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## Metaphorical Usage of the Eye in Igbo: A Corpus Based Study

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### Abstract

*This study delves into the metaphorical representations of the eye (anya) in the Igbo language and culture, exploring their meanings, frequencies, and cultural significance. Employing a mixed-methods approach, this research identifies and interprets conceptual metaphors underlying eye-related expressions. The study utilizes Conceptual Metaphor Theory to conduct an in-depth analysis of eye metaphors in Standard Igbo, categorizing them into themes. The findings reveal the eye metaphor's multifaceted nature, representing insight, perception, awareness, and understanding. The analysis sheds light on Igbo thought and perception, enhancing our understanding of the linguistic and conceptual representations of the eye in Igbo language.*

**Keywords:** Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT), Anya(Eye), Igbo language, Mixed Method.

### 1.0 Introduction

Metaphors are fundamental to human language and cognition, enabling us to describe complex ideas, emotions, and experiences in

relatable terms (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). They are not mere literary devices but rather a vital part of our conceptual framework, shaping our understanding of the world (Gibbs, 1994). In Igbo language and culture, metaphors play a crucial role in conveying meaning and understanding the world, with the eye being a recurring and multifaceted symbol. The eye metaphor is deeply rooted in Igbo culture, appearing in various contexts, such as proverbs, idioms, and everyday discourse (Emenanjo, 2015).

In Igbo, the eye is not just a physical organ but a symbol of insight, perception, awareness, and understanding. It represents the window to the soul, revealing one's thoughts, intentions, and emotions. This metaphorical significance is reflected in Igbo phrases like "anya bu uwa" (the eye is the world), highlighting the eye's role in perceiving and interpreting reality. The use of eye metaphors in Igbo language and culture can be traced back to the traditional Igbo worldview, which emphasizes the importance of vision, intuition, and spiritual awareness (Uchendu, 1965). In this context, the eye metaphor serves as a means of communicating complex ideas, emotions, and experiences, facilitating a deeper understanding of the world and human existence. Despite its ubiquity, the eye metaphor remains understudied in Igbo language and culture.

This study aims to address this gap by exploring the eye metaphor in Igbo, examining its meanings, uses, and implications for understanding Igbo thought and perception. The significance of the eye metaphor in Igbo culture is further underscored by its role in Igbo mythology and cosmology. The eye is associated with the gods and goddesses, who possess supernatural vision and insight. It's linked to the concept of "chi," the personal god or spiritual guardian, residing in the eye. Igbo language is rich in idiomatic expressions and proverbs featuring the eye as a central image. Phrases like "anya

bu uwa" (the eye is the world), and "anya na-ahu uwa" (the eye sees the world), underscore the eye's role in perceiving and understanding reality. The eye metaphor also influences Igbo social and cultural practices, such as the use of masks and masquerades in traditional rituals. Masks and masquerades often feature eye-like designs, symbolizing the connection between physical and spiritual realms.

This study focuses on the metaphorical representations of the eye (ányà) in Igbo language, excluding other body parts. Using Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) as the theoretical framework, this research explores the various metaphorical expressions related to the eye, analyzing their meanings, frequencies, and cultural significance. Using Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT), it analyzes 51 sentences from a corpus-based dataset to identify and interpret conceptual metaphors underlying eye-related expressions. The research sheds light on Igbo thought and perception, focusing solely on the eye metaphor in Standard Igbo language.

This study significantly contributes to the understanding of metaphorical language in Igbo, shedding light on the conceptual mappings between the eye and abstract concepts. The research also contributes to the development of Conceptual Metaphor Theory, demonstrating its efficacy in analyzing metaphorical language in African languages. Furthermore, it illuminates the cultural and cognitive significance of eye-related metaphors in Igbo, informing language teaching and learning. Ultimately, this study provides a methodological blueprint for future corpus-based metaphor research in African languages, addressing a critical gap in existing literature and serving as a valuable resource for scholars in linguistics, cognitive science, anthropology, and African studies.

## **2.0 Literature Review**

This section reviews existing theoretical and empirical studies on metaphor, encompassing definitions, conceptual frameworks, and variations (individual and universal). The Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) serves as the primary framework, complemented by other relevant theories. The review also synthesizes empirical research on Igbo metaphors, particularly those related to the eye (Anyà), providing a foundation for analyzing the metaphorical usage of the eye in Igbo.

### **2.1 Understanding Metaphorical Constructs**

This subsection provides an overview of existing definitions and perspectives on metaphor, by various authors, and examines the underlying basis of metaphor, providing theoretical foundation for understanding metaphorical usage.

Metaphors are fundamental linguistic tools that enable individuals to comprehend abstract concepts by drawing parallels with more tangible experiences. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) proposes a groundbreaking cognitive theory of metaphor, asserting that metaphors are not just linguistic decorations but essential mechanisms for structuring thought and understanding. They argued that our conceptual systems are largely metaphorical in nature, shaping our perceptions and interpretations of the world.

Building on Lakoff and Johnson's work, scholars like Lakoff, and Turner (1989) further explores the cognitive aspects of metaphor by emphasizing the role of conceptual integration in creating new meanings and insights. They suggested that metaphorical mappings between different domains are not arbitrary but are grounded in embodied experiences and cognitive processes. Additionally, Sontag (1977) highlights the poetic and transformative power of metaphors in her essay "Illness as Metaphor," where she

examined how metaphors can influence our understanding and experiences of illness. Sontag argued that metaphors shape our attitudes towards illness and can stigmatize individuals through the language we use to describe their conditions.

Furthermore, Black (1962) proposes a more formal approach to understanding metaphors, suggesting that metaphors involve a process of semantic transfer where the meaning of a word or phrase in one context is transferred to another context. Black's analysis focused on the structural and semantic aspects of metaphors, providing a valuable perspective on how metaphors work at a linguistic level. Also, according to Lodge (1981: 10), metaphor involves substituting one thing for another based on their similarity, requiring that the two entities share commonalities to be interchangeable. This substitution occurs despite the things being distinct and separate in space and time. Metaphorical expressions claim something to be what it is not, highlighting their dissimilarity. Emezue (2015: 119) defines a metaphorical construction as one that implies a comparison between two dissimilar entities. Metaphors serve as vehicles for conveying cultural, linguistic, and literal meanings through language. In essence, metaphor can be simply defined as a linguistic device that makes comparisons, enabling people to understand one concept in relation to another.

According to Memon (2000), there are four main types of metaphor, and they are standard, implied, visual, and extended metaphors. While "a standard metaphor states that one idea is another, making a direct comparison as if the two ideas were synonyms, an implied metaphor makes an implied comparison without ever making a direct comparison between two ideas. A visual metaphor compares something to a visual image of another. This type of metaphor is common in advertising where a product is visualized with another object. For example, spicy Cheetos being

compared to fire. An extended metaphor uses descriptive language to elaborate a comparison. It's the type of metaphor that you find referenced throughout a stanza, a full poem, a couple of paragraphs, or an entire blog post" (Memon 2000: 3).

## **2.2 Theoretical Framework**

This section outlines the theoretical framework underpinning this research, with Conceptual Metaphor Theory henceforth CMT serving as the primary framework. CMT, as articulated by Lakoff and Johnson (1980), provides the core theoretical lens for this study. In CMT, a conceptual metaphor entails two conceptual domains: a source domain and a target domain, where the target domain is comprehended in terms of the source domain. The source domains encompass more familiar, concrete, and clearly delineated domains of experience, whereas target domains represent less familiar, less clearly delineated, and more abstract conceptual domains.

Lakoff and Johnson (1980) posit that metaphor can be understood as the mapping from a source domain to a target domain, involving the understanding of a particular concept, idea, or entity through another concept or idea. The source domain is the conceptual domain from which metaphorical expressions are drawn to understand another conceptual domain, while the target domain is the conceptual domain being understood. Alternatively, the conceptual domain is the domain we seek to understand. In line with this, Kovecses (2010) states that conceptual metaphors employ a more abstract concept as target and a more concrete or physical domain as source, and metaphorical utterances are drawn from the concrete source domain to understand and express the abstract target domain. This is exemplified in Lakoff (1993:110) example, "LOVE IS A JOURNEY," where the concept "journey" serves as the source domain mapped onto the target domain "love," facilitating

understanding. The concept “journey” invokes certain concrete ideas, enabling comprehension of the target domain. This process is known as mapping.

A modified version of the theory further posits that a source domain can be used to express not only abstract concepts but also concrete concepts or domains. Lakoff and Johnson (1980,10) also posit that metaphor extends beyond language, originating from our cognitive faculties. Mey (2001) views metaphors as mental frameworks that enable us to conceptualize and comprehend our surroundings, forming a mental model of our reality. Evans and Green (2006) observe that target domains, although complex, are rooted in fundamental embodied experiences. Kövecses (2002) identifies common source domains as related to the human body, food, animals, plants, and physical forces, while target domains typically pertain to emotions, morality, thought, and human relationships. For example, Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) "LOVE IS A JOURNEY" illustrates how the concrete domain "Journey" generates a mental image (image schema) that is mapped onto the abstract domain "Love," facilitating understanding.

This metaphorical expression yields phrases like "where is our relationship heading?" or "the relationship isn't going anywhere." Similarly, in Igbo, "Anosike bu mbè" (Anosike is a tortoise) evokes attributes of tortoise, aiding comprehension. This mental image, or image schema, is a recurring cognitive structure derived from bodily experience, establishing patterns of understanding and reasoning. It is a pre-linguistic framework that motivates conceptual metaphor mappings. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) argue that our bodily nature, interactions with the environment, cultural experiences, and social interactions provide the foundation for numerous conceptual metaphors, making CMT pervasive. In Igbo culture, body parts, animals, physical objects, and

cultural experiences serve as rich sources of conceptual metaphor, such as "anya" (eye), which this study examines in detail. Furthermore, the nature of our bodies, interactions, and cultural experiences provides a basis for conceptual metaphors, making CMT a fundamental aspect of human cognition.

This framework posits that metaphors are not just linguistic expressions, but rather a fundamental way of thinking and understanding concepts. Metaphors map one domain onto another, creating a network of associations and meanings. "Metaphors are not just linguistic expressions, but rather a fundamental way of still thinking and understanding concepts" (Lakoff, 1993). "Metaphors are based on our embodied experiences and sensorimotor interactions with the environment" (Johnson 1987). According to CMT, metaphors map one domain onto another, creating a network of associations and meanings. This theory suggests that our understanding of concepts is shaped by our experiences and perceptions, and that metaphors reflect these underlying conceptual mappings.

The process and mechanism of using one concept or domain in expressing and understanding a more abstract concept is what is referred to metaphorical mapping. According to Radden & Dirven (2007), mapping is the projection of one set of conceptual entities onto another set of conceptual entities. One of the key concepts in conceptual metaphorical mapping is the concept of directionality. The concept of directionality entails the direction of mapping between the two domains (source domain and target domain). The concept of directionality in conceptual metaphor has been variously argued by scholars. According to Lakoff and Turner (1989), conceptual metaphor or metaphorical mapping is uni-directional, while scholars such as Black (1979) contends that conceptual metaphor mapping is bi-directional. By uni-directional,

Lakoff and Turner (1989) argue that metaphorical mappings goes in one direction. Specifically, they argued that metaphorical mapping is from the source domain to the target domain and not the reverse. Lakoff and Turner (1989) claim contrasts that of the bi-directional school of thought who claims that metaphorical mapping could be from the source domain to the target domain or from the target domain to the source domain.

### **2.3 Previous Studies on Conceptual Metaphors in Igbo**

Under this section, we will be reviewing existing research that has been made in relation to this given topic;

Research on metaphor in Igbo language has been approached from various angles, including its rhetorical, literary, and cognitive dimensions. Several notable studies have investigated this topic, such as those conducted by Okeogu (2015), Okeogu and Chukwu (2016), Okoye and Mmadike (2016), Onwukwe (2020a), Ejinwa (2021), and Nweya and Ejinwa (2024). This report summarizes the key discoveries from these studies. In the Igbo language, metaphorical expressions centered on body parts provide valuable insights into emotional experiences and cognitive processes. These expressions often focus on personal characteristics, actions, and behaviors. As noted by Okoye (1992), Igbo body-part metaphors facilitate analogical connections between human attributes, such as strengths and weaknesses, beauty and ugliness, kindness and wickedness, and specific bodily parts. Similarly, Okeogu (2015) observes that the prevalence of body-part metaphors in Igbo stems from the cultural significance attached to the human body, with certain body parts frequently serving as reference points in metaphorical expressions.

According to Okoye and Mmadike (2016), the figurative meaning interpretation of the selected body-part idioms in the Igbo language are generally achieved by conventional knowledge, metaphor and metonymy. Their study shows the intricate work of metaphor operation in the Igbo language, and also their specific usage of how body-parts such as eye can be conceptualized to be another meaning interpretation. Provided here, is a brief example of meaning interpretation of Eye as an idiom in igbo. It shows how metaphors also operates in this language setting.

(1) a. *inwē anya ọkụ*<sup>-</sup>

to have eye hot

b. to be envious

*Àgwà ya gòsìrì nà Ọ nà ènwere yā anya ọkụ*<sup>-</sup>

His behavior shows that he is envious of her.

In this expression, the eye is associated with some degree of hotness. Hot eyes (envy) and its figurative meaning is motivated by the metaphor INTENSE EMOTIONS ARE HEATED UP. Also the idea that hot is dangerous also aid in the understanding of the idiom as indicated by Okoye and Mmadike (2016).

In another study, Ejinwa (2021) examined *ányá* ‘eye’ as a source of metaphorical expressions in Igbo. Specifically, it analyzed the diverse ways in which *ányá* ‘eye’ can be used to express some abstract concepts, ideas, and experiences in Igbo. The study critically examined *ányá* ‘eye’ as a source of metaphor in Igbo from the conceptual metaphor theory as propounded by Lakoff & Johnson (1980). The study identified how *ányá* ‘eye’ as a concrete domain or source domain is used in the mapping out of some abstract concepts and ideas such as greed, jealousy, goodwill or good intention, respect, politeness, hope, surprise, suffering, etc. In the Igbo cultural

life, a greedy person is one who always wants the larger part of everything and so they equate such insatiable lusts to the size of the eyes. He presents the following examples for greed in Igbo.

(2) a. *ányá úkwú*

eye big

‘greediness’

b. *ónyé anyá úkwú*

person eye big

‘a greedy person’

c. *ányá ùfù*

eye pain

‘jealousy’

d. *ónyé anyá ùfù*

person eye pain

‘a jealous person’

Ejinwa (2021) argues that in examples 2a and 2b the concept *ányá* ‘eye’ is the concrete and source domain which is used in understanding and expressing the concept of ‘greed’ in Igbo which is the target domain. On jealousy, he presents examples that can be seen in (2c) and (2d). Ejinwa’s (2021) study speaks to metaphor as a cognitive process, a mental tool that helps us in understanding and expressing our worldviews.

Nweya and Ejinwa (2024) investigated the eye, as a source of conceptual metaphors in Igbo, drawing on the conceptual metaphor theory. Their study explored how the eye functions as a concrete or source domain used in mapping out abstract experience such as intelligence, distance, hope, etc. Their work adopted oral interviews with native Igbo speakers, and its subjected to semantic analysis. One of the examples as cited by the authors illustrates *anya* as intelligence, such as *Ọ nwere anya eji amuta ihe* “He/She has the ability to learn”. The study affirms that body-part metaphors,

particularly those derived from anya, reflect deeply held cultural values and insights, which aligns closely with this current research. However, this current study differs by adopting a corpus-based approach with an addition of quantitative support using AntConc for conceptual categories and frequency distribution of eye metaphors. Thus, some aspects of the Igbo culture, belief, core values and morals are embedded or expressed metaphorically. This structured literature review provides a foundation for understanding the basic concepts of metaphor.

### **3.0 Research Methodology**

#### **3.1 Research Design and Instrument**

This study employs a mixed-methods research design, integrating both qualitative and quantitative approaches to investigate the metaphorical usage of eye in Igbo. The qualitative aspect of the study involves a descriptive and analytical approach using Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) to examine and interpret the metaphorical expressions related to "eye" in Igbo. This phase will provide an in-depth understanding of the conceptual metaphors, their meanings, and how they are used in the Igbo language.

The quantitative aspect of the study will involve a frequency analysis of the metaphorical expressions related to eye in Igbo. The mixed-methods approach used in this study allows for a comprehensive understanding of the research, combining the strengths of both qualitative and quantitative methods. The research instrument used in this study is AntConc, a freeware, cross-platform corpus analysis toolkit developed by Laurence Anthony. Designed primarily for classroom use, AntConc offers a robust set of features, including concordance analysis, word and keyword frequency generators, cluster and lexical bundle analysis, and word distribution

mapping. Despite its simplicity, AntConc has proven highly effective in educational settings. While not as comprehensive as commercial products, AntConc provides essential tools for corpus analysis, along with an intuitive interface and freeware license, making it a versatile and accessible solution for researchers and educators.

### **3.2 Data Collection and Annotation Method**

This study employed a corpus-based approach using AntConc software to collect and analyze the data. The corpus was queried using the "Order by Value" function to extract relevant instances of metaphorical usage. To capture contextual information, the token size was set to 25 tokens. Additionally, the left and right context settings were configured to 4L and 4R, respectively, to provide sufficient surrounding text for analysis. Executing the search yielded a total of 3,850 hits, providing a robust dataset for examining metaphorical usage of the eye (Anyá) in Igbo.

This study utilizes the tone marking convention developed by Green and Igwe (1963) for annotating Igbo language data. The convention is as follows:

- High tone: left unmarked, Mid tone: indicated by a macron (ā), Low tone: marked with a grave accent (̀). This tone marking system ensures accurate representation and analysis of the Igbo language data.

### **4.0 Data Presentation and Analysis**

This section explores the metaphorical representations of the eye (Anyá) in Igbo, addressing research questions on conceptualization, quantitative analysis, and implications for understanding Igbo thought and perception.

#### 4.1 Metaphorical Representations of the Eye (Anya) in Igbo

The eye, a vital organ of sight, plays a crucial role in human activities and perception. In Igbo culture, the eye is revered as a symbol of guidance, illumination, and insight. This significance is reflected in the various metaphorical expressions related to the eye, highlighting its importance in Igbo intra-cultural oral communication (Emezue, 2020). According to Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) conceptual metaphor theory, linguistic metaphorical expressions reveal how speakers conceptualize abstract concepts. This study presents 64 examples of eye-related metaphorical expressions, collected through corpus-based research, demonstrating the diverse ways the eye (anya) is conceptualized in Igbo. These expressions are represented in various forms, including spoken language, songs, and other forms of cultural expression.

**Table 1: Eye (Anya) Metaphorical Expressions in Igbo**

| <b>Anya Expressions</b>                        | <b>Translation</b>                      | <b>Associated Conceptualizations</b> |
|--|---|--------------------------------------|
| 1. A hūrù m̄ ụmù m n'anya                      | I love my children                      | Love                                 |
| 2. Ngozi ahūghī dī ya n'anya                   | Ngozi does not love her husband         | Love                                 |
| 3. Okeke gà-àbia màọburụnà ọ hūrù nwaya n'anya | Okeke will come if he loves his child   | Love                                 |
| 4. Ēnweghī ihekariri Chukwu ihū m̄madù n'anya  | Nothing surpasses Gods love for someone | Love                                 |

|   |   |      |
|---|---|------|
| 5. Ọ bụrùnà ì hùrù<br>m n'anya, M gà-<br>àma            | If you love me, I will<br>know                            | Love |
| 6. Ị hụ mmadù<br>n'anya, ìgòzieyā                       | If you love someone,<br>you will bless him                | Love |
| 7. A hughī m<br>yān'anya ọzọ                            | I don't love him again                                    | Love |
| 8. M bìàrà màkàrà<br>a hùrù m̀nwaya<br>n'anya           | I came because I love<br>his child                        | Love |
| 9. Ọ bụrùnà ọ hùrù<br>gị n'anya, ọ gà-<br>ènye giya     | If he loves you, he<br>will give it to you                | Love |
| 10. Nwaanyi ahù<br>kàrà-àtù anya di<br>ya               | That woman is<br>expecting her husband                    | Hope |
| 11. Ọ kàrà-èlè anyā<br>mà egō ọ gà-<br>abàta yan'akataà | He is still hoping to<br>get money today                  | Hope |
| 12. M nā-èlekwasi<br>Chukwu anya                        | I am hoping on God  | Hope |
| 13. M nà-èlè<br>anyagīechi                              | I am expecting you<br>tomorrow                            | Hope |
| 14. Ọ kàrà-èlè anya<br>nwa nkèya                        | She is still expecting a<br>child of her own              | Hope |
| 15. Emeka tūrù anya<br>ìgafè ùlè à, màrà<br>ọ dàrà      | Emeka hoped to pass<br>this examination, but<br>he failed | Hope |

|  |  |           |
|--|--|-----------|
| 16. Onyechorō ibī<br>ezindù kwèsìrì<br>ilekwàsì<br>Chukwu anya | One who wants to live<br>a good life should<br>hope on God | Hope      |
| 17. Òlilèanya m<br>bùnà ọ gá- àlọta                            | My hope is that he<br>comes back                           | Hope      |
| 18. Azuka lekwa siri<br>ya anya mà<br>òbiaghì                  | Azuka hoped on him<br>but he did not come                  | Hope      |
| 19. Nkechi nwèrè<br>anya ukwu                                  | Nkechi is greedy   | Greed     |
| 20. Ekwēlā kà anya<br>ukwu ghòriagī                            | Don't let greed<br>deceive you                             | Greed     |
| 21. E jìanya ukwu<br>mara ya                                   | He is known for greed                                      | Greed     |
| 22. Ha bù ndị anya<br>ukwu                                     | They are greedy<br>people                                  | Greed     |
| 23. Anya ukwubù<br>àgwà ọjọō                                   | Greediness is a bad<br>behaviour                           | Greed     |
| 24. O nwere anya<br>ukwu ego                                   | He has greed for<br>wealth                                 | Greed     |
| 25. Ọ piapùrù ya<br>mkpūrù kwùrù<br>n'anya                     | He flogged her<br>mercilessly                              | Intensity |
| 26. A hūsiela m<br>anya  | I have been through a<br>lot                               | Intensity |
| 27. O jì ùra mapū ya<br>nzuzù n'anya                           | He slapped<br>foolishness out of him                       | Intensity |

|   |  |                 |
|---|--|-----------------|
| 28. Kamà m gà-<br>èzuohī, agụ<br>ūgụwa m anya           | Instead of stealing, I<br>rather starve                  | Intensity       |
| 29. Ọ hụsiri anya<br>n'aka ndị nwēya                    | He passed through a<br>lot in the hands of his<br>owners | Intensity       |
| 30. N'ezīe Obi hiri<br>àsaà n'anya                      | Indeed, Obi was<br>careful                               | Carefulnes<br>s |
| 31. Lèzie anyā tupu<br>ìlụọ nwunyè                      | Be careful before you<br>marry a wife                    | Carefulnes<br>s |
| 32. O lèziri anya<br>mgbè ọ nà-<br>èsinriahù            | He was careful when<br>he was cooking that<br>food       | Carefulnes<br>s |
| 33. Ọ nà-àdimmāi<br>lēzi anya mgbè a<br>nà-anyà ugboàlà | It is good to be careful<br>when driving a car           | Carefulnes<br>s |
| 34. Mèchie anyā<br>,nyèreyā aka                         | Ignore him and help<br>him                               | Ignorance       |
| 35. Mèchie anyā<br>kwùọrọ ụmù gị<br>ugwọ akwụkwọ        | Overlook and pay<br>your childrens school<br>fees        | Ignorance       |
| 36. A naghī m èle<br>àgwà ya anya                       | I'm ignoring his<br>behaviour                            | Ignorance       |
| 37. E lelia nwaìtè<br>anya<br>ògbonyuọọkụ               | If you ignore a little<br>situation, it escalates        | Ignorance       |
| 38. Agwa Ada tūrù<br>m n'anya                           | Ada's behaviour<br>surprised me                          | Surprise        |
| 39. Nke àbù ihe ìtụ<br>n'anya                           | This is something<br>surprising                          | Surprise        |

|  |   |               |
|--|---|---------------|
| 40. Ngozi mèrè ihe turù anya                         | Ngozi did something surprising                            | Surprise      |
| 41. Òtùghì m anya, ọ ihe e jiri mara ya              | I am not surprised, that is what he is known for.         | Surprise      |
| 42. Ihe ọ nà-ème dòrò ya anya                        | He is certain about what he is doing                      | Consciousness |
| 43. Ihe Mazi Okeke mèrè e doghi ya anya              | What Mazi Okeke did was uncertain to him                  | Consciousness |
| 44. Nne m sìnà àgwà Nnàm edoghi ya anya              | My mum said that my fathers behaviour is uncertain to her | Consciousness |
| 45. Ihe ọbùlà gbàsara isī nri dòrò Amaka anya nkèoma | Anything that has to do with cooking is clear to Amaka    | Consciousness |
| 46. O dòrò m anya nà ụmụ nwoke nà-àgba mbò           | It is clear to me that men work hard                      | Consciousness |
| 47. Ọpịpị ekwentị edoghi m anya                      | Operating a phone is not clear to me                      | Consciousness |
| 48. Àla Naijiria bù òbòdò á hùrù anya na mbà Afrika  | Nigeria is a famous country in Africa                     | Fame          |
| 49. Nwoke ahụ bù okedibịa a hùrù anya                | That man is a well known doctor                           | Fame          |

|  |   |      |
|--|---|------|
| 50. Ọ̀ bù nwa a hụ̀rụ̀<br>anya ya n'ụ̀lò<br>akwụ̀kwọ̀ ya | He is a famous child<br>in his school   | Fame |
| 51. Ikenga bù dinta a<br>hụ̀rụ̀ anya<br>n'ozobodo        | Ikenga is a famous<br>hunter in ozobodo | Fame |

The examples in this table illustrate the eye's role in representing various abstract concepts, including distance, love, time, carefulness, greediness, jealousy, distraction, and others (etc.). These concepts will be explored in greater detail in subsequent sections of this chapter, providing a deeper understanding of the eye's significance in Igbo thought and perception.

This study's findings support the notion that the eye (ányà) plays a vital role in Igbo conceptualization, highlighting the interconnectedness of language, culture, and cognition. The eye's metaphorical expressions reveal a complex and multifaceted understanding of the world, reflecting the richness and depth of Igbo culture.

## **4.2 Conceptualizations of the Eye (Anya) in Igbo**

### **4.2.1 Conceptualization of "Anya" (Eye) as Love**

The concept of love is complex and multifaceted, encompassing various emotions, behaviors, and relationships. Notably, the eye, symbolizing sight and perception, plays a pivotal role in expressing and understanding love.

Within the framework of Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT), "Anya" (Eye) serves as the source domain for understanding love as the target domain. This metaphorical mapping underscores the significance of visual perception, gaze, and eye contact in comprehending love.

The linguistic expressions "ihùnanya" (to love), "ihù" (to see), and "hùrù" (to look) exemplify this metaphorical relationship, emphasizing the centrality of visual perception in love's conceptualization. The consistent use of "Ihùnanya" with "Anya" reinforces love's visual nature, highlighting the interconnectedness of sight, perception, and affection.

The source domain ("Anya") profoundly influences love's understanding by emphasizing visual cues, gaze, and perception. This emphasis underscores the importance of non-verbal communication, intimacy, and emotional expression through visual means. The metaphorical mapping between "Anya" and love reveals a nuanced understanding of love's intrinsic relationship with visual experience. This relationship is characterized by the significance of gaze, eye contact, and visual perception in conveying affection, attachment, and emotional connection.

As evidenced by linguistic examples, "Anya" symbolizes affection and attachment, illustrating the conceptualization of love as a visual and perceptual experience.

Example(1)

(1). A hùrù m ùmù m n'anya

1SG see-PST me children me PREP eye

(I love my Children)

(2). Ngozi ahūghī di yan'anya

Ngozi see-NEG husband 3SG PREP eye

(Ngozi does not love her husband)

(3). Okeke gà-àbia mà ọburunà ọ hùrù nwayan'anya

Okeke come-FUT COND it is DEM it see-PST child him PREP eye

(Okeke will come if he loves his child)

(4). È nweghī ihekariri Chukwu ihù mmadù n'anya

There own-NEG something greater God PREP see person PREP eye

(Nothing surpasses God's love for someone)

These examples demonstrate the pervasive use of "Anya" in expressing love, reinforcing the visual metaphors underlying this concept. The intricate relationship between "Ihụnanya" and "Anya" underscores the complexity of love's conceptualization, highlighting the interplay between visual perception, emotional expression, and non-verbal communication.

#### **4.2.2 Conceptualization of "Anya" (Eye) as Hope and Expectation**

Hope and expectation are essential human experiences enabling individuals to envision a better future, cope with challenges, and strive for improvement. In Igbo, the eye ("Anya") transcends physical sight, symbolizing hope, expectation, and aspiration. Notably, Igbo language employs two distinct expressions to convey hope and expectation: "olileanya" and "ileanya." While "ileanya" literally translates to "to look," it idiomatically conveys the concept of expectation. Conversely, "olileanya," derived from the gerundive form of "look," encompasses the notion of hope. Despite their literal meanings, both expressions convey abstract concepts, underscoring the complex relationship between visual perception and cognitive processes in Igbo.

Within the framework of Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT), "Anya" (Eye) serves as the source domain, mapping onto the target domains of hope and expectation. This metaphorical extension highlights visual and perceptual aspects of these concepts. The linguistic expressions "olileanya" (hope) and "ileanya" (to expect) exemplify this metaphorical relationship, emphasizing the centrality of visual perception in hope and expectation's conceptualization. The consistent use of "Anya" in conveying hope and expectation reinforces the visual nature of these concepts. The source domain (Anya) profoundly influences hope and expectation's

understanding by emphasizing visual cues, gaze, and perception. This emphasis underscores the importance of non-verbal communication, intimacy, and emotional expression through visual means. The metaphorical mapping between "Anya" and hope/expectation reveals a nuanced understanding of these concepts' intrinsic relationship with visual experience. This relationship is characterized by the significance of gaze, eye contact, and visual perception in conveying aspiration, anticipation, and emotional connection. As evidenced by linguistic expressions, "Anya" symbolizes hope and expectation, illustrating the conceptualization of these concepts as visual and perceptual experiences.

Example(2)

(10). Nwaànyị̀ ahụ̀ kà nà-àtụ̀anya di ya  
Woman DEM still throw-PROG eye husband her  
(That woman is still expecting her husband)

(11). Ọ̀ kà nà-èleanyā̀ mà egṑ ọ̀ gà-abàtayan'akataà  
3SG still look-PROG eye DEM money 3SG enter-FUT him PREP  
hand today  
(He is still hoping to get money today)

(12). M nā̀-èlekwàsị̀ Chukwu anya  
1SG look-PROG PREP God eye  
(I am hoping on God)

(13). M nà-èleanyagị̀ echi  
1SG look-PROG eye 2SG tomorrow  
(I am expecting you tomorrow)

These examples demonstrate the pervasive use of "Anya" in expressing hope and expectation, reinforcing the visual metaphors underlying these concepts. The intricate relationship between "ileanya" and "olileanya" underscores the complexity of hope and

expectation's conceptualization, highlighting the interplay between visual perception, emotional expression, and non-verbal communication.

#### **4.2.3 Conceptualization of "Anyá" (Eye) as Greed in Igbo**

Greed is a fundamental human emotion characterized by an excessive desire for wealth, material possessions, or power. In Igbo culture, greediness is metaphorically represented through the concept of "Anyá ukwu," literally translating to "big eyes." This metaphorical extension underscores the visual and perceptual aspects of greed, highlighting the insatiable nature of desire.

In Igbo, "Anyá ukwu" is used to convey greediness, avarice, and covetousness. The eye metaphor emphasizes the idea that greed is often driven by an excessive focus on material wealth and possessions, which are perceived through the eyes. The examples provided will illustrate the various forms of "Anyá ukwu" in expressing greediness, demonstrating the significance of visual cues and perception in shaping this complex emotion. Within the framework of Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT), "Anyá" (Eye) serves as the source domain, mapping onto the target domain of greed. This metaphorical mapping emphasizes the significance of visual perception and gaze in shaping greed's conceptualization.

The linguistic expression "Anyá ukwu" is used to convey greed, avarice, and covetousness, illustrating the eye metaphor's centrality in Igbo language. The consistent use of "Anyá ukwu" reinforces the visual nature of greed, underscoring the idea that excessive desire is often driven by an intense focus on material wealth and possessions, perceived through the eyes. The metaphorical mapping between "Anyá" and greed reveals a nuanced understanding of this complex emotion's intrinsic relationship with visual experience. This relationship is characterized by the

significance of gaze, eye contact, and visual perception in conveying excessive desire and harmful intentions. As evidenced by linguistic expressions, "Anya ukwu" symbolizes greed, illustrating the conceptualization of this emotion as a visual and perceptual experience.

Example (3)

(19). Nkechi nwèrè anyaukwu

Nkechi has eye big

(Nkechi is greedy)

(20). Ekwēlā kà anyaukwu gi ghòrĩa gĩ

Agree-NEG like eye big deceive you

(Don't be deceived your greed)

(21). E jì anyaukwu mara ya

They hold eye big know him

(He is known for greed)

(22). Ha bù ndị anya ukwu

3SG AUX people eye big

(They are greedy people)

In the examples above, the metaphorical use of "Anya" (Eye) to convey greediness is evident, with "Anya ukwu" (big eyes) consistently representing excessive desire, avarice, and covetousness. The eye metaphor highlights the visual and perceptual aspects of greed, emphasizing the significance of gaze and eye contact in shaping this complex emotion. The consistent use of "Anya ukwu" in expressing greediness underscores the importance of this metaphor in Igbo, revealing a nuanced understanding of greed as an excessive and harmful desire.

#### **4.2.4 Conceptualization of "Anyā" (Eye) as Intensity in Igbo**

Intensity refers to the degree or magnitude of an action, emotion, or experience. In Igbo, "Anyā" (Eye) is used metaphorically to convey intensity, emphasizing the visual and perceptual aspects of extreme experiences. This metaphorical extension highlights the significance of gaze and eye contact in shaping the understanding of intensity. In Igbo culture, "Anyā" is employed to express the severity or magnitude of an action, emotion, or suffering.

The examples provided illustrate the various forms of "Anyā" in conveying intensity, demonstrating its role in shaping the understanding of extreme experiences. Within Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT), "Anyā" serves as the source domain, mapping onto the target domain of intensity. This metaphorical mapping emphasizes visual perception and gaze's role in conceptualizing extreme experiences. The source domain ("Anyā") influences intensity's understanding by emphasizing visual cues and perception. This emphasis highlights emotional expression through visual means.

Example (4)

(25).  $\text{O } \text{p}i\text{ap}\ddot{u}\text{r}\ddot{u} \text{ ya } \text{mkp}\ddot{u}\text{r}\ddot{u} \text{ o}\text{kw}\ddot{u}\text{r}\ddot{u} \text{ n'anya}$   
3SG flog-PST 3SG seed okoro PREP eye

(He flogged her mercilessly)

(26).  $\text{A } \text{h}\ddot{u}\text{siela} \text{ m } \text{anya}$

IMP see-PST 1SG eye

(I have been through a lot)

(27).  $\text{O } \text{j}\ddot{i} \text{ }\ddot{u}\text{ra } \text{map}\ddot{u} \text{ ya } \text{nzuz}\ddot{u} \text{ n'anya}$

3SG use slap slap-PST 3SG foolishness PREP eye

(He slapped foolishness out of him)

In the examples above, the metaphorical use of "Anyā" (Eye) to convey intensity is evident. Notably, "Anyā" is used to express the degree of suffering (sentence 26) or the magnitude of an action

(sentences 25, and 27). This distinction highlights the versatility of the eye metaphor in Igbo, emphasizing the significance of visual perception and gaze in shaping the understanding of intensity. The consistent use of "Anyā" in conveying intensity underscores its importance in Igbo culture, revealing a nuanced understanding of extreme experiences as visually and perceptually salient.

#### **4.2.5 Conceptualization of "Anyā" (Eye) as Caution or Carefulness in Igbo**

Caution or carefulness is a vital aspect of human behavior, enabling individuals to navigate complex situations and avoid potential dangers. In Igbo, "Anyā" (Eye) is used metaphorically to convey caution or carefulness, emphasizing the visual and perceptual aspects of vigilant behavior. In Igbo culture, carefulness is often expressed through the phrase "ilēzīanya," literally meaning "look well," but conveying caution and vigilance.

Additionally, "Anyā" is employed in various idiomatic expressions to convey degrees of caution or carefulness. Within Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT), "Anyā" serves as the source domain, mapping onto the target domain of caution or carefulness. This metaphorical extension highlights gaze and eye contact's significance in shaping cautious behavior. The metaphorical mapping between Anyā and Caution reveals a nuanced understanding of vigilant behavior's intrinsic relationship with visual experience. This relationship is characterized by gaze, eye contact, and visual perception's significance in conveying attention to detail and careful consideration.

Example (5)

(30). N'ezīe Obi hiri àsaà n'anya  
Indeed obi rub-PST seven PREP eye  
(Indeed, Obi was careful)

(31). Lèzieanyā tupu ì luọ nwunyè

Look eye before 2SG marry wife

(Be careful before you marry a wife)

(32). O lèzirì anyamgbè ọ nà-èsinri ahù

3SG look-PST eye when 3SG AUX cook-PROG food DEM

(He was careful when he was cooking that food)

The examples illustrate the metaphorical use of "Anyā" (Eye) to convey caution or carefulness in Igbo. Notably, sentence I, "N'ezīe Obi hirì àsaà n'anya" (Indeed, Obi was careful), demonstrates the use of "Anyā" in an idiomatic expression, distinct from the phrase "ilēzīanya," highlighting the versatility of "Anyā" in conveying caution. This emphasizes the significance of visual perception and gaze in shaping the understanding of caution in Igbo culture. The consistent use of "ilēzīanya" and other idiomatic expressions underscores the importance of vigilance and attention to detail, revealing a nuanced understanding of carefulness as a vital aspect of human behavior.

#### **4.2.6 Conceptualization of "Anyā" (Eye) as Consciousness or Awareness in Igbo**

Consciousness or awareness is a complex cognitive process involving attention to information, situations, or behaviors. In Igbo language and culture, "Anyā" (Eye) plays a significant role in conveying consciousness, emphasizing visual and perceptual aspects of attention. Within Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT), "Anyā" serves as the source domain, mapping onto the target domain of consciousness or awareness. This metaphorical extension highlights gaze and eye contact's significance in shaping attentive behavior.

In Igbo, attention is often metaphorically represented as "looking" at something, while ignoring involves "not looking." The

negative form of "ileanya" (to look at) conveys a deliberate lack of attention or consideration. The linguistic expressions illustrate the various forms of "Anyā" in conveying consciousness or awareness, demonstrating its role in shaping understanding. The source domain ("Anyā") influences consciousness' understanding by emphasizing visual cues, gaze, and perception. The metaphorical mapping between "Anyā" and consciousness reveals a nuanced understanding of attentive behavior's intrinsic relationship with visual experience.

Example (6)

(34). Mèchie anyā ,nyèreyā aka

Close 3SG eye help 3SG hand

(Ignore him and help him)

(35). Mèchieanyā kwùorọ umù gị ụgwọ akwụkwọ

Close eye pay-PST children 2SG fee book

(Overlook and pay your children's school fees)

(36). A naghī m èle àgwà ya anya

IMP NEG 1SG look character 3SG eye

(I'm ignoring his behavior)

These examples demonstrate "Anyā"'s pervasive use in expressing consciousness or awareness, reinforcing visual metaphors underlying this concept. The proverbial expression in sentence (37) underscores the importance of attention and consideration in preventing escalation, highlighting Igbo culture's nuanced understanding of consciousness, where visual perception and attention play a crucial role in shaping cognitive processes.

#### **4.2.7 Conceptualization of "Anyā" (Eye) as Surprise in Igbo**

Surprise is a fundamental human emotion, arising from unexpected events or experiences that challenge our expectations and

assumptions. In Igbo and culture, the concept of "Anyà" (Eye) plays a significant role in conveying surprise, emphasizing the visual and perceptual aspects of unexpectedness. The term "ìtụnanya" is commonly used to express surprise, highlighting the idea that something has caught one's attention unexpectedly.

This metaphorical extension underscores the connection between visual perception and surprise, where the unexpected event or behavior is seen as something that "hits" or "strikes" the eye. Within Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT), Anyà serves as the source domain, mapping onto the target domain of surprise. This metaphorical extension highlights gaze and eye contact's significance in shaping surprise. The metaphorical mapping between Anyà and Surprise reveals a nuanced understanding of unexpectedness' intrinsic relationship with visual experience.

Example (7)

(38). Agwa Ada tụtù m n'anya

Character ada throw-PST 1SG PREP eye

(Ada's behaviour surprised me)

(39). Nke à bù ihe ìtụnanya

Which DEM AUX something throw PREP eye

(This is something surprising)

(40). Ngozi mèrè ihe tụtù anya

Ngozi do-PST something throw-PST eye

(Ngozi did something surprising)

The examples illustrate the metaphorical use of "Anyà" (Eye) to convey surprise in Igbo, highlighting the significance of visual perception and gaze in shaping the understanding of unexpectedness. The term "ìtụnanya" and other expressions demonstrate the versatility of "Anyà" in conveying surprise, emphasizing the idea that unexpected events or behaviors are seen as visually striking or attention-grabbing. This underscores the

nuanced understanding of surprise in Igbo culture, where visual perception plays a crucial role in shaping emotional experiences.

#### **4.2.8 Conceptualization of "Anya" (Eye) as Confidence in Igbo**

Confidence is a fundamental aspect of human understanding, enabling individuals to navigate complex situations and make informed decisions. In Igbo language and culture, Anya (Eye) significantly conveys confidence, emphasizing visual and perceptual aspects of assuredness. Within Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT), Anya serves as the source domain, mapping onto the target domain of confidence. This metaphorical extension highlights gaze and eye contact's significance in shaping assuredness. The term "ido anya" (confidence, certainty) exemplifies this metaphorical relationship, implying confidence or self-assurance through visual perception. Various forms of "ido anya" convey degrees of confidence, ranging from absolute assurance to uncertainty or doubt. The metaphorical mapping between "Anya" and confidence reveals a nuanced understanding of assuredness' intrinsic relationship with visual experience.

Example (8)

(42). Ihe ọ nà-ème dòrò ya anya

Something 3SG AUX do sure 3SG eye

(He is certain about what he is doing)

(43). Ihe Mazi Okeke mèrè e doghi yaanya

Something mazi okeke do-PST AUX sure NEG 3SG eye

(What Mazi Okeke did was uncertain to him)

These examples demonstrate Anya's pervasive use in expressing confidence, reinforcing visual metaphors underlying this concept. The various forms of "ido anya" showcase Anya's versatility in conveying degrees of confidence, emphasizing visual perception's importance in shaping cognitive processes. This underscores Igbo

culture's nuanced understanding of confidence, where visual perception plays a crucial role in shaping self-assurance and informed decision-making.

#### **4.2.9 Conceptualization of "Anya" (Eye) as Fame or Popularity in Igbo**

Fame or popularity is a social phenomenon where individuals or entities gain widespread recognition and attention. In Igbo language and culture, the concept of "Anya" (Eye) plays a significant role in conveying fame, emphasizing the visual and perceptual aspects of being known or recognized. The term "imaanya" (to know, to recognize) is commonly used to express fame or popularity, highlighting the connection between visual perception and public awareness.

When someone or something is "imaanya," they are literally "in the eye" of the public, signifying widespread recognition and attention. Within Conceptual Metaphor Theory, Anya serves as the source domain, mapping onto the target domain of fame or popularity. This metaphorical extension highlights gaze and vision's significance in shaping public awareness. The metaphorical mapping between "Anya" and fame reveals a nuanced understanding of social recognition's intrinsic relationship with visual experience.

Example (9)

(48). *Ála Naijiria bù òbòdò á hùrù anya na mbà Afrika*

Land Nigeria is community imp see-PST eye in region Africa

(Nigeria is a famous country in Africa)

(49).. *Nwoke ahù bù oke dibìà a hùrù anya*

Man DEM AUX great doctor 3SG-PL see-PST eye

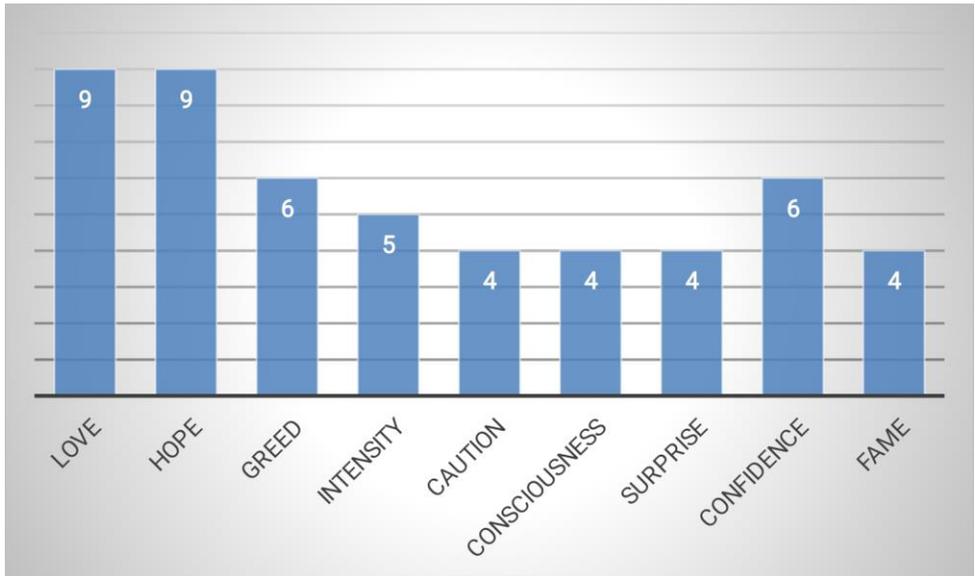
(That man is a famous doctor)

(50).. *Ọ bù nwa a hùrù anya n'ulò akwụkwọ ya*

3SG AUX child IMP see-PST eye PREP house book 3SG  
(He is a famous child in his school)The examples illustrate the metaphorical use of "Anya" (Eye) to convey fame or popularity in Igbo, highlighting the significance of visual perception and public awareness in shaping social recognition. The term "ihụ anya" demonstrates the importance of being "seen" or "recognized" in Igbo culture, underscoring the connection between visual perception and social status. This conceptualization of fame emphasizes the idea that being famous means being continually visible and present in the public eye.

The use of "ihụ anya" to convey fame highlights the Igbo cultural value placed on community recognition and social visibility. This metaphorical extension underscores the importance of public perception in shaping individual and collective identity, demonstrating the intricate relationship between visual perception, social awareness, and cultural values.

#### **4.3 Frequency Distribution of Eye Metaphor Concepts in Igbo**



*Fig 1: frequency distribution of data collected*

The frequency distribution graph presents the occurrence of 9 concepts related to the eye metaphor in Igbo language, based on an analysis of 51 sentences. The concepts represented are: Love, Hope, Greed, Intensity, Caution, Consciousness, Surprise, Confidence, and Fame.

### **Distribution of Concepts**

The graph reveals a varied distribution of concepts, with some occurring more frequently than others. The most frequent concepts, Love and Hope, occur 9 times each, accounting for approximately 17.6% of the total data each. The mid-range frequencies include Confidence, occurring 6 times (11.8% of the total data), and Greed, also occurring 6 times (11.8% of the total data). Intensity occurs 5

times (9.8% of the total data). Caution, Consciousness, Surprise, and Fame occur less frequently, with 4 occurrences each (7.8% of the total data).

### **Analysis**

The frequency distribution suggests that Igbo language users frequently associate the eye metaphor with abstract concepts such as Love, Hope, and Confidence. These concepts may be central to Igbo worldview and perception. The relatively high frequency of greed indicates its significance in Igbo thought and culture.

### **Ranking by Frequency Percentage**

Here are the concepts ranked in order of frequency percentage:

1. Love (17.6%)
2. Hope (17.6%)
3. Confidence (11.8%)
4. Greed (11.8%)
5. Intensity (9.8%)
6. Caution (7.8%)
7. Consciousness (7.8%)
8. Surprise (7.8%)
9. Fame (7.8%)

This ranking highlights the prominence of key concepts in Igbo, revealing the relative importance of each concept in understanding the eye metaphor.

## **5.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION**

This study investigated the metaphorical representation of the eye (anya) in Igbo, exploring its conceptualization and linguistic manifestations. The findings reveal that the eye is a central concept in Igbo metaphorical language, reflecting its cultural significance.

Specifically, nine conceptual metaphors of the eye were identified, including love, hope, greed, intensity, caution, awareness, surprise, confidence, and fame. These metaphors convey complex emotions, thoughts, and experiences, highlighting the importance of metaphor in Igbo language and culture. The study also demonstrated the efficacy of Conceptual Metaphor Theory in analyzing metaphorical language in Igbo. The findings underscore the significance of cultural context in metaphor analysis, emphasizing that metaphors are not universal, but rather culturally-specific. Overall, the study provides valuable insights into the metaphorical language of Igbo, contributing to a deeper understanding of the language and its cultural significance.

In conclusion, this study has successfully investigated the metaphorical representation of the eye (*anya*) in Igbo, revealing its conceptualization in various domains. The findings underscore the significance of metaphor in Igbo language and culture, highlighting its role in conveying complex emotions, thoughts, and experiences. The study's recommendations provide a foundation for future research on metaphorical language and cultural representation in African languages. Ultimately, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of Igbo metaphorical language, informing language teaching, learning, and cultural studies.

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