

Turning Requires Plucking: The Role of Understanding in Igbo Conceptualization of Translation

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Abstract

This paper centers on one of the conceptual metaphors that is evoked schematically in conceptualizing translation by the Igbo speaker. *Understanding is Grasping* is conceptualized in Igbo as *Understanding is Plucking*. This discussion is based on the assumption that whenever a concept is invoked in a discourse setting, several other sub-schemas are evoked. The apprehension of a concept requires contextual information which is supplied by the conceptual substrates. In particular, if the discussants are people from different cultural orientations and social contexts. Several people have written on the subject of conceptual metaphors so this work focuses on the concept of *ghota* ‘pluck’ as one of the metaphors activated in the cognitive environment of the Igbo speaker whenever the concept of translation is evoked. The research was conducted in the South-eastern part of Nigeria where the Igbos are located predominantly and the language data was collected using questionnaires. The sample population for the questionnaire survey consisted of one hundred and fifty (150) respondents both male and female selected through purposive sampling. Also, the questionnaire was designed following an open-ended format as it requires translation of English expressions culled from translation training materials. The respondents were required to translate these English expressions into the Igbo language. Further, the cognitive grammar theory (CG) was adopted as a theoretical framework for data analysis. This linguistic theory leans extensively on cognitive linguistic approach. The

findings show that *ngħota* ‘plucking’ is crucial in the Igbo conceptualization of translation. The detailed discussion of the issues introduced here is found in the doctoral dissertation on, the Igbo conceptualization of *ntughari* ‘translation’.

Keywords: Conceptualization, conceptual metaphor, cognitive grammar, *Għota*, understanding, Igbo

THE CONCEPT OF *NGHỌTA*

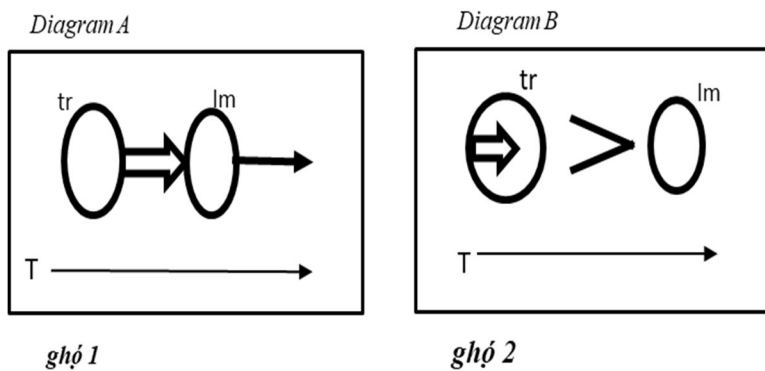
Nghòtà ‘understanding/ the act of comprehending’ is a nominalization of the verb *ghòtà* meaning ‘pluck/ understand’. Etymologically, *ghòtà* is a verb stem derived by the combination of two morphemes *ghò* and *tà*. The morpheme *ghò* is the verb root combining with the second morpheme *tà* to derive the verb stem *ghòtà*. The second morpheme *tà* is referred to as an extensional suffix as its function in *ghòtà* is extending the meaning of *ghò* (Emenajo, 1987). Abstracting from the work on *Igbo verbs of motion and vantage point* (Unpublished), the use of *tà* as an extensional suffix to the verb root *ghò* instantiates the idea of motion towards the subject, or an action performed for the subject’s benefit (Welmers, 1968). In this paper, *-tà* ‘towards’ is glossed with the sense of motion both in the literal and metaphorical senses, which is adapted from examining the examples presented by Emenajo (1987 & 2015).

The verb root *ghò* is a high tone verb and the vowel /o/ belongs to the class of retracted tongue root (-ATR) of Igbo vowel harmony system. When the verb is used as a free or independent morpheme it usually has an additional vowel at the end, as with *ghòó* ‘pluck’. Also, this verb root *ghò* is polysemous in nature. Thus, it is in the usage context that the appropriate meaning is derived. The examples below illustrate the different meanings of *ghò*. Figure 1 represents the different possible meanings of *ghò* found in examples 5-9. In CG diagram A of Figure 1, *ghò* is glossed as ‘pluck’ (which in various contexts could as be rendered as ‘pick,

harvest’ ‘select, decide’); while CG Diagram B illustrates *ghọ* as meaning ‘become/ transform into/ turn into’. The semantic domain evoked by the verb root *ghọ* ‘pluck’ here, does not include the English notion of plucking the feather of birds. Igbo has a different way of expressing that conception.

In Figure 1, the small ovals represent concrete entities. Diagram A demonstrate a cause-motion action. Diagram B illustrates an intransitive construction, where the subject indicated as the trajector (tr) assumes the form of an object that is landmark (lm). The single line arrow in both diagrams labeled (T) denotes time used in cognitive processing.

Figure 1: Different meanings of *ghọ*



Ghọ is also glossed as ‘go wrong, miss, be mistaken’ (Williamson, 1972, *cf* Ihebom, 2016, & Echeruo, 2001). Ihebom’s description of *ghọ* as ‘mistake’ is illustrated in the following excerpt.

- 1) *ihe ga-ra otu a-na-atụ-ghị anya ya mfu*
 thing go-PST way PRF-PROG-throw-NEG eye 3SG loss
 ‘The thing went in an unexpected direction -loss

ihe a-na-akpachapụ-ghị anya mee.
 thing PRF-PROG-careful-NEG eye do
 something done unintentionally

ọ ghọ-rọ ya aghọ.
 3SG miss-EMP 3SG BCN.miss
 It happened by mistake / accidentally’ (Ihebom 2016).

The various meanings assigned to the verb *ghó* in each usage event greatly depend on context and object of the verb in each sentence. Examples 2 (a-e) relate to CG diagram (A) in Figure 1 above showing *ghó* as ‘pluck’.

- 2) a. *Ífèómà nā-à-ghó ifórò*
 Ifeoma PROG-3SG-pick flower
 ‘Ifeoma is picking (some) flowers.’ (Ihejirika, 2008)
- b. *Ádà nā-à-ghó ókà*
 Ada PROG-3SG-harvest maize
 ‘Ada is harvesting (some) maize.’ (Echeruo, 2011)
- c. *Ádà nā-à-ghó úbē*
 Ada PROG-3SG-pluck pears
 ‘Ada is plucking (some) pears.’ (Echeruo, 2011)
- d. *Gà ghó-rò údì éfè í-chó-rò*
 go pick-EMP type dress 2SG-want-EMP
 ‘Go (and) select the type of dress you want.’
- e. *Ó ghó-rò i-bù ónyē ñkúzi*
 3SG pick-PST INF-be person teach
 ‘He decided/ chose to be a teacher.’

The idea of *ghó* ‘pick’ as presented in Example 2a in the Igbo cultural worldview is the notion of separating the flowers from the main plant as the agent (subject) is initiating the process. It does not require exerting much pressure (effort) by the agent onto the patient, although motion is experienced by both the agent and patient. Examples 2 (b & c) describe the harvesting of such foods as maize, okra, pear, pepper and tomatoes. With the verb *ghó* (2b & c), it is not specified whether the agent is harvesting the food items for personal benefit or for the benefit of someone else. Thus, at this point the verb does not specify categorically whose sphere of control the harvested items end up in. In Example 2d the agent is selecting a specific physical item (dress) for personal use. The same verb is employed to express making a decision in Example 2e; in this case the choice made is about a state of being. The use of *ghó* ‘pick’ in (4e) corresponds to CG diagram (B) in Figure 1.

Furthermore, *ghọ* ‘turn into’ in CG diagram (B) of Figure 2 can also be glossed as ‘transform into’, or ‘become’ (Echeruo, 2001; cf Williamson, 1972; Ihebom, 2016 & Welmers, 1968). The objects for the examples under this category depend solely on the category of image schema the speaker wants to evoke in the discourse context. Literally, the object could be a teacher as observed in Example 2e or any other profession as a career in life. Ihebom uses the schema presented in CG diagram (B) of Figure 1 for *ghọ* 2, taking the perspective of someone making a decision of turning into something else, which the excerpt following demonstrates.

3) (i) *i-nọ-kata n’otu ọdịdị nọ-gharịa buru ihe ọzọ*
 INF-be-EMP in-one form be-around become thing another
 ‘To change from one state of existence to become another thing.’ [That means],

(ii) *Olee mgbe Eze ji-ri ghọọ onye iberiibe?*
 how time Eze use-EMP change person fool
 ‘When did Eze become a foolish person?’ (Ihebom, 2016)

Ghọọ anụ-uzọ ndị ufọdu ji a-sị na mmadu
 become meat-way PL some use PRF-say that person
 ‘Become an animal- some people use this adage in saying that a person

na-akpa agwa nzuzu. Okonta na-a-ghọ anụ.
 PROG-behave character foolish Okonta PROG-PRF-become meat
 is behaving foolishly. Okonta is becoming an animal’ (Ihebom, 2016)

The excerpt invokes the schema of an individual transforming into an animal through change in character, which is considered foolishness. Line (i) in the excerpt describes the verb *ghọọ* ‘become’ found in Line (ii). Also, Line (ii) is an elucidation on the description with an illustration. In Example 2e above, the agent turned out to be a teacher while the agent (Eze) in Example 3 transformed into a foolish person through making a decision. A literal example of ‘turn into’ is seen in the Bible story about Lot’s wife who became a pillar of salt. The understanding is that she transformed from human into salt.

- 4) [...] *Ó ghó nnù*
 3SG turn salt
 ‘She turned into salt.’ (Gen. 19: 26c [Igbo Bible KJV])

With this understanding, the potential meaning of *ghó* is narrowed down to two basic ideas namely: the category of ‘pluck, pick, and harvest’; and the category of ‘become, transform, turn/change into’ (something)¹. Example 5 illustrates the ‘pluck’ meaning of *ghó* that is central to this study, and is also relevant to the discussion on extended meaning of *ghóta*. This is an Igbo monolingual dictionary description of *ghó*.

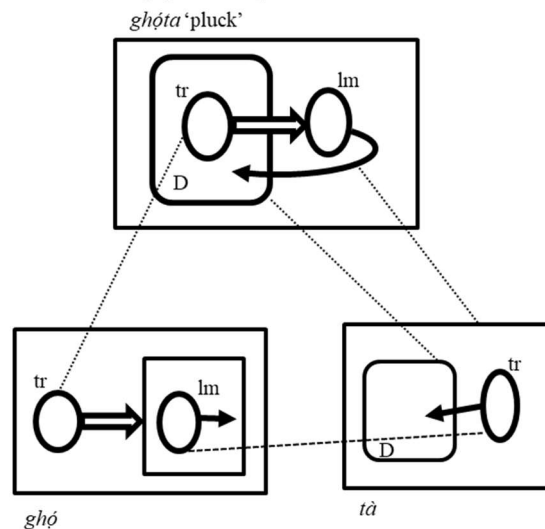
- 5) *Ghó-ro- i-ji aka ji-chie ihe mmadu lu-ru ebe i-nó.*
 catch-EMP INF-use hand hold-close thing person throw-PST place 2SG-stay
 ‘Catch- to hold tightly with your hands what someone threw to you
- onye nó n'elu ghóta,*
 person stay in.top pluck
 the person on top catches,
- ya e-luo-ro onye nó n'ala, ya a-ghóta.*
 3SG PRF-throw-EMP person stay in.ground 3SG PRF-pluck
 s/he throws to the person on ground, s/he catches
- A na-e-ji-kwa okwu a a-kówa ihe me mmụọ dika*
 3SG PROG-PRF-use-ENCL word DEM PRF-explain thing inside spirit like
 This word is also used in explaining spiritual things like
- i-ji omume mmadu a-tụ-nyere ihe a-kụ-rụ n'ubi.*
 INF-use character person PRF-throw-give thing PRF-plant-PST in.farm
 to use someone’s character to compare what is planted in the farm.’ (Ihebom 2016)

The following discussion focuses on the verb stem *ghóta* ‘pluck’, having analyzed it constituent parts. The verb stem *ghótà* in a transitive construction is depicted in Figure 2 below. The lower level of Figure 2 comprises of two rectangular boxes. The first rectangular box labeled *ghó* ‘pluck’ is made up of two ovals. The first oval with the double arrow, labelled trajector (*tr*) depicts the agent who causes the landmark (*lm*) to be in the dominion of the *tr*. The double line

¹ There are also other entries in various Igbo dictionaries for *ghó*, which are preferably referred to as homophones.

arrow indicates the force exerted on the object (*lm*), which is enclosed in a smaller rectangular box. The single line arrow attached to the oval labeled *lm* shows the direction of movement. The second rectangular box labeled *-tà* illustrates movement of the *lm* to dominion (D) of the *tr*. The rectangular box at top level shows directional movement evoked by the concept of *ghota*, which is depicted using the single line arrow. The *lm* ends up in the dominion (D) of the *tr*. The corresponding lines link identical entities in the diagram. This basic knowledge of *ghota* is mapped onto its metaphorical use in the work. Figure 2 is followed by three different interpretations of *ghotà* in an Igbo monolingual dictionary.

Figure 2: showing *ghotà* ‘pluck’



6) a. **Ghotà 1**

Ji-ri aka jide ihe onye ozo tu-ru atụ nye gi.
 use-EMP hand hold thing person another throw-PST BCN give 2SG
 ‘Using your hand to catch what someone threw at you, (for instance)’

Oche-goole unu a-bụ-ghị ya.
 keeper-goal 2PL PRF-is-NEG 3SG
 your goalkeeper is not it (capable)

O nwe-ghị ike ghotà bọọlụ ahụ e-jiri nwanyo gbaa.
 3SG have-NEG power catch ball DEM PRF-use slow kick
 He was unable to catch that ball, kicked slowly.

b. Ghota 2

i-nwe odudo-anyan n'ihe mmadu na-a-kowa.
 INF-have clear-eye in.thing person PROG-PRF-explain
 to have an understanding of what a person is explaining.

c. Ghota 3

isi n'elu osisi we-tuo mkpuru osisi.
 from in.top tree take-down seed tree
 to bring down fruits from a tree,

i-were mkpuru osisi i-were mkpuru dika ihe ubi.
 INF-take seed tree INF-take seed like thing farm
 to take fruits like crops from the farm.' (Ihebom 2016: 169)

The illustration of *ghota* 1 in (6a) demonstrates the primary experience of *ghota* where someone literally catches the object thrown in his/ her direction. In Example 6c, *ghota* 3 is an instance of removing a farm produce (fruits) from a tree. In both *ghota* 1 and *ghota* 3, the objects move into the possession of the agentive subjects. In (6b), *ghota* 2 is the extended meaning of the verb as its object is abstract and also involves the apprehension of something by the conceptualizer. The two descriptions of *ghota* (1 & 3) are further explained using the examples below.

- 7) a. *Ada ghò-tà-rā ójì*
 Ada pluck-towards-PST kola
 'Ada plucked kola (nuts).'
- b. *Uchè ghò-tà-rā nwa-ntakiri áhù*
 Uche pick-towards-PST child-small that
 'Uche caught that child'
- c. *Nwókè ahụ ghò-tà-rā bólù*
 man DEM pluck-towards-PST ball
 'The man caught the ball.'

The use of *ghòtà* 'pluck' in Example 7a is the primary experience of someone harvesting some fruits from the plants where they are produced, which corresponds with *ghota* (3) above.

The fruit harvested is kola nut, which can be substituted with other fruits like pears, oranges, and

others mentioned earlier. The category of the food to be harvested using this verb differs from how some other foods are harvested. In particular, for vegetables that are leafy in form, the verb used differs, and may include *kwùtá* ‘pluck’, *kpátà* ‘pluck’, *kátà* ‘cut from’, *kpájítà* ‘break & bring’; the objects of these verbs in contexts are leafy vegetables like greens, spinach, and so on. This section discussed how addition of the second morpheme *-tà* modifies the meaning of bringing something to close proximity with the causer, whereby the patient or object of the verb is brought into the sphere of control of the agent (subject). Figure 2 shows the movement of the landmark to the sphere of control the trajector and how the notion of ‘pluck-toward’ can be mapped onto a secondary experience in a metaphoric sense is discussed in the next section.

Also, we can mention at this point that the English verb “catch” is interpreted in Igbo as *jìdē*. The scenario presented in a discourse situation determines whether to use *ghótà* or *jìdē*. An appropriate instance of use of *jide* ‘catch’ would be a situation such as: *Jidē ónyè óshì áhū* ‘Catch that thief’, which is different from: *ghótà nwantakiri áhū* ‘Catch that child’. *Jidē* instantiates the notion of trying to stop someone from getting away while *ghótà* evokes a mental picture of trying to render help to the patient to prevent something probably bad from happening. The use of *jìdē* ‘catch’ is closer in meaning to *jìdēgìdē* which is glossed as ‘hold tight’. But Igwe (1999) identified ‘grasp’ as one of the meanings of *ghótà*, noting that *ghótà* can also be translated as ‘hold on to, seize and clutch.’ In order to clarify the meaning of *ghótà* as different from other verbs, Igwe (1999) used the two examples in (8).

- 8) a. *í-ghó-tà* *ákà*
 INF-pick-towards hand
 ‘To grasp/ hold on to the hand. (Igwe 1999)
- b. *í-ghó-gìdē* *ákà*
 INF-pick-DUR hand
 ‘To grasp/ hold tightly the hand (continuously).

A closer look at Examples 8 (a & b) prompts more reflection on some of the dictionary entries as emanating from thinking from English into Igbo instead of moving from Igbo to English in conceptualizing what some of the lexical entries mean. This leads to inability to properly elucidate the etymology of some of the concepts using the verb root *ghò* as an example. One cannot simply apprehend the basic meaning of a root or word without deep reflection even as a native speaker. Therefore, the claims about meanings of relevant verbs were further verified through data collected from indigenous Igbo speakers for validity and authentication considering the fact that these linguists as Igbo authors may not have paid keen attention to the cognitive aspect of conceptualization. Nevertheless, in conceptualization of *nghòtá* ‘understanding’, the verb root *ghò* means ‘pluck’ instead of ‘grasp’ in Igbo language.

METAPHORICAL USES OF GHÒTÀ ‘PLUCK’

The discussion of metaphor relative to *ghòtá* ‘pluck’ shows the shared cognitive environment of Igbo speakers in discourse contexts where *nghòtá* ‘understanding’ is projected. Lakoff in one of his articles classified the expression: UNDERSTANDING IS GRASPING, as a dead metaphor considering its root, which is captured in this excerpt:

Comprehend comes from the Latin word *comprehendere*, which in turn was formed from *com*, meaning ‘together’ plus *prehendere* meaning ‘seize’ or ‘grasp’. At the time the Latin term came into being, Latin presumably had the conventional metaphor that ‘Understanding is grasping’. In Latin, *Comprehendere* meant what comprehend means now, to understand, or as the American Heritage Dictionary puts it “to grasp mentally” (Lakoff, 1986).

Lakoff suggests that conceptually, understanding is seen as a kind of mental grasping. Looking at the English dictionary in analyzing the concept ‘grasp’ in the English speakers’ worldview, different mental images are invoked. These images evoked are summarized thus;

Grasp refers to the power of seizing, either concretely or figuratively. Grasp suggests actually seizing and closing the hand upon something or figuratively, it

means thoroughly comprehending something and therefore refers to something within one's possession or immediate possibility of possession. (Stein & Urdang, 1983)

It is with this understanding of 'grasp' that the Igbo data under this section are analyzed using Langacker's concepts of 'dominion', 'epistemic control', 'vantage point' and the 'conceptualizer'. Examples 9 (a-c) are discussed using Figure 2. These examples illustrate the extended meaning of *ghota*. Example 9a shows the nominalized form of *ghótà* as the object of the verb 'have'. Examples 9 (b-c) introduce the negative particles used in Igbo in relation to *ghota* and various other verbs. There is a slight difference between *ghí* 'not' and *hyé /hiē* 'miss/off'.

- 9) a. *Ónyè nwé-rè ñ-ghótà máa-rà ihē*
 who have-EMP NMLZ-pluck know-EMP thing
 'Someone who has understanding is wise.'
- b. *Á-ghó-tà-ghí m̄ ónyè ñkúzi m*
 PRF-pluck-DIR-not me who teach me
 'I do not understand my teacher'
- c. *Ádà nà-à-ghó-tà-hiē m̄*
 Ada PROG-3SG-pluck-DIR-off me
 'Ada is misunderstanding me.'

The use of 'have' schema in (9a) evokes the notion of possessing something. This entity can either be concrete or abstract; the entity possessed in (9a) is an abstract noun. Ownership in the perspective of this article is bringing something into close proximity where access is guaranteed to the individual within his/ her sphere of control. That is, in changing from the literal 'pluck-towards' to abstract notion, one can talk about 'plucking towards' an idea or concept, and thus apprehending it. Thus, with the introduction of *ghí* 'not' appended to *ghota* 'pluck' indicates that the subject (agent) have not understood the teacher's ideas. The inability to grasp becomes failure to understand. Hence, the subject does not have the object (idea) within the sphere of control and cannot be considered as having plucked or harvested or picked the object. This

notion of inability to pluck the idea partially accounted for the seventeen (17) empty spaces on the questionnaires recorded in Table 1, row 7 as *NIL* below.

Example 9c shows another sense of lack of ownership. *Ghòtá-hiē* ‘pluck-off’/ ‘misunderstand’ presents another perspective. This basically is a reflection of the conceptualizer’s vantage point in the process of ‘plucking’.

The world around us is formed by our human perception, knowledge, and attitude or by our human experience. This could be subjective or objective. [...] The human conceptualization (conceptualizer) is based on one’s conceptual category (linguistic category) which is informed by the experiences of one within his world (Dirven & Verspoor, 2004).

In the Cognitive Grammar theory, the vantage point is the actual location of the speaker and the hearer. Langacker also noted that the vantage point assumed for linguistic purposes need not be the speaker’s actual location, but can be a fictive vantage point that facilitates one describing a scene from the perspective of another (2008). Notwithstanding these various stances, the speaker or hearer maybe at the same location physically, yet cognitively the location may differ resulting in differing construals of the same event under observation. This is basically a consequence of different shared background information, as a result of differing embodied nature of experiences in life. Hence, the space occupied literally at the same time by speaker and hearer does not account for the divergent construal to meanings. This may account for the ‘miss-plucking’/ ‘plucking- off’ observed by the conceptualizer in example (9c), where the idea held in possession by the trajector is differing from the ‘supposed’ idea anticipated for him/ her to possess. This may not be considered as valid ‘possession or ownership’ as the entity or thing held may not be of relevance to the possessor, which may be tantamount to not having any thing. The subjectivity that probably affected the construal of meaning may also be obstruction from the point of reference. Thus, the connection between use *ghí* ‘not’ and *hiē* ‘miss/ off’ in the

conceptualizer's sense of ownership is not certain. Because *ghị* 'not' indicates lack of possession and *hiē* 'miss /off' implies that what is possessed is not in complete relationship with what is anticipated. Therefore, incapacitating the supposedly firm grip or sense of ownership the would-be possessor should have within his or her sphere of control. This notion of plucking but wrongly is seen with some of the entries recorded in Table (1) row (6) categorized as mistranslation, i.e these were judged to be misrepresentation of the English expression. Twelve entries are categorized as mistranslations in Table (1), which is significant as these respondents have misapprehended the information, hence, leading to their mistranslation. There is definitely more to be said than can be addressed. For example, one could also consider the metaphor "Holding is Controlling" (Dunn, 2015), which is related to the ideas presented here but is expressed in Igbo using the verb *jidē* "hold/ catch". Both evoke a sense of possession related to exercising epistemic control although the verbs used are different in Igbo cognition. The analyzed Igbo data from questionnaires are presented below, to summarize the metaphorical use of the verb *ghota* discussed in this section. I administered questionnaires to one hundred and fifty respondents. This informed use of the category of respondents shown in Table (1) below. The respondents were asked to write in Igbo the English expressions: UNDERSTANDING IS GRASPING. The responses are summarized in Table (1).

Table 1: Igbo translation of UNDERSTANDING IS GRASPING

S/ NO	VARIOUS TRANSLATIONS	NO. OF RESPONSES
1	<i>Nghota bu ighota</i> 'Understanding is to pluck'	26
2	<i>Nghota bu imata ihe / mmara</i> 'Understanding is knowing [something]'	15
3	<i>Nghota bu ijide.</i> 'Understanding is	34

	to hold' <i>Nghota bu ijidesi ihe ike.</i> 'Understanding is holding something firmly'	
4	<i>Nghota bu inweta</i> 'Understanding is to have/possess'	15
5	<i>Nghota bu...</i> 'Understanding is....'	10
6	<i>Nghota di mkpa.</i> 'Understanding is important' <i>Nghota zuru oke</i> 'Understanding is complete' <i>Nghota bu ihe mbu</i> 'Understanding is first thing' <i>Nghota bu nlelu anya</i> 'Understanding is carefulness' <i>Nghota bu anyaukwu</i> 'Understanding is greed' <i>Nghota bu gasipini</i> 'Understanding is grasping' (Examples of mistranslations)	12
7	NIL	17
	Total returned questionnaires	129
	Total respondents	150

Looking at the Igbo data collected from both individual interviews and filled questionnaires, the lexeme *ngikota* activates various schemas in Igbo discourse contexts. All the returned filled questionnaires show that Igbo speakers construe understanding as *ngikota*. Some of the domains evoked from the Igbo discourse data include: *Nghota bu ighota* 'Understanding is plucking'. There were twenty (26) responses to this effect indicating that some of the Igbo speakers conceptualize grasping using the lexeme *ngikota*. Another important domain activated is described as *Nghota bu imata ihe/ mmara* 'Understanding is knowing (something)'. The notion of dominion is seen from *Nghota bu ijide*. 'Understanding is to hold' and *Nghota bu ijidesi ihe ike*. 'Understanding is holding something firmly' with thirty-four (34) entries; and *Nghota bu*

inweta ‘Understanding is to have/ possessing’, having fifteen (15) entries. This implies the significance of understanding is bringing into one’s sphere of control the conceptual content of the message in a discourse. This demonstrates gaining epistemic control of the thought or idea portrayed.

CONCLUSION

The study of metaphor in linguistics is very wide in scope. It is an aspect of language study that has lots of literature because of the interests of different individuals, yet it still remains fascinating when explored in languages like Igbo. The field of metaphor studies has developed over the years as the works of such authors as Lakoff and others continue to receive recognition as people continue to further research into the concept of metaphor. Metaphors have permeated the human conceptual system that daily we converse with such tropes with less difficulty. This is very evident across cultures as UNDERSTANDING IS GRASPING was explored in the Igbo language. It has been observed that polysemy can give rise to figurative expressions. And the study of metaphor cannot be conducted in isolation of metonymy as both are conceptual phenomena that interact in deriving meanings from linguistic expressions. This is due to our reliance on primary and concrete experiences in life in order to conceptualize the secondary abstract experiences as we mature mentally.

Langacker’s discussion of epistemic control and “sphere of control / dominion” was explored. Hence, the metaphor UNDERSTANDING IS GRASPING literally means bringing something (object) into close proximity within the vantage point of a conceptualizer in a discourse. This notion is cross mapped mentally with abstract objects like knowledge. Therefore, UNDERSTANDING IS GRASPING refers to the idea of one possessing or being in control of

something. This is expressed in Igbo using the verb *ghòtá* ‘pluck’, which is understood from the primary knowledge of plucking fruits in order to be in possession of them.

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