

**The Pragmatics of Cooperation and Pursuit of Common Interest in the Discourse of Rural
Igbo Community Meetings in Nigeria**

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Abstract

In the Igbo society, community meetings are taken very seriously. It is through such meetings that issues affecting the community are examined and decisions are taken, disputes between persons or groups are settled, development projects are proposed and debated, various forms of cultural education are promoted, etc. Members of the local community assemble to engage in discourses that promote mutual interest and consolidate interdependency, deploying linguistic and non-linguistic forms that communicate shared values in the cultural context. This study aims to explore

the nature of these strategies from a pragmatic theoretical standpoint to find out how assumptions in the local context contribute to the interpretation of the talk and particularly to the comprehension of the commitment to cooperation and the pursuit of common interest. Rural discourse is suffused with metaphors and verbal ironies, and in interpreting these, we find that the semantic meaning of a particular discourse recovered by interpreting (decoding) vastly underdetermines the pragmatic meaning latent in the context of the utterance. Thus, this researcher's task in this study is to find the meaning speakers intend to convey. Towards this end, the analysis will be predicted on constructing or erecting a hypothesis. The route this research will take to the pragmatics of rural discourse is the trope of verbal irony.

Key Words: Communication, Verbal Irony, Rural Discourse, Pragmatics, Meaning

Introduction

Pragmatics is a field of study that shows how language is used to send messages that are not directly related to the additive value of the raw linguistic data of the utterance. Jenny Thomas posits that "in the early 1980s, when it became common to discuss pragmatics in general textbooks on linguistics, the most common definition of pragmatics was: meaning in use or meaning in context (1-2), in other words, contextualized meaning.

Both semantics and pragmatics are the two main branches of the linguistic study of meaning. Patrick Griffiths sees semantics as:

the study of the "toolkit for meaning: knowledge encoded in the vocabulary of a language and in its patterns for building more elaborate meanings, up to the level of sentence meanings. Pragmatics [on the other hand] is concerned with these tools in meaningful communication. Pragmatics is about the interaction of semantic knowledge with our knowledge of the world, taking into account contexts of use (1)

The above definition shows that semantics is concerned with meaning at the formal meaning, which is more or less the literal meaning of a sentence. Pragmatics goes beyond the literal meaning of a sentence, concentrating, instead, on the contextual level of meaning. To capture both the

semantic and pragmatics levels, Griffiths further explains that “pragmatics deals with inferences that listeners and readers make, or that ___ when speaking or writing ___ they invite others to make” (ix). He argues that these inferences are often conscious, thus pragmatics tends to be easier to understand than semantics because the latter is about abstract potential meanings that are often best described using notions drawn from logic and a set of theories. He also maintains that linguistic meaning cannot usefully be studied by someone who knows only about pragmatics.

Griffith further points out that the essential difference between sentences and utterances is that sentences are abstract, not tied to contexts, whereas utterances are identified by their contexts (6). To him, this is also the main way of distinguishing between semantics and pragmatics. His main observation is that “if one is dealing with meaning without a context to consider, one is into semantic analysis; but if there is a context to consider, it is purely pragmatics analysis.” There are, therefore, three distinguishing stages that one can adopt in pragmatic interpretation. The first he identifies as the semantic stage or the stage of literal meaning; the second and third are two kinds of pragmatic interpretation: explicature and implicature. To him, the literal meaning of a sentence refers to the semantic information one has from one’s knowledge of English. In that case, no consideration of context is involved. An explicature could be seen as the fundamental interpretation of utterance through contextual information and universal ideas to capture what is being and which way to understand ambiguous expressions. He states that the explicatures of utterances usually go beyond the literal meaning of sentences. They are interpretations based on the linguistic and non-linguistic contexts. He then goes further to say that in dealing with implicature, we consider the implied meaning of an utterance in its specific context, that is, we try to find out the encoder’s intention or agenda. It is important, however, to know that literal meaning

should not be neglected. This is because it is the foundation for explicature on which implicatures are based.

In the rural Igbo communities of Nigeria, traditional meetings play a vital role in fostering cooperation, resolving conflicts, and pursuing common interests. These meetings, often characterized by rich discourse and vibrant dialogue, serve as a platform for community members to gather, share ideas, and work towards collective goals. Through a nuanced analysis of the

language and communication strategies employed in these meetings, this study aims to uncover the pragmatics of cooperation and the pursuit of common interest in rural Igbo community discourse.

The researchers attempt to examine how community members negotiate meaning, build consensus, and navigate power dynamics, this research seeks to shed light on the complex social dynamics at play in these meetings. Furthermore, it aims to explore how the discourse of cooperation and collective interest is constructed, maintained, and contested in the context of rural Igbo community meetings. This research will help deepen understanding of how language and communication shape social relationships, foster cooperation, and promote collective action in rural Igbo communities, ultimately contributing to the broader field of pragmatics.

Objective of the Study

This study seeks to do the following:

- (i) Examine and analyze the deeper, inferred “social force” of language that promotes cooperation in these discourses.

(ii) Discover how deeper, the inferred meaning is also encoded within the rural discourses that create a pragmatic force within them.

(iii) Examine the degree to which the interpretation of these rural discourses would ignore the pragmatic force of the Igbo language and culture and thus lose the deeper levels of meaning vital to the cultural setting.

(iv) Find out the extent to which rural discourses in Igboland are particularly worth studying from the point of view of pragmatics because the study of language as an action really helps the interactants to arrive at an authentic interpretation. They need pragmatics principles to fathom the deeper meanings in the exchanges.

Literature Review

According to Yule (1), quoted by Osisanwo (55), pragmatics is “concerned with the study of meaning as communicated by a speaker (or writer) and interpreted by the listener (or reader).”

According to Fromkin, Rodman & Hyams (199), pragmatics studies linguistic meanings in contexts. This definition means that pragmatics operates within contexts. When one talks about pragmatics, one is simply talking about meaning beyond sentence level. That is to say that pragmatics takes care of the implied meaning of an utterance which could only be inferred within the context, in other words, contextual meaning. This study is designed to comprehend the pragmatics of rural discourses of Igbo community meetings. The study, therefore, employs the Cooperative Principles developed by H.P. Grice who’s Conversational Implicature is central to the

discussion. The literature review of this study is designed to accommodate the pragmatics analysis of literary works and speech as well as works done on rural discourses.

In a conference paper titled “Education and Self-Reliance in the 21st Century: A Pragmatics Analysis of Mariama Ba’s *So Long a Letter*,” Ambi Abigail Andrew examines the message communicated in the novel and takes into cognizance the influence of Mariama Ba’s diction in *So Long a Letter* and how she uses her social background as a standpoint to convey her message to her targeted audience. Her paper applies the pragmatics features of Speech Act Theory and

Cooperative Principles in the analysis of the novel to reveal the cognitive meaning of the author’s intention. The researcher discovers that Mariama Ba’s novel violates some Grice’s maxims. However, the researcher notes that maxims are being violated not intentionally but due to a speaker’s/writer’s intent on achieving, through illocutions, a successful perlocutionary act by the listener/ reader.

In the article “Irony in the *Mayor of Casterbridge*: a Literary Pragmatic Study,” Zhang Ting explores one of Thomas Hardy’s most outstanding novels, the *Mayor of the Casterbridge* using pragmatics approaches. Ting employs the Speech Act Theory in the interpretation of irony in the novel, arguing that irony is a type of speech act with indirectness as its key feature and insincerity as its felicity condition.

Lihua Huang in her essay entitled “Pragmatic Study of Irony in Samuel Beckett’s Plays,” posits that the paper attempts to apply post-Gricean theories of pragmatics to analyze both “echoic mention” and “allusional pretense” ironies to reveal the different subjects implied in Beckett’s plays. Huang contends that Beckett uses ironic techniques to build his unique narrative modes. She

avers that employing ironic discourse, Beckett tries to negate “proustian imagery” narration and creates “Beckettian narration.”

In her essay entitled “A Pragma-Stylistic Analysis of Robert Frost’s Poem ‘The Road Not Taken,’” Dyah Rochmawati attempts an analysis of Robert Frost’s poem, the Road Not Taken from the perspective of pragmatics and stylistics. He asserts that a pragmatics account of literature assumes that in literary communication we do not only have a text but also the effects of literary

interpretation involving the needs, wishes, desires, likings, and feelings of the author by using Grice’s Cooperation Principles.

Florence Indede in her article entitled “The Pragmatics of Kiswahili Literary Political Discourse” attempts a pragmatics analysis of Kiswahili literary political discourse using Grice’s Cooperative Principles. She bases her analysis on the following poetic texts: Chembe cha Moyo by Alamin Mazuri, Sauti ya Dhiki by Abdilatif Abdala, and Jiho la Ndani by Said Ahmed Mohamed. She maintains that her article employs the Cooperative Principles developed by Grice who’s Conversational Implicature is central to her discussion. She argues that the interpretation of meaning requires a high level of application of the Cooperative Principles by both the reader and the author. Indede avers that the poetic dialogic understanding of the author’s theme or message involves recognizing his rationale for using an utterance in context.

Krisagbedo in her paper entitled “The Pragmatics Analysis of President Obasanjo’s Speeches on Corruption in Nigeria, has adopted Austin’s speech act theory which is basically on the doctrine of felicity to interpret Obasanjo’s speeches on corruption. She aims to explore the SAT as a tool

for analyzing former president Obasanjo's proclamations of fighting corruption in Nigeria. She tends to prove that the use of language, as Smith (2007) observes, ". . . not only can, but even normally do have the character of actions."(10)

Adeyemi in his paper *Beyond 'Halleluya' and 'Amen': An Enquiry into Discourse Innovations in Pentecostal Worship Service*, makes an in-depth analysis of 'Halleluya' and 'Amen' that is commonly used in many Christian worships/services. The essay analyzes the smooth blend of the

verbal and non-verbal strategies and audience-participating technique of the discourse, treating them as doctrine-reinforcing and discourse-knitting strategies.

Leech and Short take extracts from *Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austin and Alan Sillitoe's *The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner* to show how characters communicate and how their interaction can be effectively interpreted using pragmatic principles. They also emphasize that the interpretation of implicatures assumes that the cooperative principle is being observed even though the participants violate the principles at various points in their talk exchange. (288-298)

Grundy uses so many extracts in his book *Doing Pragmatics* to conversations using certain pragmatic theories. He emphasizes that learning pragmatics and learning syntax are mirror images of one another. This is because pragmatic data consist of everyday utterances. To him, the first impression of pragmatics tends to be that it's really quite easy: the examples and the ways they are described seem to accord closely with our intuitions about everyday talk. He notes that in contrast, when we study syntax for the first time, the formal representation of the examples often seems

very challenging. But as time goes on, we realize that the underlying ideas in syntax have simplicity and elegance that make syntax seem less difficult the more we study it.

Jorn Cruickshank, Hans Kjetil Lysgard and May-Lind Magnussen in “The Logic of the Construction of Rural Politics: Political Discourse on Rurality in Norway” have identified two competing discourses from parliamentary debates in Norway on rural development. For them, one of these discourses regards rural values as intrinsic, while the other regards the rural as an actor in a play about economic growth. They have noted that rural change is contingent not only on the meaning-making process in parliamentary debates, but on the way truth claims made by politicians

are linked to general national and global issues (Geografiska Annaler. Series B, Human Geography 2009 Swedish Society of Anthropology and Geography). Owain Jonas has also done valuable research on “Lay Discourse of the Rural: Development and Implications for Rural Studies.” Jonas attempts to review some key examples of how and why lay discourses are being used in academic approaches to the rural, and how some of these are also addressing the key question of the problematic relationship between lay and academic discourses. The study has found that lay discourses of the rural, studies such as they are, can be expected to be both spatially and conceptually complex and incoherent to an extent that will make it difficult for them to be incorporated into (modern) academic rural approaches and thus leads to conclusion that in part supports Murdock Pratt’s (1993) concept of the ‘post rural’ (1995).

In all the works examined, the researchers observed that much has not been carried out to critically and pragmatically analyze Igbo rural discourses.

Methodology

The data for this study is sourced from the Igbo speech communities of the Southern Eastern states in Nigeria through participant observation, interviews, and video recording. Four Igbo-speaking states are sampled and four rural discourses are collected from each of these states. The researcher has grouped these rural discourses according to: gender, age grades, kindred, and clans and hamlets.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Clan Meeting

Ezeudo: My people, we must not allow this issue to affect the poor in our community. We must act together.

Nnamdi: That is true, Ezeudo. Let us come together in agreement so we can provide assistance.

Adamma: We will plan a sanitation exercise this year. It is time we should rally together.

Obinna: That's a good idea. Let us set a date and we will call on everyone in the village to participate.

Ozoemena: Let us seek the advice of the elders before making any decision.

Ikenna: Yes, that way we will be guided in the right direction.

Chizoba: We will join hands in this work. Everyone will carry their share of the load.

Chinedu: Let us divide the tasks fairly so that everything will go smoothly.

Pragmatic Analysis of Clan Meeting

Ezeudo: “My people, we must not allow this issue to affect the poor in our community. We must act together.”

* Maxim of Quantity: Ezeudo's response is informative and provides the right amount of information to express the key point that the community needs to act together to help the poor.

* Maxim of Quality: Ezeudo's statement appears to be truthful and sincere in its expression of the need for the community to come together.

* Maxim of Relevance: Ezeudo's statement is highly relevant to the context of the clan meeting and the issue being discussed.

* Maxim of Manner: Ezeudo's response is clear, concise, and easy to understand.

Nnamdi: “That is true, Ezeudo. Let us come together in agreement so we can provide assistance.”

* Maxim of Quantity: Nnamdi's response is appropriately informative, agreeing with Ezeudo's point and expressing the need for the community to come together.

* Maxim of Quality: Nnamdi's statement is truthful and in agreement with Ezeudo's sentiment.

* Maxim of Relevance: Nnamdi's response is directly relevant to the discussion at hand.

* Maxim of Manner: Nnamdi's response is clear and succinct.

Adamma: “We will plan a sanitation exercise this year. It is time we should rally together”

* Maxim of Quantity: Adamma provides a specific proposal for a sanitation exercise, which is an appropriate amount of information to contribute to the discussion.

* Maxim of Quality: Adamma's statement about planning a sanitation exercise appears to be sincere and truthful.

* Maxim of Relevance: Adamma's proposal for a sanitation exercise is relevant to the context of the community coming together to address issues.

* Maxim of Manner: Adamma's response is clear and easy to understand.

The above excerpts analyzed from the clan meeting demonstrates a high level of adherence to the pragmatic principles of cooperation, with each speaker making relevant, truthful and appropriately informative contribution to the discussion. The participants appear to be working together constructively to address the issues facing their community.

Age Grade Meeting

Udenze: Good morning, brothers. As we gather today, let us remember the importance of unity and mutual support in our community. This meeting is an opportunity for us to discuss our shared responsibilities and the way forward.

Ikemba: Udenze, you are wasting our time, please proceed.

Uche: Ikemba, please keep quiet and allow our chairman to address us.

Abuchi: We must always remember that we are brothers and should not always fight in our meetings.

Udenze: We will first address the ongoing community project, followed by a discussion on the upcoming cultural festival. If there are other matters of urgent concern, please let us also deliberate on them.

Pragmatic Analysis

Udenze: “Good morning, brothers. As we gather today, let us remember the importance of unity and mutual support in our community. This meeting is an opportunity for us to discuss our shared responsibilities and the way forward”.

* Maxim of Quantity: Udenze's opening statement is appropriately informative, highlighting the importance of unity and mutual support, and framing the purpose of the meeting.

* Maxim of Quality: Udenze's statement appears to be sincere and truthful in its expression of the community's values and the meeting's objectives.

* Maxim of Relevance: Udenze's statement is highly relevant to the context of the age grade meeting and the issues the group needs to address.

* Maxim of Manner: Udenze's response is clear, concise, and easy to understand.

Ikemba: “Udenze, you are wasting our time, please proceed.”

* Maxim of Quantity: Ikemba's statement is brief and to the point, although it could be perceived as somewhat abrupt.

* Maxim of Quality: Ikemba's response does not necessarily reflect a sincere or cooperative attitude, as it dismisses Udenze's introduction.

* Maxim of Relevance: Ikemba's statement is relevant to the context of the meeting, but his tone and manner of delivery undermine the cooperative spirit.

* Maxim of Manner: Ikemba's response is not particularly considerate or polite, violating the maxim of manner.

Uche: "Ikemba, please keep quiet and allow our chairman to address us."

* Maxim of Quantity: Uche's statement is appropriately informative, addressing Ikemba's interruption and defending the chairman's right to speak.

* Maxim of Quality: Uche's response appears to be sincere and truthful in its support of Udenze and the meeting's procedure.

Maxim of Relevance: Uche's statement is directly relevant to the context of the meeting and the need for orderly discussion.

* Maxim of Manner: Uche's response is clear and polite, adhering to the maxim of manner.

Abuchi: "We must always remember that we are brothers and should not always fight in our meetings."

* Maxim of Quantity: Abuchi's statement is sufficiently informative, reminding the group of the importance of unity and avoiding unnecessary conflict.

* Maxim of Quality: Abuchi's statement appears to be sincere and truthful in its expression of the community's values.

* Maxim of Relevance: Abuchi's response is highly relevant to the context of the meeting and the need for constructive dialogue.

* Maxim of Manner: Abuchi's statement is clear, polite, and adheres to the maxim of manner.

Udenze (continued): “We will first address the ongoing community project, followed by a discussion on the upcoming cultural festival. If there are other matters of urgent concern, please let us also deliberate on them”.

* Maxim of Quantity: Udenze's continued statement provides a clear agenda for the meeting, addressing the ongoing community project and the upcoming cultural festival, as well as allowing for discussion of other urgent matters.

* Maxim of Quality: Udenze's statement appears to be sincere and truthful in its presentation of the meeting's agenda.

* Maxim of Relevance: Udenze's response is directly relevant to the context of the meeting and the issues that need to be addressed.

* Maxim of Manner: Udenze's statement is clear, organized, and easy to follow, adhering to the maxim of manner.

The above discourse demonstrates a mix of adherence and non-adherence to the pragmatic principles of cooperation. While Udenze, Uche and Abuchi maintain a cooperative and

constructive tone, Ikemba's interruption violates the maxim of manner and undermines the group's unity. However, the overall discussion still appears to be focused on addressing the community's shared responsibilities and moving the meeting forward in a productive manner.

Kindred Meeting

Eze: "What should we do so that the youth will join us in rural meetings and development?"

Chinedu. We can encourage them by helping in calling them together and supporting them in the works they have started doing already.

Okoro: Hmmm! I don't have money for supporting anybody ooo!

Eze: Okoro, You always want to scatter things, tufiakwa!

Chinedu: Let's start by giving them small communal jobs.

Pragmatic Analysis

Eze's statement: "What should we do so that the youth will join us in rural meetings and development?"

* Maxim of Quantity: Eze's statement is informative and provides the necessary information to initiate a discussion on how to encourage the youth to participate in rural meetings and development.

* Maxim of Quality: Eze's statement appears to be sincere and truthful, as it is a genuine concern about involving the youth in community activities.

* Maxim of Relevance: Eze's statement is highly relevant to the context of the discussion, which is about encouraging youth participation in rural development.

* Maxim of Manner: Eze's statement is clear and unambiguous, adhering to the maxim of manner.

Chinedu's statement: "We can encourage them by helping in calling them together and supporting them in the works they have started doing already."

* Maxim of Quantity: Chinedu's statement provides a specific and informative suggestion on how to encourage the youth to participate, adhering to the maxim of quantity.

* Maxim of Quality: Chinedu's statement appears to be sincere and based on a genuine understanding of the situation, adhering to the maxim of quality.

* Maxim of Relevance: Chinedu's statement is highly relevant to the discussion, as it directly addresses Eze's question about how to involve the youth.

* Maxim of Manner: Chinedu's statement is clear and easy to understand, adhering to the maxim of manner.

Okoro's statement: "Hmmm! I don't have money for supporting anybody ooo!"

* Maxim of Quantity: Okoro's statement is brief and does not provide much information, potentially violating the maxim of quantity.

* Maxim of Quality: Okoro's statement may be perceived as insincere or evasive, potentially violating the maxim of quality.

* Maxim of Relevance: Okoro's statement does not directly address the issue of encouraging youth participation, potentially violating the maxim of relevance.

* Maxim of Manner: Okoro's statement is somewhat ambiguous and may be perceived as defensive or dismissive, potentially violating the maxim of manner.

Eze's statement: "Okoro, you always want to scatter things, tufiakwa!"

* Maxim of Quantity: Eze's statement is brief and targeted, adhering to the maxim of quantity.

* Maxim of Quality: Eze's statement appears to be sincere and based on a genuine frustration with Okoro's response, adhering to the maxim of quality.

* Maxim of Relevance: Eze's statement is directly relevant to the context of the discussion, as it addresses Okoro's dismissive response, adhering to the maxim of relevance.

* Maxim of Manner: Eze's statement is clear and unambiguous, adhering to the maxim of manner.

Chinedu's statement: "Let's start by giving them small communal jobs."

* Maxim of Quantity: Chinedu's statement provides a specific and informative suggestion, adhering to the maxim of quantity.

* Maxim of Quality: Chinedu's statement appears to be sincere and based on a genuine understanding of how to engage the youth, adhering to the maxim of quality.

* Maxim of Relevance: Chinedu's statement is highly relevant to the discussion, as it directly addresses the issue of how to encourage youth participation, adhering to the maxim of relevance.

* Maxim of Manner: Chinedu's statement is clear and easy to understand, adhering to the maxim of manner.

Overall, the discourse shows a mix of adherence and potential violations of the pragmatic principles of cooperation. Chinedu's statements demonstrate the strongest adherence to the maxims, while Okoro's statement appears to be the most problematic in terms of potential violations.

Umuada Meeting

Adaobi: My fellow daughters, we need to assess the condition of the children's school in our community.

Chinwe: Yes, it's important. That school needs repair.

Ngozi: How can we evaluate the funds needed to repair that school?

Nkiru: Let's ask the elders to help us assess the necessary funds.

Ezinne: It seems prices are high now. Will that affect the cost?

Amaka: Yes, but we will look around the market to find where we can get materials at a better price.

Onyinye: My fellow daughters, we must not forget that our labour is also important. We should contribute with our hands.

Pragmatic Analysis

Adaobi's statement: "My fellow daughters, we need to access the condition of the children's school in our community."

* Maxim of Quantity: Adaobi's statement provides the necessary information to introduce the topic of the children's school condition, adhering to the maxim of quantity.

* Maxim of Quality: Adaobi's statement appears to be sincere and truthful, adhering to the maxim of quality.

* Maxim of Relevance: Adaobi's statement is highly relevant to the context of the Umuada (women's) meeting, adhering to the maxim of relevance.

* Maxim of Manner: Adaobi's statement is clear and unambiguous, adhering to the maxim of manner.

Chinwe's statement: "Yes, it's important. That school needs repair."

* Maxim of Quantity: Chinwe's statement is concise and informative, adhering to the maxim of quantity.

* Maxim of Quality: Chinwe's statement appears to be sincere and based on a genuine assessment of the school's condition, adhering to the maxim of quality.

* Maxim of Relevance: Chinwe's statement is directly relevant to Adaobi's previous statement, adhering to the maxim of relevance.

* Maxim of Manner: Chinwe's statement is clear and easy to understand, adhering to the maxim of manner.

Ngozi's statement: "How can we evaluate the funds needed to repair that school."

* Maxim of Quantity: Ngozi's statement is informative and seeks specific information, adhering to the maxim of quantity.

* Maxim of Quality: Ngozi's statement appears to be sincere and reflects a genuine concern about the financial aspects of repairing the school, adhering to the maxim of quality.

* Maxim of Relevance: Ngozi's statement is directly relevant to the discussion of repairing the school, adhering to the maxim of relevance.

* Maxim of Manner: Ngozi's statement is clear and straightforward, adhering to the maxim of manner.

Nkiru's statement: "Let's ask the elders to help us assess the necessary funds."

* Maxim of Quantity: Nkiru's statement provides a specific suggestion, adhering to the maxim of quantity.

* Maxim of Quality: Nkiru's statement appears to be sincere and based on a practical understanding of the situation, adhering to the maxim of quality.

* Maxim of Relevance: Nkiru's statement is directly relevant to the discussion of evaluating the funds needed for the school repairs, adhering to the maxim of relevance.

* Maxim of Manner: Nkiru's statement is clear and easy to understand, adhering to the maxim of manner.

Ezinne's statement: "It seems prices are high now. Will that affect the cost?"

* Maxim of Quantity: Ezinne's statement is relevant and informative, adhering to the maxim of quantity.

* Maxim of Quality: Ezinne's statement appears to be sincere and reflects a genuine concern about the potential impact of high prices on the cost of the repairs, adhering to the maxim of quality.

* Maxim of Quality: Ezinne's statement appears to be sincere and reflects a genuine concern about the potential impact of high prices on the cost of the repairs, adhering to the maxim of quality.

* Maxim of Relevance: Ezinne's statement is directly relevant to the discussion of evaluating the funds needed for the school repairs, adhering to the maxim of relevance.

* Maxim of Manner: Ezinne's statement is clear and straightforward, adhering to the maxim of manner.

Amaka's statement: "Yes, but we will look around the market to find where we can get materials at a better price."

* Maxim of Quantity: Amaka's statement provides a specific solution to the issue raised by Ezinne, adhering to the maxim of quantity.

* Maxim of Quality: Amaka's statement appears to be sincere and reflects a practical approach to addressing the potential cost challenge, adhering to the maxim of quality.

* Maxim of Relevance: Amaka's statement is directly relevant to the discussion of evaluating the funds needed for the school repairs, adhering to the maxim of relevance.

* Maxim of Manner: Amaka's statement is clear and straightforward, adhering to the maxim of manner.

Onyinye's statement: "My fellow daughters, we must not forget that our labour is also important. We should contribute with our hands."

* Maxim of Quantity: Onyinye's statement provides an additional consideration to the discussion, adhering to the maxim of quantity.

* Maxim of Quality: Onyinye's statement appears to be sincere and reflects a commitment to community-driven efforts, adhering to the maxim of quality.

* Maxim of Relevance: Onyinye's statement is directly relevant to the discussion of addressing the school's needs, adhering to the maxim of relevance.

* Maxim of Manner: Onyinye's statement is clear and encourages the participation of the community, adhering to the maxim of manner.

The discourse in the Umuada meeting demonstrates a strong adherence to the pragmatic principles of cooperation. All the speakers make relevant, sincere, and informative contributions, showing a collaborative approach to addressing the community's needs.

Conclusion

The analysis of the discourses within the context of a rural Igbo clan meeting reveals the profound significance of cooperation, collective responsibility, and respect for tradition in Igbo society. Through these interactions, key societal values such as respect for elders, inclusivity, fairness, and unity are not only expressed but also actively promoted, ensuring the continued harmony and strength of the community. The language used by the participants is rich with inclusive pronouns and action-oriented phrases, which reinforce the idea that success in any communal endeavor is rooted in collective effort and mutual support.

Furthermore, the respect for traditional authority and the emphasis on consulting elders before making decisions underscore the value placed on wisdom and cultural continuity. This respect for tradition ensures that decisions are made in a manner that aligns with the community's values and preserves its cultural heritage.

The discourse exemplifies how language and communication practices within the Igbo community are instrumental in upholding societal values and fostering cooperation. These interactions serve not only as a means of addressing immediate communal issues but also as a way of reinforcing the cultural norms and values that bind the community together. Through this cooperative spirit, the

Igbo community continues to thrive, with each member playing a vital role in the collective well-being and progress of the community.

The discourse within rural Igbo clan meetings serves as a microcosm of the broader societal values that define and sustain the Igbo community. At the heart of these interactions lies a deep commitment to cooperation, which is not merely a means to achieve communal goals but a fundamental principle that governs social relations, decision-making, and conflict resolution. This

cooperative spirit is manifested in various linguistic and non-linguistic practices that ensure the well-being and continuity of the community.

Language plays a crucial role in fostering cooperation within the Igbo community. The use of inclusive pronouns such as "anyị" (we) and phrases like "ka anyị" (let us) is pervasive in the discourse. These linguistic choices are not incidental; they are deliberate and culturally embedded practices that emphasize the collective over the individual. By framing issues and solutions in terms of "we" rather than "I," the speakers reinforce the idea that community problems require collective action. This linguistic strategy fosters a sense of shared responsibility, where every member of the community feels accountable for the welfare of the group.

Moreover, the language used in these meetings often includes verbs that denote action and collaboration, such as "kọwaa" (explain), "kọkọta" (gather), and "jikọtara aka" (join hands). These verbs not only describe physical actions but also symbolize the cooperative efforts required to address communal challenges. The repeated use of such terms throughout the discourse reinforces the notion that cooperation is not just desirable but necessary for the community's survival and prosperity.

Another key theme that emerges from the discourse is the respect for elders and traditional authority. In Igbo culture, elders are revered as custodians of wisdom and tradition. Their opinions and advice are sought in matters of importance, and their guidance is considered vital in making decisions that affect the community. This respect for elders is deeply ingrained in the language and structure of the discourse.

For instance, when members of the community suggest consulting the elders before making a decision, they are not merely following a procedural norm; they are acknowledging the value of the accumulated wisdom that elders possess. This deference to authority ensures that decisions are made in a manner that is consistent with the community's values and cultural heritage. It also helps maintain social order, as the elders serve as a stabilizing force, guiding the community through challenges and ensuring that traditions are upheld.

The principle of collective responsibility is another cornerstone of Igbo societal values, as reflected in the discourse. The idea that "igwe bụ ike" (strength lies in unity) permeates the conversations, with members consistently emphasizing the need for everyone to contribute to communal projects. This collective approach is not only pragmatic but also ensures that the burden of work is shared equally, preventing any single individual or group from being overwhelmed.

Fairness is a critical component of this collective responsibility. The discussions often involve careful consideration of how tasks should be distributed, ensuring that each member of the community is given a fair share of the work. This emphasis on fairness reinforces the idea that everyone has a role to play in the community, regardless of their status or position. It also fosters a sense of belonging and equity, as each person's contribution is valued and recognized.

The discourse also highlights the importance of inclusivity and dialogue in the decision-making process. Igbo meetings are typically characterized by open discussions where every member is given an opportunity to voice their opinions. This inclusive approach ensures that decisions are not made unilaterally but rather through a process of consensus-building. By allowing all voices

to be heard, the community ensures that the decisions made reflect the collective will and address the concerns of all members.

This practice of inclusivity is closely tied to the value of "obodo bu ọnụ", meaning that the strength of a community lies in its collective voice. The discourse demonstrates that through dialogue, differences can be reconciled, and a unified course of action can be charted. This not only promotes cooperation but also strengthens the bonds within the community, as members feel that their views and contributions are respected and considered.

The discourse within rural Igbo meetings also serves as a mechanism for preserving and transmitting cultural norms and traditions. The language used, the respect for elders, the emphasis on collective action, and the process of consensus-building are all reflective of the cultural values that have been passed down through generations. These practices ensure that the community remains rooted in its traditions while also adapting to new challenges.

By adhering to these cultural norms, the Igbo people maintain a sense of identity and continuity. The discourse acts as a living document of the community's values, reinforcing the idea that culture is not static but dynamic, shaped and reshaped through everyday interactions. This cultural continuity is crucial for the survival of the community, as it provides a framework within which members can navigate the complexities of modern life while staying true to their roots.

In conclusion, the discourse within rural Igbo community meetings is a powerful reflection of the societal values that underpin the community. Through language, respect for elders, collective responsibility, inclusivity, and the preservation of cultural norms, the Igbo people demonstrate a deep commitment to cooperation and communal harmony. These values are not only expressed in

words but also enacted in practices that ensure the well-being and continuity of the community. The discourse serves as a reminder that in Igbo society, the strength of the community lies in its ability to work together, respect tradition, and embrace the contributions of all its members. In a rapidly changing world, these values remain as relevant as ever, providing a foundation for the continued resilience and success of the Igbo people.

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