

Article

Tautology in Igbo Language: A Conscious or an Unconscious Repetition of Words and Phrases

Gloria Tochukwu Okeke¹, Mbacke Diagne², Chukwuma Onyebuchi Okeke³

^{1&3}Department of Linguistics, Igbo and Other Nigerian Languages, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Nigeria

²Centre de Linguistique Appliquée, Université Cheikh Anta Diop de Dakar

Correspondence: Chukwuma Onyebuchi Okeke, chukwuma.okeke@unn.edu.ng

Abstract

Tautology has received divergent treatments across linguistic traditions – dismissed as a stylistic fault in grammar, treated as a necessarily true statement in logic, and valued as a literary device for rhetorical emphasis. Despite this theoretical attention, tautology remains understudied in African languages, particularly Igbo. This study investigates tautological expressions in Igbo to determine whether they function as grammatical errors, literary devices, or both, depending on context. Drawing on corpus data from five selected Igbo texts and audio recordings of thirty-eight native speakers across varied sociolinguistic backgrounds, the study identifies and classifies forty-two tautological expressions, with sixteen subjected to detailed analysis under Redundancy Theory. The findings reveal that Igbo tautology operates along a conscious–unconscious continuum: conscious tautology serves pragmatic functions such as emphasis, intensity, and stylistic effect, while unconscious tautology arises from grammatical deficiency or code-mixing with English and other Nigerian languages. Tautology in Igbo may be intralingual (originating within the language) or interlingual (resulting from code-switching). Crucially, the study finds that speaker awareness is low – only seven of thirty-eight respondents recognised their utterances as tautological – and that neither gender nor age significantly affects tautology production. The study concludes that effective communication in Igbo requires balancing formal grammatical rules with functional contextual demands, and that tautology cannot be universally condemned or endorsed without reference to its communicative context. These findings contribute to the broader reappraisal of tautology as a pragmatically nuanced phenomenon rather than a purely formal error.

Keywords: Igbo tautology, Redundancy, Pragmatic repetition, Code-mixing, Intralingual vs. Interlingual phenomena, Speaker awareness

Introduction

Although numerous domains within linguistics have been extensively explored, several sub-fields continue to lack terminological precision. Semantics exemplifies this challenge. Commonly defined as the branch of linguistics concerned with meaning, semantics nonetheless grapples with an object of study that is often ‘vague, insubstantial, and elusive’ (Kwon, 2014). A definitive, exhaustive account of ‘meaning’ remains virtually unattainable; yet meaning is indispensable to any serious inquiry into language.

Meaning should be conceived not as a static entity but as a dynamic process that mirrors the intentions of speakers and the interpretive responses of hearers. It crystallizes when the content and context of an utterance converge, and the recipient’s interpretation aligns with the speaker’s communicative goals, a convergence enabled by the strategic deployment of linguistic and paralinguistic cues (Winkler, 2007).

Contemporary linguistic theory consequently treats language less as a private vehicle for individual thought and more as a socially co-constructed medium for information exchange. As Winkler observes, successful communication presupposes a communal negotiation of

lexical and phrasal meanings; were each interlocutor to attach radically idiosyncratic senses to words, mutual understanding would collapse (Winkler, 2007). Hence, semantics is concerned not only with lexical meaning but also with the combinatorial principles by which words yield larger interpretive wholes.

Within semantics, meaning is analysed at both the lexical and the sentential (or phrasal) levels. Sentential semantics investigates the interpretation of syntactic units larger than the word, phrases, clauses, and sentences, and the relations that obtain among them. These relations include, *inter alia*, presupposition, entailment, analyticity, contradiction, anomaly, redundancy, and tautology. The present study concentrates on tautology, with particular attention to its intersection with redundancy, in order to elucidate how seemingly superfluous repetition can perform specific pragmatic and discourse-functional roles.

Background of the Study

Generally, tautology is seen as a needless repetition of an idea, statement or word. In other words, it is viewed as a rhetorical repetition, an unnecessary duplication of an idea, a redundancy, a pleonasm, or an unintentional reiteration of meaning, using various words, phrases, and clauses that successfully say the same thing twice; most times regarded as a fault of style. A tautologous expression does not make the speaker's meaning clearer or more forceful. It only restates the obvious. Hence, it does not tell the listener anything new that he does not know or that the hearer cannot deduce by the belief or knowledge about the context of the expression. "A tautologous expression is, therefore, considered uninformative because it does not provide new information. It merely restates the fact", (see Ndimele, 1999:74).

Ndimele (1999) further states that to be tautologous does not mean to be devoid of sense; sometimes, a tautologous expression can be used to create some stylistic effect in a sentence. It enhances the style of speech or writing and may be considered a logical tautology. Traugott and Pratt (1980) believe that tautologies are neither false nor necessarily absurd, unlike anomaly and contradiction. They state thus: "While contradiction and anomaly violate the organization of sense in a message, tautology seems rather to violate pragmatic rules requiring that utterances include new and relevant information. That tautology is a pragmatic rather than a semantic kind of deviance is suggested by the fact that there are contexts in which tautology is not deviant; for instance, 'A dog is an animal' is tautological, but it is perfectly well formed as an answer to the question, 'What is a dog?' Ndimele opines that the implication of what is said by Traugott and Pratt (1980:23) is not to discard an expression because it is tautologous. Instead, one should try to understand why the speaker has chosen to tell him what he (the listener already knows to be true).

With this variety of views about tautology by various scholars, one can see that different scholars have divergent views about tautology. While some authors see it as a grammatical error, others see it as a writing style for some semantic reasons. For scholars who view it as a grammatical error, it hinders meaning and causes misconceptions in communication. Kallan (2005) also holds this view when he posits that tautology as an error is usually

unintentional. It often hinders reader comprehension and undermines the writer's credibility. As Kallan (2005:32) explains, "using *mental telepathy*, *planned conspiracies*, and *small dwarfs*, for example, convey the possibility of physical telepathy, spontaneous conspiracies, and giant dwarfs."

Based on the above background information, it is clear that the logical, linguistic, and literary perspectives on tautology are necessary for a good understanding of the concept of tautology. In logic, tautology becomes a necessarily true statement under any interpretation and cannot be denied without introducing logical inconsistencies. In grammar, tautology is either a needless elaboration, fruitless repetition, extraneous description, an unproductive addition or a self-cancelling statement. In literature, it can add beauty or cause the reader to think more deeply about a subject and may be used for dramatic or comedic effects (see Niu, 2021). Based on these opposing views about tautology in various languages, this study examines the manifestations of Igbo tautological expressions to determine whether they are grammatical errors, literary devices, or both.

Research Statement

This study is an investigation of tautology in the Igbo language, with the primary objectives of fishing out the tautological expressions in the language using five selected Igbo texts and also from native speakers' utterances in various contexts, examining the general properties and functions of tautological expressions in Igbo in order to reappraise the concept of tautology in the Igbo language; and examining the various status of tautological expressions and what they depict in various Igbo cognitive domains [contexts]. The study also tries to determine whether tautology in the Igbo language is intralingual [within the language] or interlingual [outside the language]. If it is outside the language, is it caused by mixing and switching codes [Igbo, English, Pidgin English, etc.]; does it depict unnecessary repetitions? If it is within the language, is it a literary device? The study also seeks to determine whether Igbo language users are aware that they produce tautological expressions and, finally, to know if some sociolinguistic variables like age and gender affect the production of tautological expressions.

Conceptual Framework

Vero-Ekpris (2016) sees tautology as a semantic redundancy with superfluous information, a semantic discourse, which is one of the meaning relations at the level of a sentence. Carston (2002) conceptualises tautology from two perspectives: logic and linguistics, or grammar. This study focuses on both perspectives.

According to Kleene (1967), in logic, a tautology is a formula that is true in all possible interpretations. The philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein, according to Kleen, was the first to apply the term to redundancies of propositional logic in 1921. Before 1921, the term tautology had been used to denote rhetorical tautologies, and it continues to be used in that other sense. In support of Kleene's (1967) view, Hazewinkel (2001) states that a formula is

satisfiable if it is valid under at least a single interpretation. Thus, a tautology is a formula whose negation is unsatisfiable. Hazewinkel (2001) states that unsatisfiable statements, both through negation and affirmation, are formally regarded as contradictions. This invariably implies that a formula that is neither a tautology nor a contradiction is said to be logically contingent.

The above views align with Wittgenstein (1921), who posits that tautologies are a crucial concept in propositional logic, where a tautology is seen as a propositional formula that is true under any possible Boolean valuation of its propositional variables. A fundamental property of tautologies in propositional logic, according to Wittgenstein (1921), is that an effectual method exists for discovering whether a formula is always satisfied (or, equivalently, whether its negation is unsatisfiable).

Based on the preceding discussion, the definition of tautology, from this perspective, can be expanded to include sentences in predicate logic, which may have quantifiers, unlike sentences of propositional logic. There is no demarcation between a tautology and a logically valid formula in propositional logic. In the context of predicate logic, it is imperative to note that many scholars define *tautology* as a proposition obtained by taking a tautology of propositional logic and evenly replacing each propositional variable with a first-order formula (one formula per propositional variable). This vividly means that the set of such formulae is a proper subset of the set of logically valid propositions of predicate logic (which are true propositions in every model).

From the linguistic and/or grammar perspective, Bryson (1999) posits that a tautology is a tautological statement, or an unnecessary repetition of meaning, using more than one word effectively to express the same thing. According to Kallan (2005), if a part of the meaning is replicated in such a way that it appears unintended or awkward, it may be seen as tautological. Tautology, in this sense, means the use of words that literally repeat elements of the meaning conveyed already. By literal repetition, it means that such repeated words have no function and, as a result, are considered useless restatement or re-saying the same thing using different words.

On the other hand, Kallan (2005) further notes that a repetition of meaning that enhances the style of a piece of speech or writing is undoubtedly not tautological. From Kallan's views, it can be deduced that intentional repetition of meaning, intended to boost or highlight a particular, usually important fact about what is being talked about, is stylistic. For instance, a gift is, by definition, free of charge; using the phrase 'a free gift' might point out that there are no concealed conditions or fine print, be it the expectation of money or a mutual exchange or that the gift is being given on one's accord.

In his opinion, Snider (2010) avers that tautology is a way to express an idea by restating or saying it in various ways. This can highlight, convey something significant, or beautify a literary piece. However, its use is often unintentional and is just a useless repetition. The

above scholars' views on tautology show that meaning is dynamic and varies depending on each individual and the context of use. As a result, an utterance's intended meaning may differ from the meaning the receiver of the message perceives. No wonder Cherry (1957:112) remarks that "meaning is a harlot among words; it can seduce the writer or speaker from the path of intellectual chastity." Snider (2010) further observes the various senses in which tautology is applied. These senses observed by Snider (2010:598) are exemplified below. [Note: the authors italicised the repeated semantically similar elements in Snider's examples for lucidity]:

1. Tautology in sentences

- a. I went there *personally*.
- b. The car cost \$20,000 *dollars*.
- c. I need a new *hot* water *heater*.
- d. Charlie told his mom *he* made it for her with *his own hands*.
- e. My *first priority* is to lose weight.
- f. There is a lot of *frozen ice* on the road.
- g. I know it's true because *I heard* it with *my own ears*.
- h. She always *over-exaggerates*.
- i. In Rome, we saw *dilapidated ruins*.

2. Tautology in acronyms

Sometimes, according to Snider (2010:599), "there is tautology with our use of acronyms, causing words to be repeated. Example: ATM is an Automated Teller Machine, so saying 'machine' again is redundant. Other examples are:

- a. CD-ROM *disc*
- b. DVD *disk*
- c. GPS *system*
- d. HIV *virus*
- e. ISBN *number*
- f. PIN *number*
- g. *Please* R.S.V.P. (Please is already in the French phrase for this abbreviation [Répondez s'il vous *plait* - Reply if it *pleases* you])
- h. RAM *memory*

3. Tautology in song

- a. 'I want to *live* while I am *alive*' - Bon Jovi
- b. 'There's nothing you *can do* that *can't be done*. There's nothing you *can sing that can't be sung*' - The Beatles
- c. 'Que *sera, sera*. Whatever will be, will be' - Jay Livingston and Ray Evans
- d. 'Only the *lucky ones... get lucky*' - Loverboy
- e. '*Shout it out loud!*' - Kiss"

Therefore, this study considers the above definitions of tautology in other languages to reappraise the concept of tautology in the Igbo language based on its manifestation and functions.

Theoretical Backgrounds of Tautology

Studies of tautological expression have been carried out within the framework of three theories: the radical pragmatic circle, the radical semantic circle and the middle circle theories.

According to Levinson (1983:2), “the pragmatic circle claims that the research of tautology should take its pragmatic inference as the focus. This circle proposes to reduce to an insignificant amount, the semantic contribution of a tautological construction, thereby pushing the burden of utterance interpretation almost entirely onto pragmatic inference.” The proponents are called Radical Pragmatists.

In the semantic circle, Wiezbicka (1987:13) holds that the pragmatic inference could solely infer the semantic meaning of tautological construction. It states, “Each English tautological sentence would carry a unique and significant semantic contribution.” Radical Semanticists, as they are called, argue that the meanings of these sentences are conventionalised and language-dependent.

According to Fraser (1988:14), unlike the above two circles, “the middle circle chooses a middle line. It claims that the semantic and pragmatic contributions should be emphasised in the study of tautological constructions. The middle circle proposes that the understanding of tautology relies on semantic analysis and pragmatic inference. So, the position of this circle is relatively less radical. The problem with this circle is that they pay less attention to the cognitive mechanisms of the semantic interpretation of tautologies”, which is one of the major focus areas of this study.

Apart from the above three viewpoints, truth-conditional semantics also have a role to play in the study of tautology. It states that the meaning of a proposition is given by its truth conditions. It is important to note that scholars have widely reviewed this theory because the intuition associated with it is relatively accurate. For a native language speaker, the truth-conditional meaning is seen as the literal meaning of an expression or phrase. This also extends to the ability of the speaker to know the truth conditions of any declarative sentence in such a language, underscoring the fact that every sentence has a ‘literal’ meaning. Nwaozuzu (2013) avers that language users have to understand that for the above theory (truth-conditional semantics) to reflect what meaning is all about in tautological expressions, the procedure for checking the truth value of the expressions must be a reliable yardstick for doing so.

Further, she states that the steps in checking the truth value of a tautological expression must show the compositionality of meaning. If this is done correctly, we will have shown how the constituents of the expression contribute to the truth value of the entire expression. This view cements the idea that whatever is regarded as truth should not be liable to an

argument or a shift of stand. Such statements must be scientifically analysed, or they could be faulted.

Additionally, there is a need for a theory of truth that permits language users to generate all of the correspondingly infinite numbers of truth conditions. This means that the apparatus for identifying truth conditions must be hinged on a generative device similar to how syntax is characterised. In other words, the truth conditions associated with a sentence must be specified compositionally by looking at the parts and how they are strung together.

Another theory that is also relevant in tautology is the redundancy theory. As a theory of sentential semantics, it tries to explain when a linguistic unit is absent in sentence construction. However, the absence of the linguistic unit does not change the meaning or the sense embedded in the construction. According to Norquist (2019), redundancy is a complex phenomenon within language. It demonstrates that successful communication is not just a superficial quality of language but a restriction at the heart of its foundation and the constant changes of its development. Furthermore, redundancy theorists base their inference on the premise that truth is typically a redundant concept. That is to say that 'truth' is just a conventional word applied in specific contexts but not in reality.

Most redundancy theories try to inquire into the function the predicate in a sentence plays as to whether or not it is true. Another objective of theirs is to refer to both a longer or shorter sentence as one or equivalent. Sometimes, redundancy theory denies that most predicates ascribe properties to their subjects; instead, it handles any predicate as empty, adding nothing to a postulation except to change its use to its mention. This implies that the predicate merely asserts the proposition housed in the sentential clause to which it is applied but does not assign any extra feature to that sentence. Therefore, the theory of redundancy claims that the entire issue of truth in an expression is an illusion caused by our use of a predicate which allegedly is redundant, that is, without meaning. According to Norquist, this later claim about redundancy is only sometimes the case.

Ndimele (1999) also opines that redundancy theory investigates the absence or the presence of a linguistic unit that fails to change the meaning of the larger construction in which it is a member. Illustrating redundancy in English, we have:

- 4a. the reason **why**...
- b. repeat **again**...
- c. scrutinize **carefully**...

One common view from the above-reviewed theories is that tautology involves repeating grammatical elements, which eventually makes the repeated elements redundant. Hence, this study adopts the strengths of the redundancy theory in data analysis.

Literature Review

Many scholars have worked on tautology, and some studies are reviewed hereunder. Ward and Hirschberg (1991) investigated the interpretation of tautological utterances of the form ‘utterance’ in their study entitled *In a pragmatic analysis of tautological utterances*. Their study considered some English utterances in the form of equatives, disjunctions, conditionals, subordinate conjunctions, and headless relatives to be tautological utterances. Additionally, they categorically pointed at some flaws in Wierzbicka’s ‘radical semantics’ approach to tautology. Ward and Hirschberg discovered that when uttered by different speakers, ideas or words with the same tautological component convey different meanings in pragmatics. They proposed a new Gricean account of tautological utterances based on a sizeable corpus of naturally occurring data. Ward and Hirschberg’s (1991) research work is related to this present study because they both try to investigate the concept of tautology. However, Ward and Hirschberg (1991) differ from this present study in that it studied tautology under the field of pragmatics, while this study investigates tautology in the Igbo language from a hybrid perspective.

Lyons (1981) made a crucial distinction between tautologies and contradictions in his book *Language, meaning and context*. According to him, tautologies are propositions that are necessarily true by their logical form. His study of tautology, a topic of perennial interest, is contained in the subtopic ‘Meaningful and meaningless sentences’ in ‘chapter five’ of Part three (3) of the text. Tautologies, for Lyons, also mean logical truths and are seen as anomalous because they are propositions whose truth is determined wholly by their meanings. Lyons illustrated the generality of tautologous words as being meaningless. This present study, like Lyons (1981), examines tautology in semantics. However, it takes a unique approach, investigating tautology in the Igbo language, considering the different views about tautology, and challenging the notion of all tautologous words as meaningless.

Rhodes (2009), in his *Cross-linguistic comparison of tautological constructions with a particular focus on English*, posited that in Grice’s maxim of Quantity, cooperative speakers do not utter uninformative expressions. Given that tautological expressions are necessarily true and provide no novel information, Rhodes (2009:60) stated that one would not “expect such constructions to be used in conversation. However, sentences like those in (4) are always uttered.

- (5) a. **Kinks** will be **Kinks**.
- b. An **early day** is an **early day**.
- c. I will **shave it** when I **shave it**.
- d. If **I’m wrong**, **I’m wrong**.

As it turns out, utterances like those in (5) are very informative, according to Rhodes. (5a) was used to explain that fans of the Kinks have accepted that Ray and Dave Davies (the

two most famous members) will never agree on anything long enough to play together again. (5b) was uttered as a means of accepting a member of a couple's excuse for their having to leave an evening engagement early. An angry husband exclaimed (5c) to tell his wife that she must accept that he would not shave his moustache at that point, as she wanted. A talk show host communicated that he could accept it if his answer to a logic problem were wrong by uttering" (5d). According to Rhodes, there is more to the meanings and functions of tautologies other than their truth-conditional contents. Going further, he explained that there had been different approaches to accounting for the communicative importance of tautological expressions in English. According to Rhodes, the Radical Pragmaticists contend that the meanings of such expressions in (5) are formed by universal pragmatic principles (see Levinson, 1983; Brown & Levinson, 1987; Ward & Hirschberg, 1991). On the other hand, the Radical Semanticists maintain that the meanings of these utterances are conventionalised and language-specific (see Wierzbicka 1987). Rhodes (2009:61), in tandem with the views of Ward & Hirschberg (1991), counts the following categories of constructions as tautological: "'a is a' (equatives), 'either p or not p' (disjunctions), 'if p, then p' (conditionals), 'when p, p' (subordinate conjunctions), and 'what p, p' (headless relative)". Rhodes (2009) usually refers to equatives as nominal tautologies. This is misleading because adjectives can fill the 'a' slot sometimes. However, this is incongruous with existing researchers' terminology. Still, other researchers contend for what Kwon (2009) names a Non-radical or Hybrid account of the meanings of English tautological expressions. Under the Hybrid or Eclectic approach, the meanings of tautological expressions are partially conventionalised (semantics) and partially dependent on context (pragmatics), as was evident in Fraser (1988), Gibbs & McCarrell (1990), Gibbs (1994), Miki (1996), and Bulhof & Gimbel (2001). Apart from Ward & Hirschberg's (1991) study, the above researchers focused mainly on nominal tautologies, like (5a) and (5b) above.

Additionally, Rhodes (2009) also observed that nominal tautologies, as in (6a) and conditional tautologies, as in (6b) below, can be used to show the idea that the indistinctness of a category is not so significant. In other words, "these constructions can be used to deny the importance of differences between instances of a particular category. Although this use has been documented for nominal tautologies (especially Bulhof & Gimbel 2001), it has yet to be discussed for conditionals." Consider the following examples from Rhodes (2009:61):

(6) a. "A win is a win.... Even if it's a weird one.

b. People aren't gonna buy something that is slower than what they already have; I don't care how high they can fly or how well they can scout with it. If it's slow it's slow."

Kwon (2009) conducted a study entitled *A tautology is a tautology: Specificity and categorization in nominal tautological constructions*. Kwon's (2009) view aligns with Okamoto's (1993) postulation, which sheds light on the construal of Japanese nominal tautological constructions concerning its language specificity. Okamoto (1993) argued that

meanings of tautological expressions in Japanese are shown with case markers *-wa* (topic marker) and *-ga* (subject marker), which leads to construal of the immutability of category and undesirability, respectively. It can be implied that the meaning distribution is complementing except for some instances (see Okamoto 1993). One of his examples is presented below:

(7) (an excerpt from the *Asahi Shinbun* newspaper) [Okamoto 1993: 443]

"kimi wa kimi, ware wa ware nari, saredo nakayosi.
You Top you I Top I Cop yet, (we) are good friends
'You are you, I am I, yet we are good friends.'

As shown in (7), if the topic marker *-wa* is used in the construction, the author argues that it conveys the immutability of the category for the referred nominal in question but not the undesirability of the nominal. However, there are some cases where desirable meaning can be derived even though the topic marker *-wa* is used:

(8) [When seeing a student, who has been known for his brilliance, solving a very tough question in a second without any hesitation,]

tensai wa tensai-da
genius Top genius-Decl
'(Lit.) Genius is a genius' (HE IS a genius)."

Okamoto argued that if it is true that the construction bearing the topic marker can convey either (un)desirable or category immutability reading, meanings which are determined by grammatical markers alone would not be convincing enough.

In another expression that resembles the Japanese constructions, the construal of Korean tautological expressions, according to Kwon (2009:28-29), seemed "to be determined by case markers such as *-un/-nun* (topic marker) and *-i/-ka* (subject marker)." However, their range of semantic inferences also lap over so that the "construal of one sentence, such as" (9), "varies:

(9) *os-un/i os-i-ci/ -ya/ -ney1*
Clothes-Top/Nom clothes-Cop-Decl
'(Lit.) clothes are clothes'

It can be equivalent to saying, 'This outfit can be barely called an outfit,' 'That is an outfit,' or 'That's nothing but an outfit,' depending on various contexts. If the meaning distribution only relied on grammatical markers, the semantic overlap shown above would not be expected."

In his paper, Kwon posited that providing interpretation hinged on the speaker's knowledge about the entity concerning its generic distinction and the speaker's categorisation of the entity alluded to, not just the language-specific conventionality.

Again, his study relates the construal of tautologies to cognitive categorisation processes about shared knowledge, expectation, and inferences. His article went further to take care of the general distribution of meaning in tautological expressions by drawing some examples of tautological expressions from the Korean and Japanese languages that used the Mental Spaces theoretical framework (see Fauconnier & Turner, 2002). According to Kwon, the Mental Spaces theory is handy in accounting for the interrelatedness of nominals in any syntactic construction.

Snider (2010) researched the use of tautologies and contradictions. According to Snider (2010:594), “tautologies are necessarily true, and contradictions necessarily false, so one might expect neither to be conversationally useful.” Snider (2010) also analysed the uses of tautological expressions and contradictions in felicitous contexts and observed that both result in implications. With regard to tautological expressions, this implication, according to Snider (2010:594), “is a specific conversational implicature, an uncontrollability implicature; for contradictions, it is part of the literal content, a contextual restriction arising from a result of the process of semantic interpretation.” He argued that various accounts of tautologies and contradictions have not generally provided a sufficient semantic interpretation. Observe examples (10) and (11) below of felicitous uses of tautologies and contradictions by Snider (2010:594).

- (10) a. I'll be there if I'll be there. *propositional, conditional*
b. Either I'll like him or I won't. *propositional, disjunctive*
c. Hubert is Hubert. *nominal, equative*
- (11) a. Janice is smart, but she isn't smart. *propositional, conjunctive*
b. If Peter is there, he won't be there. *propositional, conditional*
c. Kevin isn't Kevin. *nominal, equative*

From the foregoing, Snider (2010:594) stated that most literature focused on nominal tautologies like *Boys will be boys*. However, some argued that these are not “equative constructions - and that English has no equative constructions, and so are not indeed tautologies (Moro, 1997; Adger & Ramchand, 2003, among others; see Heycock & Kroch, 1999; Heycock, 2012 for the opposite view)”, but Snider (2010) focused on propositional tautological expressions, and by extension, contradictions, which are not part of the above criticism.

According to Snider (2010), Stalnaker's (1974) and (1978) well-known assertion theory posits that in the non-defective conversation principle, an asserted proposition “should be compatible with at least some of the worlds in the context set (lest it is ‘self-defeating’) and that it should not be true in all worlds in the context set (lest it is ‘something that is already

done'), the result of these two conditions being that 'a proposition asserted is always true in some but not all of the possible worlds in the context set'." Contradictions, as Snider (2010) asserted, "being necessarily false, violated the first condition of this principle: they denote no worlds and so will denote no worlds in any context set. Rather than being informative", Snider (2010:594) stated that they were over-informative; "intersecting a context set with the (empty set of) worlds denoted by a contradiction yields an empty context set: the absurd state. Tautologies, on the other hand, being necessarily true, violated the second condition: they denoted all worlds, so they would denote the entirety of any context set." Instead of providing more information, Snider (2010) noted, they were not informative; "intersecting a context set with the (entire universe of) worlds denoted by a tautology yields an unchanged context set."

Given that neither tautological expressions nor contradictions provide information in the ordinary sense, conversationally, one might expect both not to be helpful - but both still have felicitous uses. Snider (2010) showed that tautological expressions and contradictions result in semantic implications. Rhodes (2009), Kwon (2009), and Snider (2010) are related to the present study because all of them are studies on the tautologies of various languages, their characteristics, and manifestations. However, the current study focuses on the features, status, grammatical and cognitive contents of tautological expressions in the Igbo language.

Kwon (2014) studied tautology on the topic entitled *Categorization and its embodiments: Korean tautological construction in the mental theory*. Kwon adopted the Mental theory in the study to examine Korean expressions or constructions. According to Kwon (2014), nominal tautology relies on cognitive abilities such as discerning whether a nominal expression refers to a generic one in a given context. Kwon (2014) is related to the current study because both focus on tautology. The difference is that Kwon (2014) studied the tautology of Korean expressions, while this work studies tautology in the Igbo language.

Urujzian (2016) conducted a study on tautology tagged: *The gap between teaching and research in English semantics: A study of tautology in English and Anaan languages*. The principal aim of Urujzian's study was to evaluate the extent to which outcomes of research in English semantics were implemented in the classroom, with a particular interest in teaching tautology in English and Anaan. Urujzian interviewed fifty (50) Anaan/English bilinguals and ten (10) teachers of the English language. The data analysis showed no corresponding relationship between research findings in the area and teaching the concept in the classroom. The interviewed teachers view research works as academic exercises undertaken for higher institutions, thus regarding the research findings as irrelevant to their teaching and learning.

Further findings were redundant expansions of acronyms used as common sources of tautology in the classroom. Urujzian (2016) and this present work are similar because both examine tautology. However, their difference is that while Urujzian (2016) focused on the

tautology of English and Anaan, a comparative study, this present work focuses on the tautology of the Igbo language.

Niu (2021), taking a different angle, investigated the analysis of tautology, especially in political discourse. Niu's work discussed an exciting but complicated issue of identity in tautological constructions in Chinese political discourse. In Niu's research work, more attention was given to Grice's theoretical contributions due to the lapses of Russell's description theory. Russell's theory possessed certain lapses in describing the relationship between logic and language experience. Niu (2021) is related to this present study because both are on tautology. However, this research examines the features and status of tautological expressions in the Igbo language, while Niu (2021) focused on tautology as used in Chinese' political discourses.

Muzakki and Marzuqi (2021) carried out a stylistic study of the *Tautological language style of the Qur'an on God's existence*. The main objective of their study was to study the linguistic/language features in tautological expressions evident in the Arabic language of the Qur'an with regard to the existence of God, highlighting their underlying meanings. They employed a stylistic approach in investigating each word used in the data. The findings revealed that God's existence is "constructed in (1) kalam khabar-informative; (2) qashr-limited, and (3) similar construction of the predicate illustrating the subject. The underlying meaning of such constructions is to emphasize Allah's almighty, the present God's presence, and illuminate the hereafter," (p. 257). Muzakki and Marzuqi's (2021) study is similar to this present research work because the two studies examine tautology; however, their difference lies in the fact that this present study centres on tautology in the Igbo language, while Muzakki and Marzuqi (2021), focused on tautology of language style of the Qur'an on God's existence.

From the review of related literature, the concept of tautology in the Igbo language has not been discussed to the best of the researchers' knowledge. There is no gainsaying that an investigation into the tautology of the Igbo language is a necessary academic vacuum worth filling to show, with copious examples, how tautology is evident in the Igbo language semantics.

Research Methodology

The research design of this study is a mixed method of data analysis, that is, qualitative and quantitative, but it is more qualitative than quantitative. Hence, we have QUAL-quant analysis. The analysis is corpus-based. Five Igbo texts are subjected to the Antconc concordance software to fish out the tautological expression therein. Sixty (60) respondents are randomly selected from different walks of life within Nsukka [the town hosting the University of Nigeria] and interviewed in different cognitive domains [contexts]. They are asked questions on various topics to get their utterances. The researcher's initial interest is

not in the issues they responded to but in the instances of tautological expressions in their utterances during the interview. The utterances are stored and reviewed in audio files.

From the review of the audio files, only thirty-eight (38) files have instances of tautological expressions, representing 63.33% of the respondents used for the study. The thirty-eight (38) respondents are further interviewed, specifically on issues that bother on tautology in line with the study objectives. Based on the page limit usually assigned to articles, sixteen tautological expressions are analysed in this study out of the forty-two (42) tautological expressions obtained. The sixteen purposefully selected tautological expressions are qualitatively analysed and classified by employing a descriptive model embodying cognitive and thematic approaches based on some lexical and morphological criteria via Igbo tautologies involving lexical units that are semantically similar, and those with similar verbal endings, phrases, and noun complements. Furthermore, we have another subdivision among those with similar lexical items or expressions via intralingual and interlingual Igbo tautologies. Quantitatively, some numerical analysis and observations that support qualitative analysis are also made.

The geographical area of this study is the Igbo language, a language spoken predominantly in the southeastern part of Nigeria. The Igbo language belongs to the Kwa group of the Benue-Congo sub-branch language family. It is one of the three major languages in Nigeria, with over twenty-nine million speakers (see Author & Author, Year).

Note:

Participants who provided data for this study did so voluntarily, a testament to their autonomy and the respect we have for their decision-making. The Ethical Committee of the Department of Linguistics, Igbo & Other Nigerian Languages, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, in adherence to the Declaration of Helsinki, prioritized the privacy and well-being of our respondents.

The consent of the participants for participation in the study was also obtained verbally. This method was chosen because the provided data were Igbo statements [tautological expressions] in the public domain, used mainly by members of the community that are vast in the Igbo language. Verbal consent was considered appropriate as it allowed for a more natural and culturally sensitive approach to obtaining consent.

Presentation and Analysis of Data

As stated earlier, out of the sixty (60) audio files analysed, only thirty-eight (38) audio files have instances of thirty-seven (37) tautological expressions in them. Secondly, among the five (5) Igbo texts subjected to the Antconc software, tautological expressions were observed only in three (3) of them - *Nkọlị*, *Nwaọhaneze*, and the New Testament of the *Igbo Bible*. Two instances each were obtained from *Nkọlị* and the New Testament, and one

sentence from *Nwaophaneze*, giving five (5) tautological expressions from the study texts. Altogether, forty-two (42) tautological expressions were obtained, but only sixteen are presented and analysed in this section for want of space. The remaining twenty-six tautological expressions are in the appendix.

Furthermore, among the thirty-eight audio files with instances of tautological expressions, thirty tautological expressions, which are from twenty-eight respondents, are tautologies within the Igbo language [intralingual tautologies], while seven instances of interlingual tautologies are from ten respondents. It is also worthy of note that the five tautological expressions from the study texts fall under intralingual tautologies, giving a total of thirty-five intralingual tautologies and seven interlingual tautologies.

The data are broadly grouped into three categories: repetition of similar or different lexical items, phrases and clauses that have the same semantic import, repetition of similar verb endings that belong to the same semantic field with other nouns/verbs in the same utterance, and repetition of similar words, phrases, and clauses from different languages mixed with Igbo. Below are the characteristics of the respondents.

Table 1: Characteristics of the thirty-eight respondents

a. Gender:	Male:	16
	Female:	22
b. Age:	15-35 years:	13
	36-55 years:	11
	56-75 years:	14
c. Levels of education:	Primary:	7
	Secondary:	11
	Tertiary:	20
d. Aware of using tautological expressions:	7	
Not aware of using tautological expressions:	31	
e. I know the meaning of tautology:	17	
I do not know the meaning of tautology:	21	

Repetition of similar/different words, phrases, and clauses with similar meanings

(Note that for all the illustrations, the words, phrases, and clauses in italics are repeated elements, while the ones in bold print are the main elements.)

1. **Ọtutu** *igwe* mmadu biara ihu Pita Obi.

[**Many** (*many*) people came to see Peter Obi.]

In example (1) above, *otutu* means the same thing as *igwe*. In the context of example (1), both words mean 'many'. It is either the sentence reads:

Ọtutu mmadu biara ihu Pita Obi. OR **Igwe** mmadu biara ihu Pita Obi.

The presence of *otutu* renders *igwe* redundant and vice versa, rendering the sentence tautological.

2. **Kwa** Sode *obula* anyi na-esi osikapa.

[**Every** Sunday (*every*) we cook rice.]

The bold and italicised words in (2) mean 'every'; using the two words together makes one redundant and makes the sentence tautologous. In order to unpack the redundant lexical items, the sentence would read:

Sode **obula** anyi na-esi osikapa OR **Kwa** Sode anyi na-esi osikapa

3. Umụ **agboghọ** *na-alughị di* ma tūrū ime anaghị ara ahụ tufuo nwa ha mūrū n'okporo ụzọ. [**Unmarried** (*spinsters*) who get pregnant are usually quick to abandon the child by the road side.]

We got example (3) from one of the study texts, *Nwaophaneze*, written by Chidimma Ugoalachile, page 3. The Igbo meaning of *agboghọ* is a 'spinster', and *na-alughị di* also means 'an unmarried girl'. Even from the metaphorical perspective, when one refers to an elderly married person as *agboghọ* 'spinster', the conceived meaning is that that elderly person is looking younger, maybe due to the person's dressing, make-up, etc. Therefore, in (3), having *agboghọ* and *na-alughị di* together makes the sentence tautologous.

It is better to say: Umụ **agboghọ** tūrū ime anaghị ara ahụ tufuo nwa ha mūrū n'okporo ụzọ. OR Ndị **na-alughị di** tūrū ime anaghị ara ahụ tufuo nwa ha mūrū n'okporo ụzọ.

4. O nyere m **ego** *ugwo* onwa m.

[S/he gave me (**money** [for]) my *salary*]

5. Kpotere m **akpuru** *nsi* ewu.

[Get goat **dung** (*goat faeces*) for me.]

Ugwo onwa in example (4) means 'salary', so the sense of *ego* - 'money' is already included in 'salary'. For one to say, *ego ugwo onwa* is tautologous because it is a needless repetition. It is better to say: O nyere m **ego** onwa m. OR O nyere m **ugwo** onwa m. In the same vein, *akpuru* (goat dung) in (5) includes *nsi* (faeces). So, the correct expression will be Kpotere m **akpuru** ewu. OR Kpotere m **nsi** ewu.

6. Nneamaka mụrụ **ejima** *abu*.

[Nneamaka gave birth to **twins** (*two*).]

Ejima in (6) stands for 'twins', which is 'two'. The addition of *abu* (two) to *ejima* translates to 'four' in mathematical parlance. Simply put, *ejima* is 'two', and the sense it gives in the sentence should not be repeated; otherwise, it gives room for semantic redundancy, as in (6). Hence, the sentence should be: Nneamaka mụrụ *ejima*, with *abu* deleted. It is worthy of note to point out that the expression *Ọ mụrụ abu*. 'It gave birth to two' is also correct in the Igbo language. It still refers to 'Giving birth to twins', but it is restrictively used in some Igbo dialects (Eastern Igbo dialect group, see Nwaozuzu 2008) to refer to animals giving birth to two/twins, not humans.

7a Eji m **anya** m *hu* ya.

[I *saw* it (with *my* own **eyes**).]

The only organ of sight in the human body is the eyes. In other words, one cannot see with the leg, mouth or ears but rather with the two eyes. Again, the first person's pronoun *M* (I) in (7a) presents the speaker as a witness. In (7a), therefore, we have two tautological issues: (a) the repetition of *anya* (eyes), where the verb of vision *hu* (see), is already in function renders the former redundant in meaning and as such tautologous, (b) seeing it with 'my own eyes' is another issue. Of course, the speaker cannot see it with 'Uche's eye' or 'Ada's eyes'. Therefore, the correct version will be *Ahuru* m ya - 'I saw it'. Other similar examples of (7a) are:

7b. Eji m **ntị** m *nu* ya.

[I *heard* it (with my own **ears**).]

7c. Eji m **ukwu** m *je* ebe ahụ.

[I *went* there (with my own **legs**).]

Some may argue that the repetition in (7) is for emphasis. However, even if (7a-c) are communicatively acceptable (because they are very common expressions in Igbo), they are grammatically unacceptable in the language.

8. Anụlịka mụrụ **nwa** *ọhụ* n'abalị.

[Anụlịka gave **birth** (to a *new* baby) last night.]

In this case, the idea of *imu nwa* (to give birth) entails that the child is 'new' (*ọhụ*) because one cannot give birth to an 'old child'. Funny as the utterance might sound, the speaker was proofing the fact that 'newly born child is new'. Therefore, *imu nwa ọhụ* is tautologous and should be considered an inappropriate Igbo rendition. It is best to say: Anụlịka mụrụ *nwa* - 'Anụlịka gave birth'.

9. Legodi **ozu** *nwuru* *anzu* di ka gi.

[Look at a **corpse** (*dead person*) like you.]

One of the respondents made this statement at the motor park when a fellow driver teased him about our interview with him, and he retorted in the above sentence. A 'corpse' (ózu) is already 'dead' (nwurū anwu). Therefore, using the two in one sentence is wrong. It should be:

Legodi *ozu* di ka gi. OR Legodi onye *nwurū anwu* di ka gi.

10a. O mere **ngwa** *ngwa*.

[She did it **quickly** (quickly).]

Sentence (10a) is supposed to read, O mere *ngwa*. Repeating *ngwa* is tautologous, but it is important to note that it is morphologically acceptable to have repetition, as in *O mere ngwa ngwa ngwa*, to show emphasis, frequency, quality or intensity in Igbo. So, 'O mere *ngwa ngwa*,' when used to show **emphasis**, means that 'S/he did it **'very quickly,'** where the second 'ngwa' means 'very'. Other examples include:

10b. Osikapa ahụ bụ *aja aja*.

[The rice is **sandy**] - It shows the **intensity** of sand in the rice.

10c. O na-abịa *kwa izu kwa izu*.

[He comes **weekly**] - It shows the **frequency** of coming.

10d. Okwute ahụ di *muru muru*.

[The stone/pebble is **smooth**] - It shows the **quality of the stone/pebble**.

Igbo tautologies involving verb endings with noun/noun phrase complements

11. O kwughariṛi ya *ozo*.

[He **repeated** it (*again*).]

Kwughari is to 'repeat' what one said. The presence of *ozo* (again) is needless and renders the sentence tautologous. The correct version is O kwughariṛi ya. A close observation of (11) shows that the verb ending is instrumental in forming the tautologous expression. *Kwu* is 'talk/say', *kwughari* is to 'repeat' what one said/talked about. The structure of (11) differs from examples (1-10), where a noun/noun phrase, verb/verb phrase, adjective, or adverb was repeated. In (11), the *-ghari-* suffix attached to *kwu* means 'repeat what was said'. This observation shows that inflected Igbo verbs combined with semantically similar noun complements can create tautologous expressions in Igbo. Other similar examples include:

12. Dkt. Goodluck Jonathan, onye **chiburu** ala anyi n'oge *gara aga*, biara.

[Dr. Goodluck Jonathan, who **ruled** Nigeria (*in the past*) came.]

As (12) points out, the *-buru* suffix is one of the past tense markers in the Igbo language. When attached to *chi-* (rule), it signifies 'ruled', indicating an action completed in the past. Therefore, the use of 'ruled' (*chiburu*) and *gara aga* (*in the past*) in the same sentence is not

only redundant but also linguistically incorrect. It is akin to stating the same fact twice. The speaker should, therefore, choose one of the following:

Dkt. Goodluck Jonathan, onye *chiburu* ala anyị biara. OR Dkt. Goodluck Jonathan, onye isi ala anyị n'oge *gara aga* biara.

All the tautological expressions analysed so far can be classified as intralingual tautologies because all of them (1-12) are within the Igbo language. The following section looks at Igbo tautological expressions across the Igbo language.

Tautological expressions across the Igbo language

13. Nwankwọ bụ nnọọ onye **iberibe**, confirmed *foolish* man.

[Nwankwọ is just a **stupid/foolish** man (confirmed *foolish* man).]

Sociolinguistically, example (13) is a typical example of code-switching/mixing. In this context, code-switching and mixing are used interchangeably to mean *mixing two or more languages or language varieties in an utterance by a speaker within a sentence*. Sentence (13) is an instance of interlingual tautology involving the mixture of two languages - Igbo and English. *Iberibe* is the English equivalence of 'foolish'. They belong to the same semantic field. Assuming the sentence was rendered only in the Igbo language as: 'Nwankwọ bụ nnọọ onye *iberibe*.' Or as 'Ọ bụ a confirmed *foolish* man' (the code-switching notwithstanding), it would not be classified as tautologous. So, leaving the two words [*iberibe* (Igbo) and *foolish* (English)] in one sentence makes it a tautological expression.

14. Ọ bụ ezigbo **onye ohi**, na *ole*, *thief* wey im be

[He is a professional **thief** (*thief*), a (*thief*) that is what he is]

Example (14) filtered into the recording during our interview with one of the respondents at the Nsukka main market. The respondent was distracted by the neighbour about one of their customers, and in his response, he produced a sentence (14). Here, we have the mixture of four codes (languages) - Igbo, Yoruba, English and Nigerian Pidgin English but the tautological expression is realised by mixing three codes - *onye ohi* [Igbo], *ole* [Yoruba], and *thief* [English]. The three italicised words mean 'thief', and the speaker used them in one sentence to refer to the customer in question. The sentence can be rendered as: Ọ bụ ezigbo *onye ohi*. OR Ọ bụ ezigbo *ole*. OR Ọ bụ ezigbo *thief*, where *ezigbo* stands for 'professional/seasoned/hardened' (*thief/criminal*). Therefore, (14) is another example of interlingual Igbo tautology. Three other examples of interlingual tautology involving abbreviations and acronyms are observed in the collected data. Observe sentences (15-16) below.

15. My **NIN** *number* dị n'ime phone m.

[My **NIN** (*number*) is inside my phone.]

The Nigerian government just introduced the National Identification Number [NIN] for its citizens to checkmate crime, especially kidnapping. So, adding 'number' after saying the acronym/abbreviation is inappropriate because NIN already contains 'number'. The correct thing to say is: My *NIN* dī n'ime phone m. Another related example is:

6. Ọ gwara m tinyekwa my **BVN** *number again*.

[S/he told me to type in **again** my **BVN** (*number*) (*again*).]

In (16), we have two tautological issues: the addition of 'number' after the acronym 'BVN', which means 'Bank Verification Number', and the suffix *-kwa* attached to *tinye-*, and the addition of 'again.' *Tinyekwa* in (16) means 'put *again*'; therefore, the addition of 'again' is tautologous. To correct the sentence, it will be: Ọ gwara m tinyekwa my BVN. OR Ọ gwara m tinye my BVN *again*, deleting the enclitic '*kwa*'.

Deductions from the Analysis

Based on the data presented and analysed, the following are deducible:

1. that tautology in Igbo is a result of the repetition of identical lexical items, phrases and clauses for the same meaning, either within the Igbo language (intralingual tautologies, see examples 1-10) or outside the Igbo language (interlingual tautologies, see examples 13-17),
2. that we can also have Igbo tautological expressions due to the duplication of two or more lexemes, phrases, and clauses belonging to the same semantic field in an utterance. In other words, there are different words, phrases, and clauses in a sentence that have the same semantic import as some other words, phrases, and clauses in the same sentence (see examples 1-10),
3. considering the number of repeated identical words (5 instances [see examples 10 & 13-16]) and the repetition of different words with the same meaning (11 instances [see examples 1-9 & 11-12]), we can say that tautology in Igbo is mainly as a result of needless repetition of different words that belong to the same semantic field, that is, using different words to represent the same idea in a sentence,
4. that some Igbo verb endings co-occurring with similar verbs and nouns in the same sentence can also result in tautological expressions in Igbo (see examples 11-12),
5. that code-switching/mixing is another major cause of tautology in Igbo (see examples 13-16),
6. that improper rendition of abbreviations and acronyms in code-switched/mixed sentences is also another cause of tautology in the Igbo language (see examples 15-16),
7. that the significant implications of tautology in Igbo are:

a. redundancy of words, phrases, and clauses (see examples 1-16), which, according to Jobe & Stevens (2009:59), takes place “when the repetition of a word or idea does not add anything to the previous usage; it just restates what has already been said, taking up space, and gets in the way without adding extra meaning”. In other words, it is a self-contradicting wording by the speaker;

b. wordiness (see examples 1-16). Any needless repetition makes the sentence wordy. In other words, tautology does not encourage word economy;

c. ambiguities (see examples 3, 6, 15-16). Ambiguous sentences affect comprehension and cause delays in getting the correct interpretation. A close observation of the analysed data shows that nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs are the major word classes duplicated in Igbo tautological sentences (observe the italicised words in the examples). Hence, comprehension is badly affected in cases of tautology because the major word classes are involved. In addition, according to States (1989), sometimes, ambiguities are intentionally used by speakers to achieve vagueness, that is, one saying something without saying much. States says that one cannot tautologise to an elite audience. This later claim by States disagrees with the findings of this study (see section 4.5).

d. production of embarrassing utterances by the speaker, for instance, using three similar words from different languages to express one idea, as observed in example (14), undermines the speaker’s credibility, as Kallen (2005) rightly pointed out. In the context of tautology’s implications, as pointed out in (7) above, tautology is seen as an error, a mistake, a malformation, or ill-construction because its fundamental role is to make one of the words or expressions useless or needless since other words can comfortably be used in the construction without losing the original meaning or intended sense in the expression.

8. that the disadvantages of tautological expressions in Igbo, notwithstanding that repetition, which is one of the significant characteristics of tautology, performs some morphological and syntactic functions in the Igbo language as follows:

a. in showing emphasis (see examples 10a): O mere *ngwa ngwa*.

b. in showing intensity (see example 10b): Osikapa ahụ bụ *aJa aJa*.

c. in showing frequency (see example 10c): Ọ na-abịa *kwa izu kwa izu*.

d. in showing quality (see example 10d): Okwute ahụ dị *mụrụ mụrụ*.

e. in serving as a quantifier for more clarity (see examples 1 & 2)

f. in adding to the stylistic and comic components of some expressions (see examples 3, 7, 9, 13 & 14).

The morphological and syntactic functions of repetition in (10a-d) add more meaning in the sentences where they occur, even though they are tautological. Furthermore, from our

observation, in the contexts of (10) above, tautology is intentional, and the speakers use it in a unique way to achieve some linguistic and literary goals.

Summary of the Findings and Conclusion

This study has shown copious examples of tautology in the Igbo languages and their manifestations in different forms. Based on the study objectives, forty-two Igbo tautological expressions were collated and classified, but sixteen were analysed here following the redundancy theory. Secondly, the study finds that repeating similar or different words, phrases, and clauses with the same meaning in a sentence is the primary cause of tautology in Igbo. Also, in many contexts, tautology is seen as a grammatical error; in a few contexts, it is seen as a style of speech for some linguistics and literary reasons. Based on the preceding, this study defines *Igbo tautology* as a conscious and unconscious repetition of similar words, phrases, and clauses in an utterance. When it is conscious, the repeated words or expressions are used to emphasise, show intensity, frequency, and quality or as a literary/linguistic tool. On the other hand, when it is unconscious, it results from the speaker's lack of knowledge of the Igbo language grammatical rules or deficiency in the use of the Igbo language, which leads to mixing/switching of Igbo with English or other Nigerian languages.

Thirdly, the findings show that Igbo tautological expressions in some cognitive domains (contexts) are intentional, assuming different statuses, as in number 8 of section 4.4. In this case, the expressions may be grammatically unacceptable but communicatively acceptable. On the other hand, the tautological expressions could be unintentional, wherein the utterances are grammatically and communicatively unacceptable, also assuming different implicative status as in the implications of tautology enumerated in number (7) of section 4.4.

Fourthly, the study observes that Igbo tautologies could be intralingual or interlingual, and both are caused by conscious and unconscious repetition of similar/different words, phrases, and clauses with similar meanings. Furthermore, intralingual Igbo tautologies result from an error in some contexts and a style of speech in some other contexts. On the other hand, interlingual Igbo tautologies result from code-switching/mixing.

Still on the objectives of the study, it is observed that tautology as a grammatical error is quite common among the Igbo native speakers, and the majority of the language users are not even aware of it (see Table 1 above). For instance, out of the thirty-eight respondents whose audio files were used for this study, seven respondents from the structured interview conducted are aware that they produced tautological expressions; the remaining thirty-one respondents (which include both the literate, semi-literate, and illiterate users) are not aware that they made tautological expressions. Furthermore, from the interview, the characteristics of the respondents show that out of the thirty-eight respondents, eighteen attended primary and secondary schools, while twenty had first degree and above. This observation disagrees with States' (1989) assertion that one cannot use tautological expressions amid literate audiences.

This study's findings show that most literate Igbo language users are unaware of the tautological sentences they produce.

Again, from our interview, seventeen respondents knew the meaning of tautology, and twenty-one respondents did not know what tautology is all about. Sixteen out of the thirty-eight respondents used for the study are males, while twenty-two respondents are females, and all their utterances had instances of tautological expressions. So, gender did not affect the production of tautologies in Igbo. Also, fourteen respondents are older Igbo language users [56-75 years], while twenty-four are younger users [15-55 years], but they all produced tautological utterances. This also shows that Igbo language users of all age brackets are not free from producing tautologous expressions.

In conclusion, from the findings, most words or expressions in the tautological expressions lack functional meanings. So, in as much as the native speakers of a language are at liberty to choose and use words to satisfy various communication needs depending on the context, the grammatical rules of the language also need to be considered in order not to have communicatively acceptable sentences, which are grammatically unacceptable. This is because language comprises both formal and functional properties, plus the proper use of these properties in conceiving meaning in various cognitive domains [contexts]. If one is neglected in place of the other, effective communication will break.

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Appendix

[Other tautological expression not analysed]

17. **Qha** mmadu niile gbakoro n'ama.
 [Everybody (everyone) assembled at the village square.]
18. Ha **ncha** niile bu ndi ohi.
 [All of them (all) are criminals.]
19. ...n'ih i na **otutu** ndi nwoke ozọ na-abia...
 [...because many other (many) men are coming...]
20. **Kwa** mgbe obula o huru Nneka...
 [Every (every) time he saw Nneka.]
21. **Soso** naani Chineke ma ihe mere Eze.
 [Only (only) God knows what happened to Eze.]
22. Mgbe Jizos ruru na Galilee, **otutu** igwe mmadu biakwutere ya.
 [When Jesus came to Galilee many (many) people came to Him.]
23. Uju na-anu tii **kwa** ututu obula.
 [Uju drinks tea every morning (every)].
24. O bughị mmasi Chineke ka **onye** ome **njo** nwuo
 [It is not God's intention that a sinner (a sinful person) shall die.]
25. Ekele oge uguru aghaghị ibu n'akuku **ekwu** oku.
 [Greeting during harmattan is usually by the fire side (fire).]
26. Nwa agboghobia ahụ bu **akwa ugo** mma.
 [The maiden is gorgeous (beautiful).]
27. Okuko ahụ nyuru **nsi** akpana/akpala.
 [The fowl defecated 'faeces' (fowl droppings).]
28. O huru ya na **mkpumkpu** ugwu
 [He saw it on a (protruded) mountain.]

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29. I lee mbe ahụ anya na **mkpumpku** *azu*, i mara na okenye abịala
[If you look at the (**protruded**) *back* of the tortoise, you will notice that it is ageing.]
30. Otutu umu nwwanyi na-ere ihe n'ogige a bucha **akwuna** *okueni*
[Many women selling in this compound are **harlots** (*prostitutes*).]
31. ...mgbe ihe mberede mere n' **ezi** *okporo ama* anyi...
[...when the accident happened on our **roadway** (*road*).]
32. Mama Ugwuanyi bu **agadi** nwaanyi *kagoro nka*, gini ka gi na ya na-ekwu?
[Ugwuanyi's mother is an **old** (*aged*) woman, what are you discussing with her?]
33. Umaka **oge** *ugbu a* anaghi ekele ekele.
[Children of **nowadays** (*these days/this generation*) no longer greet.]
34. O gbara **mkpi** *abuo*
[It is *two* (**two halves**).]
35. Ndi Pati Lebọ meriri na Steeti Enugwu maka na ha **biakoro onu**, *jikoo aka*.
[Labour party won in Enugu State because they were **together** (*united*).]
36. Umu nwaanyi **ogbara ohu** *oge ugbu a* na-eyizi ihe masiri ya.
[Ladies of **these days** (*nowadays*) put on what they like.]
37. Uche, i ma na o bu moto **gburu** ewu ahụ *nwuru anwu*?
[Uche, do you know that a car **killed** the (*dead*) goat]
38. Nne ha **nwuru anwu**, *lagoro mmuo*, biara uwa.
[Their **dead** (*died*) mother reincarnated.]
39. Ikenna anaghi eduzi ya **ezi** *uzo*.
[Ikenna does not guide him **properly** (*good*).]
40. **Mmadu niile**, in fact, *everybody* biara mmemme ahụ.
[**Everyone**, in fact (*everybody*) attended the ceremony.]
41. ...ubochi ahụ ka m hụrụ **mmiri** *River Niger* very well
[...that was the day I saw (**water**) *River Niger* very well]
42. O gwara m tinyekwa my **PIN** *number again*.
[He told me to type in **again** my **PIN** (*number*) (*again*)]
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