

**A SEMIOTIC ANALYSIS OF ITEMS USED IN IGBO
TRADITIONAL MARRIAGE: A CASE STUDY OF AGULUZIGBO
COMMUNITY OF ANAMBRA STATE.**

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BENIN CITY**

FEBUARY, 2025

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**A PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF
LINGUISTICS STUDIES, FACULTY OF ARTS, UNIVERSITY OF
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APPROVAL PAGE

I, **EZE CHINENYE JOYCE**, a student of the department of linguistics studies, University of Benin, with the matriculation number **ART2000534**, have completed the requirements for course work and research for the Bachelor of Arts Degree of the University of Benin. The research work contained in this project is a product of my personal effort and does not contain any previously written or published material that has been submitted in any other degree or diploma program from any university or higher institution of learning.

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PLAGIARISM CERTIFICATION

I, **EZE CHINENYE JOYCE** with the matriculation number **ART2000534** declare this work Titled **A SEMIOTIC ANALYSIS OF ITEMS USED IN IGBO TRADITIONAL MARRIAGE: A CASE STUDY OF AGULUZIGBO COMMUNITY OF ANAMBRA STATE** .has successfully passed the anti- plagiarism test and does not violate any copyright regulation.

DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to God Almighty for his infinite mercies and grace.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This project work came to fruition not without the help of some persons, and I shall be deemed ungrateful if I fail to acknowledge them. First, I owe my unreserved appreciation to God Almighty, in whom I live, I move and I have my being. For her wise suggestions, timely scolding, patient hearing and motherly counsel, I salute the effort of my project supervisor Dr. (Mrs.) I. N. G. Essien. God bless you ma. I appreciate the Head of Department, Prof. M.S. Agbo, for his leadership prowess and administrative style.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

COVER PAGE	i
TITLE PAGE	ii
APPROVAL PAGE	iii
PLAGIARISM CERTIFICATION	iv
DEDICATION	v
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	vi
ABSTRACT	x
CHAPTER ONE: BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY	1
1.0 INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 IGBO LANGUAGE AND THE SPEAKERS	2
1.2 METHODOLOGY	3
1.3 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY	3
1.3.1 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM	4
1.3.2 AIM AND OBJECTIVES	5
1.3.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS	5
1.3.4 SCOPE OF THE STUDY	5
1.3.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY	6
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW	7
2.0 Introduction	7

2.1 Conceptual Review	7
2.1.1 Semiotics	7
2.1.2 Traditional Marriage	10
2.1.3 Rituals and Performance	13
2.1.4 Cultural Hermeneutics	15
2.2 PREVIOUS STUDIES	16
2.3 PRESENT STUDY	20
CHAPTER THREE: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	22
3.0 INTRODUCTION	22
3.1 SEMIOTIC THEORY	22
3.2 APPLICATION OF THE THEORY	25
3.3 RELEVANCE/JUSTIFICATION OF THE THEORY	27
CHAPTER FOUR: DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS	29
4.0 INTRODUCTION	29
4.1 DATA PRESENTATION	29
4.1.1 Old List of Aguluzigbo Development Union Traditional Marriage List (ígbànkwú Nwánnýí)	29
4.1.2 New List of Aguluzigbo Development Union Traditional Marriage List (ígbànkwú Nwánnýí)	31
4.2 DATA ANALYSIS	33
4.2.1 Money as an Item	33

4.2.2 Palm Wine as an Item	34
4.2.3 Small Stout and Can Malt as an Item for the Bride's Father	36
4.2.4 Mmányá Ìlo Ífè-òhá (Marriage Ritual Drinks and Gifts)	37
4.2.5 Mmányá Ndi Nzé (Drink for Titled Men) and Money	40
4.2.6 For the Youths (Star, Hero, and Can Malt)	41
4.2.7 Ífè-òhá in Cash (Cash Payment for Marriage)	43
4.3 Discussion Of Findings	44
CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION	46
5.0 Intoduction	46
5.1 Summary Of The Study	46
5.2 Findings	47
5.3 Conclusion	48
5.4 Recommendation	48
REFERENCES	49

ABSTRACT

This Study Examined a semiotic analysis of items used in Igbo traditional marriage of Aguluzigbo community, Anambra State. The study relied on data collected from primary sources. The primary method involved oral interviews with 4 competent speakers of Aguluzigbo comprising 3 women and 1 man, who are also vast with the cultural and traditional practices of Aguluzigbo, with their ages ranging from 40 years and above. The theoretical framework employed for the research is the "Semiotic theory" by Saussure (1916). The findings revealed that the items used in Igbo traditional marriage in Aguluzigbo carry significant symbolic meanings that reflect cultural values and social norms. Money, particularly the N1,000 paid by the groom, symbolizes his commitment and readiness to take on marriage responsibilities, serving as a marker of respect and social status. Palm wine represents unity, fertility, and prosperity, while also legitimizing the marriage between the two families. Items like small stout and malt drinks are symbols of strength, celebration, and inclusivity, reflecting the groom's ability to provide and the communal spirit of the ceremony. The male goat and yams signify fertility, provision, and respect for the bride's family, emphasizing the agricultural roots of the community. Modern elements like Gulder beer symbolize the blending of tradition with contemporary practices, while raffia wine connects the ceremony to ancestral traditions. The cash payment and additional gifts, including palm wine and a goat, highlight the formal exchange and social identity within the community. The research concludes that the items used in the marriage ceremony of the Aguluzigbo community of Anambra State reinforce unity, respect, and the continuity of cultural practices.

CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Marriage is a significant social institution that formalizes the union between individuals, often with legal, cultural, and religious recognition. Traditional marriage, particularly in many African cultures, involves a series of rituals and ceremonies that honor the customs of the community. These ceremonies are typically rich in symbolism and involve the exchange of specific items that hold cultural significance. Common items used in traditional marriage include dowries, which may consist of money, clothes, and food items like yams, kola nuts, and drinks, as well as gifts like livestock or jewelry. These items represent the commitment of the families involved and are meant to ensure the marriage is blessed and prosperous (Asadu, 2016).

The relationship between marriage, traditional marriage, and linguistics lies in how language conveys cultural values and rituals. In traditional ceremonies, specific words and phrases are used to express respect, blessings, and the cultural significance of the union (Okeke et al., 2017). Linguistic study reveals dialectal differences and how these practices preserve cultural heritage. It also shows how traditional marriage practices are communicated and maintained across generations, reflecting and shaping social norms.

This study seeks to examine a semiotic analysis of items used in Igbo traditional marriage: A case study of Aguluzigbo community of Anambra State, exploring how these items symbolize cultural values and social norms. The motivation behind this study is to understand the deep-rooted meanings embedded in these traditional practices and how they communicate societal expectations and relationships. The value of the study lies in preserving cultural heritage, offering insights into the interplay between material culture and language, and contributing to the broader understanding of how symbols function within social rituals.

1.1 IGBO LANGUAGE AND THE SPEAKERS

The Igbo language, historically referred to as "Ibo" in older literature, belongs to the Niger-Congo language family and is classified under the Volta-Niger branch. It is predominantly spoken by the Igbo people, one of Nigeria's largest ethnic groups, who primarily inhabit the southeastern region known as Igboland. According to Ethnologue, a linguistic database maintained by the Summer Institute of Linguistics, approximately 45 million people speak Igbo, not only in Nigeria but also in other parts of West Africa. The language is concentrated in five Nigerian states: Abia, Ebonyi, Anambra, Enugu, and Imo, with additional speakers in the southern parts of Delta and Rivers states. Moreover, Igbo is recognized as one of the official languages of Equatorial Guinea. Aguluzigbo is a village in Anaocha Local Government Area of Anambra State.

1.2 METHODOLOGY

The present study relied solely on data collected from primary sources. The primary method involved oral interviews with 4 competent speakers of Igbo who are from Aguluzigbo speech community comprising 3 women and 1 man, who are also vast with the cultural and traditional practices of Aguluzigbo, with their ages ranging from 40 years. Their names are Mr. Chinedu Okoye, Mrs. Ukkamaka Okoye, Mrs. Ijeoma Eze, and lastly, Mrs. Tina Onuzurike. The interviewees were met in Benin City, Edo State where they reside. All the women were business women while the man was a bus driver.

1.3 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to explore and analyze the semiotic significance of items used in Igbo traditional marriage ceremonies. By examining these items, the study aims to uncover the symbolic meanings they carry and how they convey cultural values, social norms, and familial relationships within the Igbo community. This analysis will delve into the ways in which material objects function as non-verbal communicators in the marriage ritual, revealing their role in the negotiation, exchange, and consolidation of social bonds.

The expected benefits of this study are multifaceted. First, it contributes to the preservation and understanding of Igbo cultural heritage by documenting and interpreting traditional practices that are often passed down orally. Second, it offers insights into the

semiotic relationships between objects and language, enriching the field of semiotics and cultural studies. Third, the study provides a deeper understanding of how cultural values are maintained and transmitted through generations, which can be valuable for educators, cultural practitioners, and those interested in intercultural communication. Additionally, this research can serve as a resource for other communities looking to explore and document their own cultural practices, fostering a greater appreciation of cultural diversity and the ways in which traditions shape social identities.

1.3.1 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The problem addressed by this research is the underrepresentation and insufficient understanding of the semiotic significance of items used in Igbo traditional marriage ceremonies. While these ceremonies are rich in cultural symbolism, there is limited scholarly analysis that explores the deeper meanings and communicative functions of the material objects involved. As a result, the cultural, social, and linguistic values embedded in these items are often overlooked or underappreciated in academic discourse. This lack of detailed analysis not only diminishes the understanding of Igbo cultural practices but also hinders the preservation of these traditions for future generations. Therefore, this study seeks to fill this gap by providing a semiotic analysis of the items used in Igbo traditional marriage, with the goal of enhancing the appreciation and documentation of these cultural symbols.

1.3.2 AIM AND OBJECTIVES

This study aims to carry out a semiotic analysis of items used in Igbo traditional marriage: A case study of Aguluzigbo community of Anambra State. Its specific objectives are to:

1. Examine the items used in Aguluzigbo traditional marriage.
2. Determine the meaning of these items.
3. Investigate the cultural significance and symbolism associated with these items in Igbo traditional marriage ceremonies.

1.3.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following are the research questions:

1. What are the items used in Aguluzigbo traditional marriage?
2. What are the meanings of these items?
3. What is the cultural significance and symbolism associated with these items in Igbo traditional marriage ceremonies?

1.3.4 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The study is delimited to the specific analysis of items used in Aguluzigbo traditional marriage ceremonies of Anambra State within the context of semiotic interpretation. The study will be confined to the cultural practices and symbolic meanings associated with traditional marriage items in the Igbo community, excluding other aspects of the marriage

process such as legal, economic, or modern influences. It will primarily rely on qualitative data gathered from cultural texts, oral traditions, and interviews with knowledgeable community members, and will not extend to a comparative analysis with other ethnic groups or contemporary wedding practices.

1.3.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This project is beneficial to the Igbo community members as they will gain a deeper understanding of their cultural practices and the symbolic meanings behind traditional marriage items. It will also be beneficial to researchers and scholars as those in the fields of semiotics, linguistics, anthropology, and cultural studies will benefit from the study's insights and data. The study will serve as a resource for teaching and learning about Igbo culture, traditional marriage practices, and semiotic analysis for educators and students. It will also be beneficial to cultural practitioners as those involved in the preservation and promotion of Igbo culture can use the findings to enhance cultural education and awareness.

Also, policymakers and cultural heritage organizations can use the study's findings to inform policies and initiatives aimed at preserving and promoting cultural heritage. Lastly, individuals interested in exploring and appreciating diverse cultural traditions will gain insights from the study's findings.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter reviews relevant literature which are related to this research. The chapter will be divided into four sections which are: conceptual review or theoretical review as the case may be, previous studies which gave rise to the motivation of this present study, the present study and its concerns and lastly, a summary of the chapter.

2.1 CONCEPTUAL REVIEW

The concepts to be reviewed and extensively discussed are:

- Semiotics
- Traditional Marriage
- Rituals and Performance
- Cultural Hermeneutics

2.1.1 Semiotics

Semiotics is a field that investigates the mechanisms through which sign systems generate meaning. It delves into the ways in which words, symbols, and various other signs convey meanings beyond their immediate form. In semiotic theory, a sign is defined as anything that functions to represent or stand for something other than itself, whether it be an object, idea, or concept (Chandler, 2007).

Semiotics provides a way to study communication focusing not only on spoken or written language but also on all kinds of communicative signals or “signs.” (That is why the field is called “semiotics,” based on the Greek words for signs and significance (Mertz, 2013).

According to Chandler (2017), in his third edition on semiotics, asserted that semiotics is the study of signs and symbols and how they are used to communicate meaning. It explores the ways in which we interpret everything from language and gestures to images and objects. Semiotics is a study of the science of signs and signs systems, spanning the logical and functional aspects of onomastico, kinesics, proxemics and their interactions with language in culture and society (Ibiley, 2021). It also focuses on the symbols of power and the influence of those symbols in social practices, as well as the role of New Media, particularly the Internet, in the reinvention and reuse of these symbols.

At its core, semiotics examines how meaning is created and communicated through different sign systems. A sign system can be anything from language, traffic signals, or fashion, to cultural rituals. Within a sign system, signs do not operate in isolation; they interact with other signs to produce meaning. This interaction can be understood through two key relationships: syntagmatic and paradigmatic. Syntagmatic relations refer to how signs combine in sequences to create meaning, such as the order of words in a sentence. Paradigmatic relations involve the substitution of signs within a set, like choosing one word over another in a sentence (Batu, 2012).

One of the important concepts in semiotics is the distinction between denotation and connotation. Denotation is the literal, or primary, meaning of a sign. For instance, the word "rose" denotes a type of flower. Connotation, on the other hand, refers to the secondary, often culturally specific, meanings that are associated with a sign. In the case of "rose," it might connote love, romance, or beauty depending on the context (Deely, 2015).

Codes are another crucial concept in semiotics. Codes are systems of rules that govern how signs are used and interpreted. These can be linguistic codes, such as grammar and syntax in language, or cultural codes, which dictate how certain signs are understood within a particular society. For example, the color white may be associated with purity in some cultures and mourning in others (Kourdis, 2018).

Semiotics is not only a theoretical framework but also a practical tool used in various fields. In media studies, for instance, semiotics is used to analyze how images and narratives convey ideological messages. In advertising, it helps in understanding how brands create and manipulate signs to influence consumer behavior. Semiotic analysis can be applied to literature, art, and even everyday social interactions, offering a deeper understanding of how meaning is constructed in different contexts (Chandler, 2002).

2.1.2 Traditional Marriage

Traditional marriage is a vital cultural institution in many societies, serving as a formal union between individuals that is recognized by the community, often involving various rituals, customs, and social obligations (Feinberg, 2012). This institution not only binds the couple but also links their families, creating a broader social network and reinforcing communal bonds.

In many African cultures, traditional marriage serves as the cornerstone of societal structure. For instance, in the Igbo culture, traditional marriage is a crucial event that involves the participation of both families, signifying the importance of communal consent in the union. The process often includes rituals such as the payment of bride price, exchange of gifts, and blessings from elders, all of which symbolize the mutual respect and commitment between the families involved (Nwabude, 2022).

The significance of traditional marriage extends beyond the couple to the entire community. It plays a role in socialization, as it ensures the continuation of cultural practices and values. In Igbo culture, traditional marriage is not just a union of two individuals but a merging of families and lineages, which is why the process includes elaborate ceremonies that involve the extended family (Akachukwu & Seraphine, 2018). These ceremonies often reflect the social status and wealth of the families, and the successful completion of these rites is seen as a prerequisite for a valid marriage.

Moreover, traditional marriage often involves negotiations and agreements that are deeply rooted in the cultural norms of the society. Among the Esan people, for example, the marriage process involves a series of negotiations between the families, where they discuss and agree on various aspects such as the bride price, the exchange of gifts, and the responsibilities of both parties (Kuyateh, 2022). These negotiations are critical as they help to establish the expectations and obligations of both families, ensuring a harmonious relationship between them.

In contemporary times, traditional marriage continues to coexist with modern forms of marriage, such as civil or religious weddings. However, in many societies, traditional marriage remains the preferred form of union because it is seen as a more authentic representation of cultural identity. Even in urban areas, where Western influences are strong, many couples still choose to undergo traditional marriage ceremonies, as it provides a sense of belonging and continuity with their heritage (Nwoko, 2020).

Despite the changing dynamics of marriage in the modern world, the cultural significance of traditional marriage remains profound. It is not merely a contractual agreement but a deeply embedded cultural practice that reflects the values, beliefs in the context of traditional marriage emphasizes how these ceremonies and practices are deeply intertwined with the cultural norms and ideologies of a community (Nzoiwu, 2012). Traditional marriage is more than just a legal union; it is a manifestation of the collective identity, history, and worldview of a people.

In many African societies, the rituals and customs observed during traditional marriages are designed to uphold and transmit core cultural values from one generation to the next. These practices often encapsulate the community's understanding of respect, responsibility, kinship, and social harmony. For instance, the payment of bride price in many African cultures symbolizes not just a transaction, but a gesture of appreciation and acknowledgment of the bride's family's role in her upbringing and the value she brings into her new family (Ogbeide, 2011).

Moreover, the involvement of extended family members and the community in these ceremonies underscores the belief in collective responsibility and the importance of maintaining social networks. The communal nature of these ceremonies ensures that the union is not only between two individuals but between two families or even clans, reflecting the deeply rooted belief in the interconnectedness of people within a society (Chukwu, 2004:55).

In summary, traditional marriage acts as a fundamental pillar of culture, sustaining the essential beliefs and values of the community. These customs help maintain cultural identities and strengthen social ties, safeguarding the continuity of cultural heritage despite evolving circumstances.

2.1.3 Rituals and Performance

Rituals and performances are integral components of human cultures, serving as symbolic actions that express communal values, beliefs, and social structures (Stephenson, 2015). They are often seen as transformative events where participants engage in activities that mark transitions in their social status, reinforce community bonds, or invoke supernatural forces. The performance of rituals can vary widely, ranging from religious ceremonies to secular rites, but they all share a common goal of establishing a connection between the participants and the larger social or cosmic order.

Ritual as a Social Practice

Rituals are not merely routine actions; they are imbued with symbolic meaning and serve to communicate important social messages.

Rituals are "models of" and "models for" reality, meaning that they both represent and shape the worldviews of the societies in which they are performed (Penner, 2024). This dual role of rituals underscores their importance in maintaining social order and continuity, as they help to reaffirm the values and norms of the community.

Performance and the Role of the Body

The performance of rituals is a physical as well as a symbolic act. Brown and Benson (2003) emphasizes the role of the body in ritual performance, noting that the physical actions of participants are essential to the enactment and communication of ritual meaning. Through gestures, movements, and other forms of bodily expression,

participants embody the values and beliefs that the ritual seeks to convey. This embodiment makes the abstract concepts of the ritual tangible and accessible to the participants and observers (Tsang & Woods, 2014).

The Power of Symbolism in Rituals

Symbols play a crucial role in the performance of rituals, as they convey complex meanings that are often not easily articulated through language alone.

Gaitanos and Mitkidis (2005) argue that rituals use symbols to communicate ideas about purity, danger, and order, often in ways that are deeply embedded in the cultural and social context. The use of symbols in rituals allows for the communication of values and beliefs in a manner that is both powerful and subtle, influencing participants on a subconscious level.

The Role of Community in Ritual Performance

Finally, rituals are inherently communal activities. They bring people together and reinforce social bonds through shared experiences. Yang (2024) posits that rituals are essential to the creation and maintenance of social solidarity, as they provide opportunities for individuals to participate in collective actions that affirm their membership in the community. Through the performance of rituals, individuals reaffirm their commitment to the group's values and norms, thereby strengthening the social fabric (Chvaja et al., 2022).

In conclusion, rituals and performances are essential aspects of human life, serving as vehicles for expressing and reinforcing cultural values, social structures, and communal bonds. They are dynamic processes that involve the body, symbolism, and communal participation, making them powerful tools for social cohesion and transformation.

2.1.4 Cultural Hermeneutics

Cultural hermeneutics is the study of how individuals and communities interpret and understand their cultural texts, symbols, and practices. It is concerned with the ways in which meaning is constructed and conveyed within cultural contexts, emphasizing the importance of interpretation in the transmission of cultural knowledge (Ukwamedua, 2012). By examining how different cultures understand their world, cultural hermeneutics provides insights into the processes by which meaning is produced, shared, and transformed.

The Concept of Hermeneutics in Culture

The term "hermeneutics" originates from the Greek word **hermeneuein**, meaning to interpret or explain. In its classical form, hermeneutics was primarily concerned with the interpretation of religious texts, but over time, it has expanded to include the interpretation of all forms of cultural expression. Caesar (2009) posits that understanding is always a historically effected event, meaning that interpretation is deeply influenced by the historical and cultural contexts in which it occurs. This perspective is central to

cultural hermeneutics, as it recognizes that meaning is not static but is constantly being reinterpreted in light of new experiences and contexts.

Hermeneutics and Power Dynamics

Cultural hermeneutics also engages with questions of power and authority in interpretation. Interpretations are often shaped by power dynamics within a society, with dominant groups imposing their interpretations on marginalized communities (Montague, 2014). This perspective highlights the importance of considering whose voices are privileged in the interpretive process and how power relations influence the construction of meaning.

In conclusion, cultural hermeneutics offers a powerful framework for interpreting and understanding cultural texts, symbols, and practices. By emphasizing the importance of context, the influence of preconceptions, and the dynamics of power in interpretation, it provides valuable insights into the ways in which meaning is constructed and conveyed within different cultural contexts.

2.2 PREVIOUS STUDIES

This section highlights and discusses previous research which are related to this research work.

Asadu (2016) in her work, posit that traditional marriage in Igbo land is symbolic because it reflects the Igbo man's ideology and idiosyncrasies. This could be seen in the

different gift items brought by the bridegroom to the family of the bride before the bride's kindred officially and socially legalize the marriage. She asserted that the items differ slightly from one locality to another and from one Igbo community to another. These cultural items that must be presented on the day of one's traditional marriage (otherwise called *'igba nkwu nwanyi 'okuko onye uwa or igbu ewu nna*) by the groom are quite elaborate and very significant. It was seen in her work that it is a must in Igbo land that any man who seeks the hand of an Igbo lady in marriage must concur to the provision of such items as they are listed. Alternatively, he could give the money equivalent of the items. The thrust of the paper was to translate the frequently listed items from English to French, analyze them and explicate their significance and meaning as they are given and received. The paper also investigated the various stages of traditional marriage in Igbo land precisely in Anambra State.

Solomon-Etefia (2016) paper examined a pragma-semiotic analysis of the ceremony among the Awgbu people of Orunba North Local Government Area of Anambra in Igboland. Data for the analysis was gathered through participant observation and informal questioning technique during one of such ceremony. Mey's pragmatic acts theory and Peirce symbolic sign in semiotic theory were employed for the analysis. The study revealed that *Iku Aka n'uzo* is performed in traditionally motivated contexts characterized by practices of questions, denials, reporting and responses that project issues of culture, humour, and pretence. These are indirect acts which exploit contextual features such as

reference, voice, inference, shared situational and cultural knowledge, and relevance. The semiotic analysis revealed that the signage (i.e. kolanuts, palm wine, sheep and *agwu* 'hunger') that feature in the ceremony are quite significant. Considering the real-life samples, the paper concluded that the significance of communication in the cultural context of the knocking-on-the-door ceremony based on its indirectness and symbolism is central to the overall understanding of this traditional practice among the Igbo.

Okeke and Chukwu (2015) paper was concerned on the relationship between language and communication in Igbo social cultural setting. Okeke's work looked at a semiotic perspective of some Igbo symbolic objects and their communicative meanings which are examined to ascertain how such objects as "kola nut" (*ójíé*), 'tender palm - frond' (*omu nkwu*) and "white chalk (*nzu*) come to depict 'ideas, states, situations, feelings and conditions outside of themselves'. The study is significant because it provides a way of looking at communication as it will exert a powerful impact on almost all the perspectives employed in semiotic theory. It is also relevant to some Igbo bilinguals who have little or no knowledge about most Igbo cultural - symbolic objects since they would learn to communicate effectively in certain situations where semiotic theories might be applied.

Onu and Ugwuoke (2022) examined the language and the linguistic features of Igbo traditional marriage songs and also to show the relevance of these songs in the lives of the Igbo people. A qualitative research design was used in this study. The Data for the

study were gathered through library and fieldwork. In order to construct a working theoretical framework, journal articles, dissertations, and thesis were consulted. The researchers acquired data from the fieldwork through oral interviews, observation, and participation in traditional marriage rites in various regions of Igbo territory. The functionalist theory was used in analysing the data. The methods of data analysis showcased that these data were translated into English from Igbo. Equally, notes generated during the interview, observation, and participation were analysed descriptively. The study founds that women use marriage songs to express their anxieties, worry, and uneasiness about venturing into the marriage. The study also revealed the joyous and happy occasion of Igbo traditional marriage. Also, Igbo thoughts are revealed in the joyful mood and dismal ambience established in some of their songs. The study also found out that women use marriage songs to comment on the intricacies of reality in the married venture. The findings of the study finally show that Igbo marriage songs contain imagery, repetitions, humour, alliteration, satire, and allusion. These are linguistic features deliberately crafted to teach the bride and groom Igbo societal expectations from them.

Ugwu and Ugwu (2023) study examined a pragma-semiotic inquiry into the major pragmatic acts that characterize the textual and visual communications in *Ita oji nwanyi*, its semiotic dynamics, and to relate them to the broader context of traditional marriages in Nike. The data were sourced from twelve different traditional marriage ceremonies

held within the villages of Nike through observations and interviews spanning a period of fifteen months (November 2021 through February 2023). The study was guided by some of the analytic categories provided in Mey's (2001) theory of Pragmatic Acts and Kress and Leeuwen's (2001) socio-semiotic multi-modal analytic approach. While the textual component of the data relating to linguistic features was analysed using Mey's theory of pragmatic acts, the visual component relating to the non-linguistic features was addressed following Kress and Leeuwen's socio-semiotic approach to multimodal analysis. The result revealed that the rituals of *Ita oji nwanyi* in Nike were enacted through six specific practs which include the practs of welcoming, intention expression, questioning, kola presentation, vowing and blessing.

2.3 PRESENT STUDY

The present study differs from previous studies in several ways. Asadu (2016) focused on the symbolic nature of traditional marriage in Igbo land, particularly the items required by the bridegroom, translating them into French, and analyzing their significance and meaning. Solomon-Etefia (2016) examined the pragma-semiotic aspects of the traditional ceremony among the Awgbu people, highlighting the indirectness and symbolism in the context of knocking-on-the-door ceremonies, using pragmatic and semiotic theories. Okeke (2017) explored the semiotic perspective of symbolic Igbo objects like kola nut, palm frond, and white chalk, analyzing how they represent ideas and feelings beyond

themselves and their impact on communication within semiotic theory. Onu and Ugwuoke (2021) analyzed the linguistic features of Igbo traditional marriage songs, focusing on how these songs express the anxieties and joys of marriage, employing functionalist theory to reveal the thoughts and expectations embedded in the songs. Ugwu et al. (2023) conducted a pragma-semiotic inquiry into the textual and visual communications in *Ita oji nwanyi* within the Nike community, analyzing both linguistic and non-linguistic features through pragmatic acts and socio-semiotic multimodal approaches. In contrast, the current study specifically examines the semiotic analysis of the items used in Igbo traditional marriage, focusing on their cultural and communicative significance within the marriage rites, thereby contributing to a deeper understanding of the cultural symbolism and semiotic dynamics inherent in these traditional practices.

CHAPTER THREE

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on the theoretical framework for the research on semiotic analysis of items used in Igbo traditional marriage: A case study of Aguluzigbo community of Anambra State. The theoretical framework to be employed for this research is the "Semiotic theory" by Saussure (1916).

3.1 SEMIOTIC THEORY

Ferdinand de Saussure's semiotic theory, as presented in his *Course in General Linguistics* (1916), offers a groundbreaking approach to understanding language and meaning. Central to Saussure's framework is the concept of the "sign," which he defines as the basic unit of meaning in language. A sign is composed of two interconnected elements: the signifier and the signified. The signifier is the physical form of the sign, which could be a spoken sound, a written word, or any perceptible symbol. The signified is the mental concept or meaning that the signifier evokes. For instance, the word "tree" is a sign, where the sound or written form of the word represents the signifier, while the concept or mental image of a tree is the signified. These two elements work together to form the complete sign.

One of the most important ideas in Saussure's theory is the arbitrariness of the sign, meaning that there is no inherent or natural connection between the signifier and the signified. The relationship between a word and what it represents is not based on any intrinsic qualities of the object or concept itself but is instead a result of social convention. For example, there is nothing about the sound of the word "dog" that naturally connects it to the animal it represents; it is simply a socially agreed-upon sign. This idea marked a significant shift from earlier beliefs that words or signs directly corresponded to objects in the world. Saussure's view suggests that meaning is not derived from direct reference to the world but from the way in which signs are organized within a system of language. Saussure also emphasizes that meaning arises not from individual signs in isolation, but from the differences between signs within the language system. Meaning is relational, and it is shaped by the distinctions that exist between words and symbols. For example, the word "cat" gains its meaning because it is different from words like "bat," "rat," or "dog." Without these differences, meaning would not be possible. This highlights the idea that the value of a sign is determined not by any inherent qualities but by how it contrasts with other signs in the system. Thus, Saussure's theory suggests that language functions as a network of signs, where meaning is generated through the relationships between them rather than by a direct connection to the external world. In addition to his focus on the sign and meaning, Saussure makes an important distinction between *langue* and *parole*. *Langue* refers to the underlying structure or system of

language, the set of rules, conventions, and norms that govern how signs function and how they relate to one another. It is a collective, abstract system shared by all members of a linguistic community. In contrast, parole refers to the actual instances of language use—individual speech acts or written expressions made by people in everyday communication. While langue is concerned with the social and structural aspects of language, parole refers to the personal, concrete use of language. This distinction helps clarify Saussure's view that linguistics should focus not only on individual speech acts (parole) but also on the system that makes such acts possible (langue).

Saussure further divides the study of language into two approaches: synchronic and diachronic. A synchronic approach looks at language at a specific moment in time, analyzing the structure and relationships of signs within a given period. It focuses on understanding how a language system functions in the present, without concern for its historical development. On the other hand, a diachronic approach studies language over time, exploring how languages evolve and how the meanings of signs change. Saussure's primary interest was in synchronic linguistics, which examines the structure of language as a self-contained system at any given point.

In literary theory, Saussure's theories were extended by scholars like Barthes and Derrida, who explored the instability of meaning in texts and the role of language in shaping reality. Saussure's ideas also had a profound effect on anthropologists like Lévi-Strauss, who applied structuralist methods to the study of myths and cultural practices, arguing

that cultures, like languages, are governed by underlying structures that can be understood as systems of signs.

3.2 APPLICATION OF THE THEORY

The application of the Semiotic theory framework to this research provides an insightful lens for understanding how symbols, signs, and meanings are embedded in the cultural practices of the Igbo people. Semiotics, as the study of signs and symbols, allows for an exploration of how certain objects, rituals, and practices in Igbo traditional marriage communicate deeper meanings beyond their immediate use or appearance. In this context, the items involved in an Igbo marriage ceremony—such as the bride price, kola nut, palm wine, and traditional attire—are more than just material objects; they are signs that carry significant cultural, social, and religious meanings that contribute to the construction of identity, power, and relationships within the Igbo community.

The semiotic approach to understanding these items starts by recognizing that each object or gesture within the marriage ceremony can be considered a sign. According to semiotics, signs are composed of the signifier (the form or physical manifestation) and the signified (the meaning or concept that the sign represents). For instance, the bride price, which is typically presented by the groom's family to the bride's family, can be seen as a sign of respect, recognition of the bride's worth, and the establishment of a contract between the families. The act of offering the bride price, along with the specific

items given, signifies the groom's commitment to marry, but it also reflects deeper social customs and values tied to wealth, status, and family reputation.

Similarly, the kola nut, a central item in Igbo culture, is often used in the traditional marriage ceremony to symbolize life, unity, and ancestral blessings. The ritual of breaking and sharing the kola nut with family members during the marriage rite is not just a physical action but a communicative act filled with meaning. In semiotic terms, the kola nut functions as a cultural symbol that signifies hospitality, respect, and the union of two families. The act of sharing the kola nut also functions as a performance, where the interaction between individuals becomes part of a semiotic exchange of meanings and intentions.

Palm wine, another significant element in Igbo traditional marriage, plays a role that extends beyond its function as a beverage. It is a symbol of purity, joy, and celebration in the Igbo culture. When the groom offers palm wine to the bride, it is not merely a gesture of affection but also a symbolic act of nourishment and care. The semiotic analysis of palm wine would thus explore its signifying role in the context of marriage as a ritualistic offering, one that represents the desire for prosperity and well-being for the couple.

Traditional attire worn during the Igbo marriage ceremony also serves as a powerful semiotic tool. The attire is not just about fashion or aesthetics; it represents cultural identity, social status, and the formal recognition of the marriage. The colors, patterns, and styles of the clothing worn during the ceremony signify different familial roles and

the sacredness of the occasion. In a semiotic sense, these items of clothing are signs that convey belonging, honor, and the seriousness of the union being formed.

3.3 RELEVANCE/JUSTIFICATION OF THE THEORY

The semiotic theory framework is highly relevant to the research on Igbo traditional marriage because it provides the tools necessary to analyze how signs, symbols, and meanings are embedded in cultural practices. Semiotics, which examines the relationship between signs and their meanings, allows for a deeper understanding of how these objects function not only as material items but also as vehicles of cultural significance.

The semiotic approach is preferred over other theories because it specifically focuses on the ways in which meanings are constructed and interpreted within a particular cultural context. While anthropological or sociological theories might focus more on the social functions of marriage, semiotics delves into the symbolic representation and communication inherent in the ritual objects. It helps explain how each item in the marriage ceremony, whether it be a bead, a piece of cloth, or a specific gesture, signifies broader cultural ideas like identity, social status, and the relationship between individuals and the community.

Other theories, such as structuralism or functionalism, may offer insights into social structures or functions of rituals but may not capture the symbol-laden nature of the objects involved in the ceremony. Semiotics, on the other hand, aligns directly with the

research goal of interpreting how meaning is embedded in material culture. It is the most suitable framework because it allows the researcher to not only describe the items but also decode the layers of cultural significance they carry, offering a more comprehensive understanding of the Igbo traditional marriage as a system of communication through signs.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents and analyzes the data for this research. The chapter is divided into three sections; data presentation, data analysis, and lastly, discussion of findings. The analysis will be guided using the semiotic theory framework, and the analysis will also reflect the specific objectives of the research.

4.1 DATA PRESENTATION

This section presents the data for the research. The items used in the traditional marriage list is divided into two; the old list and the new list.

4.1.1 Old List of Aguluzigbo Development Union Traditional Marriage List (ìgbànkwú Nwánnýí)

1)

1. FOR THE FATHER (NNÀ NWÁ): One carton of stout, one piece of quality cloth, one bottle of good quality hot drink and cash of two thousand naira (N2,000.00)

2. FOR THE MOTHER (NNÈ NWÁ): One crate of can malt. one piece of quality cloth and cash of two thousand naira (N2,000,00)

3. FOR ÚMÚNNÁ (KINDRED):

- a. Eight (8) jars of nkwu enu: 2 live jars, 6 by cash at five thousand naira each [N5,000.00]
 - b. Four (4) jars of ngwo: 1 live jar, 3 by cash at three thousand naira each (N3,000.00)
 - c. Two (2) crates of stout, three (3) crates of beer [different brands] and two (2) crates of can malt.
 - d. Égó mgbàtó mmányá (money for wine tasting/confirmation): one thousand naira (N1,000.00).
 - e. Ndì Nzé: (Égó ná–mmányá) both their wine and money shall be two thousand naria (N2,000.,00).
 - f. Two live native fowls (Hen and Cock)
 - g. One (1) big he goat
 - h. Thirty-three (33) big tubers of yam
4. ÁDÁ GENERAL: Three (3) crates of can malt, three (3) cartons of toilet soap, one (1) bag of medium salt and cash of two thousand naira (N2,000.00)
 5. ÁDÁ ÍMÉ ÒNÓ: Two (2) crates of can malt, one (1) carton of toilet soap, one (1) bag of medium salt and cash of one thousand naira (N1,000.00).
 6. ÍNYÓM DÍ GENERAL: Three (3) crates of can malt two (2) carton

of toilet soap, two (2) bags of medium salt and cash of two thousand Naira (N2,000.00)

7. ÍNYÓM DÍ ÍMÉ ÒNÓ: Two (2) crates of can malt, one (1) carton of toilet soap, one (1) bag of medium salt and cash of one thousand naira (N1,000.00).

8. YOUTHS:

a. Males: One crate of stout and cash of one thousand naira (N1,000.00).

b. Female: two crates of can malt and cash of one thousand naira (N1,000.00).

4.1.2 New List of Aguluzigbo Development Union Traditional Marriage List (ìgbànkwú Nwánnýí)

2)

1a. Taking of List N1,000 (One Thousand Naira)

b. Knocking at the door, 2 gallons of Nkwúénú (Palmwine)

c. 1 carton of small stout

2. Mmanya Ime ego Nwanyi, 2 gallons of Nkwuenu (palmwine)

b. 1 carton of small stout

c. 1 carton of Can Malt

3. For the Bride's Father, 1 carton of small stout

b. 1 carton of Can Malt

4. Mmányá Ílo Ìfě-òhá, 1 carton of small stout

b. 1 carton of Gulder

c. One (1) big male goat (for suitors not from Aguluzigbo)

d. Five (5) big tubers of yam.

e. One jar (16 liters) of Nkwuenu (Palm wine)

f. One jar (16 liters) of Ngwo (raffia wine)

g. 2 (two) cartons of small stout (beer)

h. 2 (two) cartons of Hero

i. One Carton of Gulider (beer)

5. Mmányá Ndì Nzé (Drink for the titled men for the marriage.): One gallon of Nkwuenu (Palm wine) and N1,000 (One Thousand Naira)

6. For the Youths: One carton of Star (beer)

b. One carton of Hero (beer)

c. Two Cartons of Can Malt.

6. Ífě-òhà in cash (ífě-òhà dìn á égó): A suitor is allowed to provide for all the marriage requirements of Umuelim in cash as follows:

a. Indigenes of Aguluzigbo: 150,000 (one hundred and fifty thousand Naira) and One jar (16 liters) of high quality Nkwúénú.

b. Non indigenes of Aguluzigbo: N200,000 (Two Hundred Thousand Naira) one jar (16 liters) of high quality Nkwuenu and one big male goat.

4.2 DATA ANALYSIS

This section analyzes the presented data in (4.1). Only the new traditional marriage list will be analyzed using the semiotic theory framework since the work is not concerned with a comparative analysis between the traditional and contemporary marriage items.

4.2.1 Money as an Item

3)



fig. 1

Signifier: N1,000 (money).

Signified: The N1,000 is more than just an amount of money; it serves as a symbol of the groom's readiness and ability to contribute to the marriage process. It signifies a formal acknowledgment of the responsibilities that come with marriage. In Igbo culture, specifically in Aguluzigbo community, money often has a dual meaning: as a material medium of exchange and as a marker of respect, commitment, and social status. By

paying this amount, the groom demonstrates his seriousness about the union and his willingness to meet the customary obligations, which are important for gaining acceptance into the bride's family and community.

The amount itself, N1,000, also carries social significance. While it may not be a large sum in the contemporary economic context, its symbolic weight in the marriage process is undeniable. It serves as a ritualistic gesture of negotiation between the families, signifying the beginning of a more formal and structured relationship. The payment of this amount also communicates the idea of the exchange of values — the groom is offering something of value, and in return, he is symbolically gaining access to the bride's family and their consent for the union.

4.2.2 Palm Wine as an Item

4)



fig.2

Signifier: Palm wine

Signified: The 2 gallons of Nkwúénú (palmwine) in an Aguluzigbo traditional marriage symbolize life, fertility, and prosperity. Palmwine is an important part of the ceremony, representing respect, unity, and the bonding of both families. The quantity (2 gallons) shows the importance of the event and the involvement of the community. Palmwine also helps legitimize the marriage, as it is shared among the families, signifying the couple's union and the blessings for their future together. It interacts with other elements of the ceremony to reinforce cultural values like unity and prosperity. The act of knocking symbolizes the suitor's desire to enter the bride's family, both physically and metaphorically. Palm wine (Nkwuénú) is a sign of hospitality, respect, and the binding of a relationship between two families. The gesture of knocking marks the formal entry into the bride's family life. Knocking at the door is a symbolic act of asking for permission to court or marry the bride, while palm wine signifies the sharing of traditions and a mutual

-

between families.

4.2.3 Small Stout and Can Malt as an Item for the Bride's Father

5)



fig.3



fig. 4

Signifier: Cartons of small stout and Can Malt

Signified: In the context of an Igbo traditional marriage in Aguluzigbo, "Cartons of small stout" and "Can Malt" carry important cultural meanings. Cartons of small stout symbolize celebration, strength, and the groom's ability to provide. Stout, an alcoholic drink, is associated with festive and social gatherings, reflecting the groom's wealth and the joy of the occasion. Can Malt represents inclusivity and respect. As a non-alcoholic drink, it ensures that everyone, including those who do not drink alcohol (like elders or women), can participate in the celebration. Both items are part of the tradition where the groom's family shows hospitality and celebrates the union. The stout is linked to

masculinity and wealth, while the malt drink shows respect for all guests. Together, they reflect the communal spirit of the marriage and the family's efforts to accommodate everyone. These items also show how marriage customs evolve, blending modern and traditional elements in the celebration.

4.2.4 Mmányá Ìlò Ifé-òhá (Marriage Ritual Drinks and Gifts)

6)



Signifier: Small stout, Gulder beer, male goat, tubers of yam, palm wine, raffia wine.

Signified: These items—small stout, Gulder beer, male goat, tubers of yam, palm wine, and raffia wine—are rich in symbolic meaning and function as significant semiotic signs in the Igbo traditional marriage ritual. The small stout in an Igbo traditional marriage is often used during the bride price negotiation or other celebratory aspects of the ceremony. From a semiotic perspective, the stout serves as a symbol of hospitality, masculinity, and strength. It is a drink that signifies the vigor of the groom's family and their preparedness for the marriage. Semiologically, the small stout could also represent the community's resistance to external influences, as it is a locally cherished alcoholic beverage. The stout, as a symbol of "strong" spirits, could signify the endurance of the marital bond and the resilience needed in maintaining a union. Gulder beer, another popular alcoholic beverage in Igbo culture, often appears in marriage ceremonies. This item carries connotations of modernity and social bonding. In the semiotic sense, Gulder beer could be interpreted as a symbol of the blending of tradition and modernity, as it is a product of contemporary commerce yet still holds a place in traditional festivities. It represents a bridging of generational gaps, where older traditions coexist with new practices. Moreover, the beer symbolizes communal celebration and the collective joy shared by both families and the community during the wedding process. The male goat is a quintessential symbol in Igbo marriage rites, often used to symbolize fertility, virility, and the initiation of new life within the marriage. The male goat, as a semiotic sign, also

represents the groom's ability to provide and sustain the family. It is linked with the male's role in reproduction and in the maintenance of lineage continuity, emphasizing the community's focus on procreation and the perpetuation of heritage. The goat thus serves as a cultural signifier of both the physical and symbolic provision of the groom's family. Yams hold deep cultural and agricultural significance in the Igbo community, symbolizing prosperity, fertility, and sustenance. In Igbo traditional marriage, tubers of yam are often presented as part of the bride price negotiation. Semiologically, yams represent the groom's ability to provide for the bride and her family. The number of yams could signify the level of respect the groom has for the bride's family and their readiness for a long-lasting marriage. In a broader sense, yams also symbolize the connection between human beings and the land, with a focus on the community's agricultural roots and survival. Palm wine is another important element in the Igbo traditional marriage ceremony, and it has a multitude of meanings. Semiologically, palm wine represents sanctity, union, and the spiritual aspect of the marriage. It is often used in rituals to seal agreements or as part of the bride price negotiation. Drinking palm wine together signifies the union of two families, and it is a gesture of mutual respect. It also carries connotations of fertility and the blessing of the union by ancestral spirits. Palm wine thus serves as a symbol of both the literal and symbolic nourishment that the union brings to both the bride and the groom. Raffia wine is less common but still holds cultural importance in some Igbo communities, including Aguluzigbo. It is typically used in

traditional settings for its ceremonial and medicinal properties. Semiotically, raffia wine could be seen as a sign of ancestral connection and cultural preservation. The use of raffia wine in a marriage ceremony may suggest a deeper connection to Igbo ancestral practices, symbolizing the continuity of traditional rites and the honoring of the past. The drink could also be associated with spiritual blessings, as it is consumed during rituals aimed at invoking good fortune and the protection of the union by ancestral forces.

4.2.5 Mmányá Ndì Nzé (Drink for Titled Men) and Money 7)



Signifier: Nkwenu (Palm wine)

Signified: The Mmányá Ndì Nzé, or the drink for titled men, is an important part of the traditional marriage ceremony in the Aguluzigbo community. It is given to men who hold titles within the community, such as Nzè, and it carries significant cultural meaning. The drink symbolizes respect and recognition for these men, who are seen as leaders and authority figures in the society. By offering the drink, the bride's family acknowledges

the social status and importance of the titled men, reinforcing the community's values of hierarchy and tradition. This ritual is not just about the drink itself but is a symbol of unity between families. It shows that both the bride's and groom's families, as well as the broader community, support the marriage. The act of giving the drink to the titled men represents the collective backing of the union and emphasizes the role of the community in the marriage process. It also highlights the power dynamics within Igbo society, where those with titles are respected and honored, especially during significant events like marriage. Also, money is given to the elders this is to show respect and regard for them, acknowledging their positions in the land.

4.2.6 For the Youths (Star, Hero, and Can Malt)

8)



Signifier: Cartons of beer (Star, Hero)

Signified: In the Aguluzigbo community's traditional marriage, items like Star, Hero, and Can Malt serve as important symbols, each carrying distinct meanings. The "Star" drink symbolizes celebration and social unity, reflecting the festive atmosphere of the event. It also connects to modernity, representing the merging of traditional and contemporary values. The "Hero" drink, with its name evoking strength and vitality, symbolizes power, endurance, and the success of the union between the bride and groom. It may also reflect masculinity and optimism for the couple's future. Lastly, the "Can Malt" drink represents a modern, refreshing choice, showing the community's embrace of contemporary practices while still holding onto traditional communal values. Taken together, these items reflect a blend of tradition and modernity. They show how the Aguluzigbo community balances old and new cultural practices in their wedding ceremonies. Through these drinks, the ceremony conveys ideas of strength, unity, and the evolving nature of cultural identity. The semiotic meaning of these items highlights how the community negotiates its traditions in a changing world. These drinks are targeted towards the younger generation and represent social bonding, celebration, and inclusivity. They symbolize the acknowledgment of the youths' role in the community, as they are the ones who will carry on traditions and cultural practices.

4.2.7 Ífé-òhà in Cash (Cash Payment for Marriage)

9)



Signifier: Cash payment (N150,000 for indigenes, N200,000 for non-indigenes), palm wine, goat.

Signified: The cash payment and additional goods (such as palm wine and a goat) symbolize the formal monetary and material exchange required in the Igbo traditional marriage. This amount differs based on whether the suitor is an indigene or a non-indigene, symbolizing the idea of belonging to the community and the respect for local customs. The payment in cash emphasizes the serious financial commitment of the suitor. The difference in amounts for indigenes and non-indigenes reflects social status, identity, and the degree of integration into the community.

4.3 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The analysis of traditional marriage items in Aguluzigbo, as explored through semiotic theory, reveals deep cultural meanings embedded in each item. Money, particularly the N1,000 paid by the groom, symbolizes not just financial contribution but also respect, commitment, and social status. It signifies the groom's willingness to assume marital responsibilities and serves as an acknowledgment of the bride's family and community. Palm wine, with its symbolic connections to life, fertility, and prosperity, plays a central role in fostering unity between both families. It is a key ritual item that signifies the legitimacy of the union and highlights the importance of community bonding during the ceremony. Items like small stout, can malt, and other drinks represent the groom's social and economic standing, as well as the inclusive nature of the celebration. While the stout reflects strength, masculinity, and festive joy, the malt drink accommodates those who do not consume alcohol, promoting respect for all participants. Other offerings such as yams, goats, and raffia wine carry symbolic significance, representing fertility, sustenance, and ancestral connections. These items also reflect the community's agricultural heritage, reinforcing the groom's ability to provide and his family's preparedness for the union. The semiotic role of drinks like Star and Hero beer demonstrates the blending of traditional values with modern influences, especially among the youth. These drinks symbolize social unity, strength, and the evolving cultural identity of the community.

Finally, the cash payment for marriage, alongside symbolic items, emphasizes the serious nature of the marital contract, with distinctions made based on whether the groom is an indigene or not, reflecting social hierarchy and identity. Through this analysis, the ritual items in Aguluzigbo's traditional marriage serve not just practical purposes but also function as signs that communicate deeper cultural values, social roles, and the collective spirit of the community.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

5.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter attempts to summarize the previous chapters of the study on the semiotic analysis of items used in Igbo traditional marriage: A case study of Aguluzigbo community of Anambra State, as well as present the findings draw some conclusions and recommendations.

5.1 SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

This research study was designed to look into the semiotic analysis of items used in Igbo traditional marriage: A case study of Aguluzigbo community of Anambra State. The first chapter of the study focused on the background of the study. It introduced the topic, language of discuss, as well as stating the aim and objectives of the study, research questions, the statement of the research problem, scope of the study, methodology, purpose of the study and the significance of the study. The second chapter reviewed some relevant literature. The chapter was divided into three main sub-sections, they were: conceptual review, previous studies, and lastly, the concern of the present study. The third chapter looked into the theoretical framework employed for the research which was the Semiotic analysis theory framework by Saussure (1916). The chapter discussed what the theory framework was all about including its working principles, application of the

theory, relevance/justification of the theory to the research, and lastly, how the theory can be applied to the analysis of the present study looking at the strengths of the theory. The fourth chapter has as its main concern the data presentation and analysis. The chapter concerned itself with the presentation of the data, analysis of the data, and lastly, the discussion of findings.

5.2 FINDINGS

The findings revealed that the items used in Igbo traditional marriage in Aguluzigbo carry significant symbolic meanings that reflect cultural values and social norms. Money, particularly the N1,000 paid by the groom, symbolizes his commitment and readiness to take on marriage responsibilities, serving as a marker of respect and social status. Palm wine represents unity, fertility, and prosperity, while also legitimizing the marriage between the two families. Items like small stout and malt drinks are symbols of strength, celebration, and inclusivity, reflecting the groom's ability to provide and the communal spirit of the ceremony. The male goat and yams signify fertility, provision, and respect for the bride's family, emphasizing the agricultural roots of the community. Modern elements like Gulder beer symbolize the blending of tradition with contemporary practices, while raffia wine connects the ceremony to ancestral traditions. The cash payment and additional gifts, including palm wine and a goat, highlight the formal exchange and social identity within the community.

5.3 CONCLUSION

The research concludes that the items used in the marriage ceremony of the Aguluzigbo community of Anambra State reinforce unity, respect, and the continuity of cultural practices. These items, which include traditional artifacts and symbolic gifts, reflect deep cultural significance and are essential in fostering social cohesion. The ceremony blends the old with the new, incorporating modern elements while preserving ancestral traditions. This dynamic allows the community to adapt to changing social norms while maintaining a strong cultural identity. As such, these rituals not only celebrate the union of individuals but also serve to strengthen communal ties and honor ancestral values.

5.4 RECOMMENDATION

The researcher recommends further studies in this particular area and any aspect not touched in this study should be treated by linguist, scholars or any other researchers who have interest in the items used in Igbo traditional marriage especially in other communities in Anambra State.

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