact they are describing bear on. But this is usually because the transient theory is not only intended as a descriptive theory but as an explanatory theory as well and the additional theoretical point being made is at least partly of significant to the explanatory goals of the theory. In addition ,the theoretical

point involves pointing to the need for some modification to the theory. But the analog happens with description in basic linguistic theory: some theoretical significance is drawn from the facts being described sometimes, it point to some need to improve the tools we have for describing languages, in which it is analogous to

issues arising from analyses in transient theories pointing to the need to change that theory. More commonly, however, it points to the existence of a phenomenon not previously attested. Since basic linguistic theory does not attempt to be a restrictive theory, new phenomena are often easy to describe in basic linguistic theory does not attempt to be a restructure theory, new phenomena are often easy to describe in basic linguistic theory and do not point to a need revise the theory, beyond the addition of new concepts such as discoveries are of obvious theoretical significance to typological theory. It must be admitted that it is often the case that the primary goals of work in basic linguistic theory is descriptive, without any intended theoretical significance, so that, it is theoretical only in the sense that it employs a theoretical framework namely basic linguistic theory. Furthermore, even if much work in basic linguistic theory is primarily descriptive in its purpose, these descriptions provide the major source of data for theoretical work in typology. In that sense, descriptive work in basic linguistic theory is always of theoretical significance (Dryer 1996).

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **DATA ANALYSIS**

#### **4.0 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter analysis the linguistics features in Igbo youth speech styles used. This chapter examines different youth speech style of Onitsha inhabitant and how they use it. The analysis is divided into (4) four tables.

Each table contains the numbers of slangs found under them and their features, followed by their analysis based on the methodology adopted for data, which is based on how they relate meaning, what caused the productions of the word and how they came about.

#### **4.1 DATA ANALYSIS**

##### **4.1.1 Social context speech style**

This is the analysis of table 1 of our various chapters. The social speech of Igbo youth are self-explanatory judging from the meaning in use given in the third segment of the table. In the social gathering of Igbo people, especially youth, these speech styles are used to covey different messages. For instance “Ompa chog”, Chachaw is a very hail their boss. The bosses in most occasions are not really their boss at work but just as a means of shifting someone they regard. Amongst youths in the streets also, you hear different

words like “Alobam, Onye mgbu, onye imi, onye obiakpo, mis, man” in their discussions which is used to refer to a close friend, a betrayer, someone who fools himself, someone who messes up, a very wicked fellow, mother or father respectively while interacting with each other. Those speech styles of the urban youth of Onitsha are at times being used intentionally by them to prevent old peoples from being part of their discussion. The analysis of these data’s are being made based on their contextual use.

#### **4.1.2 Economic life context speech style.**

This is in reference to table two of our chapter three. The Igbo are in no doubt known for their high level of their economic activities and particularly Onitsha which is the one biggest melting point notable in Africa for their economic and business lifestyle and activities Hence, they have equally adopted a new speech variety for different denomination of the Naira Currency. For example, the colours of Naira notes have been used as a slangs for each notes except #500 and #1000 notes. Ten, Twenty and Fifty Naira notes colours are used to call them red, green and white respectively. One thousand Naira note is often called “1k” in standard English/Nigerian usage.

Youths who works in the same business lines has their own particular speech style of talking/communication with their neighbors in order to either extort from their customer or to give them a normal price, for example when a rich person enters the market, one of the sellers might whisper to his neighbors things like “Obu onye afia m”, obu onye afia titi eti” meaning, He is my good and wealthy customer, he is not a good

customer etc. .When someone hits big money, “Obutego ike, money have is referred to as “strength”. Also when someone wants to go and do business or go to shop you stand to hear expressions like “ka m jee kota ego” meaning “ let me go and make money” He or she might not be going to market or shop but is definitely going to do something or earn money. Also “ka jee tuo ludo n obodo oyibo: which means “let’s go and try our today’s business luck.

### **4.1.3 Social Evils**

Referring to table 3 of chapter three, the social evils of the Igbo people also bags some of these emerging speeches as seen in this table. In Igbo land, there are places which some/utterances can endanger or put one in a big trouble so therefore, to address some things or to some people who does or go against the societal norms, some words are being used to avoid many people from knowing what is been said. Someone who sells drugs illegally is given a code language to avoid casting the person. Like “ony afia ike” which means someone who sells hard drugs. Also some words which are heavy in society ear are also given a mild utterances like “mkpuru, ipia-igwe, igwe” which means “bullet, to shot a gun, gun respectively.

Also in this table 3 of chapter four, it is discovered for some social acts of the people. This is done in order to avoid vulgar languages. To kiss, to have sex, lesbian, gay which are “aki onu, ipia-oku, onye-nru tuaks and onye ntu” respectively as seen to be

given a speech, style to express them in a lighter form. Those words are mostly used among friends, especially when they are discussing in the presence of children.

#### **4.1.4 Socio-cultural/Post Proverbial Speech Context**

Ikfe, some words are restricted in some particular communities or areas take for instance in ibenebe Awka, a village market square known as “Abaegwu market” forbids everyone from calling a woman prostitute and even using an abusive words on anyone around the market axis, so words like Nwa-oma Osiso can be replace “prostitute” without even attracting people’s attention. In some other communities, some people’s unfortunate misfortune are not supposed to be spoken anyhow, so some words were used to replace them for example

Edi tara ya aki onu ➡ He has a mental issue/He is foolish

O na etitu okuko akin a nkiti ➡ He is doing well in his business

I me ala ya bu dessert ➡ She is barren / Unfruitful in her marriage

Does words has be coined together and use to avoid harsh utterances concerning people.

Globally, proverbs are symbolic expressions of people Jegide (2008:182) Identifies “proverbs as a dynamic mode of discourse with unique identify. He further point that proverbs as a pool of linguistic and thematic resources from which speakers and writers in rhetoric, politics, economics, jurisprudence, philosophy, history, religion, technology

etc. draws inspirations. These emerging youth speech styles has some proverbial features in some of it, it is not only used in social, economics, religious and other reasons, it can also be used to ridicule some as well as causation his/her way of life- example from the table 4

- ❖ Anaghi eyi trouser agba egwu egedege → freedom and peace of mind comes from doing the right thing
- ❖ Amaghi akpa matshes n'oku mmuo → in abundance of things little amount added would not be noticeable
- ❖ Gbara ogu ginuo → be mindful of yourself/take your time

## **CHAPTER FIVE.**

### **SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION**

#### **5.0 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter houses three sections, which are, Summary of the work , Discussion of findings and conclusion. This work is summarized based on the nature of work done so far and makes its conclusion based on the data collected for this research

#### **5.1 SUMMARY**

This study has examined the Onitsha Urban youth speech style as an emerging variety used among the Igbo speech communities. In this work, five chapters were identified, chapter one the general introduction which comprises of background of the study, statement of problem, aim and objectives of the study, methodology and significance of study. Chapter two reviewed the relevant literature which is further subdivided into conceptual review, previous studies and concerns of present study. Chapter three makes an exclusive presentation of the data used and the theoretical framework used in analyzing it. Chapter four analyses the data presented in chapter three and finally chapter five gives the summary and conclusion of the study.

## **5.2. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

The previous chapter has made an attempt in analyzing some selected emerging youth language of Onitsha speech community of Anambra State. We have also shown the different context of usage of the speech expression and their users. From these data and analysis provided, it is clear from usage that those speech styles are used to enrich expression in Onitsha land and goes a long way in the prettifying, and embellishing of Igbo language as a whole. This work also points out the features of Youth speech style which includes code switching, ambiguity, slangs and other linguistics manipulations.

The use of youth speech style by Onitsha at large, has also brought additional words to the Onitsha dialect and the standard Igbo language at large. For instance, youth are fond of using slang while communicating with one another in an informal context /gathering. We have being able to reveal also that some of these speech styles are used to express heavy message in lighter form. This is why MC Laughlin (2009) dispute that a language like slang is no longer exclusively youth language but now spreading and unfolding it's role to become an Urban language of wider communication which goes against some scholars assertion that youth language is an Anti-language.

## **5.3 CONCLUSION**

This study have been able to reveal that some emerging speech styles found in Igbo language today for example "I tachiosa" (to eat) "chachaw O mpa"

(greeting boss) are employed as slang expressions with meaning modifications in Onitsha. The youth speech style expressions could conversely, pervade the different Igbo dialects, and with time, lose their status as

slangy expression in line with Winker's (2007) assertion. Since slang is used to enrich a language, the Igbo slang in Onitsha enriches the Igbo language. It is relevant, at this point to, claim that the expressions that are discussed in this chapter will spread over all other dialect areas of Igbo communities as a whole, because of people from various Igbo speech community coverages in Onitsha. They use the emerging speech style in their day-to-day activities including when they return to their different dialect areas or community, they would continue with their normal dialect or languages, thereby enriching the Igbo language.

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