
The Embodied Symbolism of the Stomach and Bone in Igbo: A Cognitive Linguistic Study

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Abstract

Within the cognitive linguistics framework, the body and its different parts have been variously examined as source domains in metaphorical mappings. Different languages and cultures conceptualize body parts in ways which generally reflect human cognition. This paper investigates the conceptualization of two body parts; afo 'stomach' and okpukpu 'bone' in Igbo culture. In Igbo, the stomach rendered as 'afo' is largely viewed as an animate entity which can undergo bodily experiences for instance, the stomach can be good or bad, dried up or filled up. In addition, the bone rendered as 'okpukpu' is used to conceptualize emotions such as anger, attributes such as naughtiness as in i buisiokpukpu 'to be stubborn'. By exploring Igbo stomach and bone expressions sourced from both primary and secondary sources, the study shows that afo 'stomach' and okpukpu 'bone' are conceptualized as the centre of different kinds of emotions and feelings in Igbo. The stomach is also capable of being in various states; good and bad states. Furthermore, in the conceptualization of anger, both afo 'stomach' and okpukpu 'bone' represent different degrees of anger for instance iwetòrò yà afo 'anger blowing up the stomach', iwe iban'okpukpu 'anger entering the bone' and iwe erughin'okpukpu

'anger not getting to the bone' It is also shown that various forms of empathy are captured in the conceptualization of the Igbo stomach 'afọ'. It can be concluded that these conceptualizations pinpoint an underpinning in the expression of cultural meaning in the language.

Keywords: Igbo cognitive linguistics embodiment; conceptual metaphor body-part metaphors

Introduction

Research in cognitive linguistics has consistently demonstrated that bodily experience provides a primary foundation for abstract thought (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). Across languages, body parts serve as conceptual anchors for emotions, moral evaluation, and social reasoning. In Igbo, while the body part *obi* 'heart' has received scholarly attention, comparatively little work has focused on *afọ* 'stomach' and *ọkpukpu* 'bone', despite their prominence in everyday discourse.

This paper investigates how these two body parts function metaphorically and metonymically in Igbo. It argues that *afọ* encodes emotional and moral interiority, whereas *ọkpukpu* encodes depth, resistance, and resilience. The study primarily seeks to account for the conceptualizations associated with the body parts; *afọ* 'stomach' and *ọkpukpu* 'bone' in Igbo in addition to identifying the cultural and cognitive factors that influence these conceptualizations. By examining how these terms are used in various contexts, we aim to uncover the cultural and cognitive underpinnings that inform their metaphorical extensions and semantic nuances. The central research question guiding this study is: What insights can be gained from the conceptualization of *afọ* 'stomach' and *ọkpukpu* 'bone' in Igbo?

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The Igbo language belongs to the Kwa subgroup of the Niger Congo language family. It is primarily spoken by the Igbo people found in the south eastern part of Nigeria :Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo states. Igbo is also spoken in some parts of Delta and River states in the south-southern part of Nigeria. Igbo is a tone language with three distinctive tones: high, low and down step. The typical sentence structure in Igbo follows a subject-verb-object order. Igbo has a complex system of verb conjugation that indicates tense, aspect, negation, and mood and the pronouns are marked. The language distinguishes between perfective and imperfective aspects, marks present, past and future tenses while negation involves specific markers that precede the verb.

The rest of the paper is organized as follows; section 2 explicates concepts relevant to the study while section 3 provides the methodology. In Section 4, the data is presented and discussed. Section 5 forms the conclusion of the study.

2.0 Literature Review

This section goes into conceptual explications beginning with the notion of symbolism.

2.1 Symbolism in Cognitive Linguistics

In cognitive linguistics, symbolism is understood holistically as the motivated relationship between linguistic form, conceptual structure, embodied experience, and cultural knowledge. Symbolism is therefore not limited to sound alone, but encompasses the interaction of phonological form, morphological structure, semantic content, pragmatic context, and culturally shared models.

Within this perspective, body-part expressions in Igbo are symbolic because they activate entrenched conceptual associations grounded in bodily experience and cultural interpretation. The stomach ‘*afọ*’ symbolizes interiority, emotion, and moral character due to its experiential role as a container for ingestion, digestion, and internal sensation. The bone ‘*ọkpụkpụ*’ symbolizes hardness, depth, endurance, and resistance because of its physical properties and role as the innermost structural support of the body.

Sound symbolism constitutes one layer of this broader symbolic system. The labiovelar plosive /kp/ and reduplicated consonantal structure in *ọkpụkpụ* iconically evoke hardness, density, and resistance, reinforcing conceptual metaphors such as STUBBORNNESS IS HARDNESS and DEPTH IS SEVERITY. However, these phonological cues operate in concert with image schemas (DEPTH, FORCE), metaphorical mappings, metonymic shifts, and cultural models of emotion and social power.

Symbolism in this study is therefore treated as a multi-level cognitive phenomenon in which meaning emerges from the convergence of embodiment, metaphor, metonymy, phonological motivation, and culturally shared inferential patterns.

2.2 Conceptualization

Conceptualization refers to how individuals mentally construct and organize their experiences and knowledge about the world. Within cognitive linguistics, it is often understood as a process through which abstract ideas and perceptible experiences are shaped into mental representations. Cognitive linguists like Lakoff and Johnson (1980) argue that our conceptual systems are largely metaphorical, asserting that we understand complex ideas through more familiar, concrete experiences.

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Conceptualization involves several cognitive mechanisms, including categorization, analogy, and metaphor. Categorization allows us to sort experiences into meaningful groups, facilitating communication. For instance, the prototypicality effect in categorization allows that members of a category can be more or less central to the category concept (Rosch, 1978). Analogy allows individuals to draw parallels between unfamiliar concepts and familiar ones, making the abstract more accessible. Recent studies have shown that analogical reasoning is integral in problem-solving and creative thinking (Gentner & Holyoak, 1997). Lakoff and Johnson (1980) demonstrate how metaphors shape not only our language but also our thought processes. For example, the metaphor of "ARGUMENT IS WAR" influences how people conceptualize and engage in debates, framing disagreements as battles that should be won.

Conceptualization serves as a crucial lens through which we can examine the intricate relationship between language, thought, and culture. As both cognitive and cultural linguistics evolve, the ongoing exploration of how concepts are formed and understood no doubt yields rich insights into human cognition and communication.

2.2 Studies on Body parts

Sharifian (2018) investigates how the Persian term *del* which can refer to both heart and stomach, serves as a key conceptual base for expressing a range of emotions, thoughts, and personality traits. The term is deeply embedded in Persian language and culture, acting as a "memory bank" for cultural conceptualizations, especially those influenced by Sufi philosophy and Iranian traditional medicine. Expressions involving *del* as noted by Sharifian conceptualize emotions, desires, patience, courage, and

even thoughts, linking the body with psychological and spiritual faculties. The author posits that the body-part term *del* is metaphorically and metonymically used to frame various human experiences such as love, anxiety, compassion, and intellectual activity. For instance, *del-baakhtan* refers to "losing one's heart" or falling in love, and *del-am tang shodeh* (my heart is tight) expresses the feeling of missing someone. Sharifian highlights the cultural influence on embodied cognition, where Persian speakers' conceptualizations are filtered through cultural models shaped by historical and philosophical traditions.

Baş (2018) explores how *ciğer* is used figuratively in Turkish to represent various abstract concepts, focusing on metaphors and metonymies derived from this body part. Baş avers that in Turkish, *ciğer* can stand for either liver or lung, depending on the context, and is used to express a range of emotions, including sadness, pity, and love. The study identifies several cognitive models where *ciğer* is conceptualized as a locus for emotions (e.g., sadness and love), a container for personal experiences, and an entity vulnerable to damage. For example, the idiom *ciğeriyanmak* (one's liver-lung burns) expresses intense sorrow. Similar to *del* in Persian, *ciğer* is also connected to personhood and emotional experience, such as in the expression *ciğirim* (my liver-lung) used affectionately for a loved one. Baş's work emphasizes the cultural specificity of these embodied metaphors, where the liver-lung system plays a central role in Turkish figurative language.

In the Igbo language, the study of body part terms has garnered attention due to its rich cultural and cognitive implications. Body parts in Igbo, like in many other languages, are not only used to describe physical attributes but also serve as metaphors and idioms

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that convey deeper meanings and cultural values. Extant studies have explored conceptualizations associated with such body part as *obi* ‘heart’ (Okoye 2024), Amaechi and Nwosu (2023), Okoye and Mmadike (2016) to mention but a few.

Amaechi and Nwosu (2023) examine the grammar of body-part terms in Igbo. They present an inventory of expressions used for body parts and highlight the complex nominal expressions involving associative constructions. Their research delves into how these terms relate to spatial relations and fixed idioms, providing a comprehensive overview of the syntactic constructions used in Igbo.

Okoye and Mmadike (2016) focus on the meaning and interpretation of Igbo body-parts based idioms. The study employs a cognitive linguistics framework to analyze how idioms pertaining to body parts are interpreted. Okoye and Mmadike’s research reveals that the figurative meanings of these idioms are achieved through conventional knowledge, metaphor, and metonymy. The study underscores the role of cognitive mechanisms in the interpretation of idiomatic expressions in Igbo. Okoye (2024) investigates various conceptualizations associated with *obi* ‘heart’ in Igbo and submits that the heart is conceptualized as the centre of emotions, capable of various kinds of movements and having various forms of endearments and empathy.

Comparative studies on body part metaphors in other languages further provide valuable insights into the universality and variability of these expressions. For example, the study by Okoye and Makinde (2025) explores the heart in Igbo and Yoruba from a comparative perspective and submit that in both languages, the heart is metaphorically constructed as a fragile object, a container,

a seat of thought and emotion, and even a moral compass. They also note that key differences emerge in the religious and metaphysical loading associated with each language. Odebunmi (2010) explores body part metaphors in Nigerian English, highlighting the similarities and differences in metaphorical usage across languages. Such comparative analyses help to contextualize the findings from Igbo within a broader linguistic and cultural framework.

The present study builds on these studies with a view to further elucidate the intricate ways in which the Igbo language encapsulates cultural knowledge and cognitive processes through the use of the body parts *afọ* ‘stomach’ and *ọkpukpu* ‘bone’ .

3.0 Methodology

Data for this study were collected through semi-structured interviews with native Igbo speakers, consultation of Igbo dictionaries, and introspective native-speaker competence. Expressions were analyzed using cognitive-linguistic tools to identify metaphorical mappings, metonymic relations, image schemas, and inferential processes. Conceptual Metaphor Theory (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980) which posits that abstract domains are systematically structured through mappings from concrete, embodied source domains was deployed in the analysis in view of the fact that body parts are especially productive source domains because they are experientially salient and culturally elaborated.

Given that meaning is grounded in bodily experience, embodiment and Image Schemas were also deployed as recurrent sensorimotor experiences give rise to image schemas such as CONTAINER, DEPTH, FORCE, and PATH (Johnson, 1987). In the Igbo data, *afọ* profiles the CONTAINER schema, while *ọkpukpu* profiles DEPTH and RESISTANCE schemas.

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Furthermore, some of the Igbo expressions instantiate metonymy whereby a body part stands for an emotional or psychological state e.g. STOMACH FOR MORAL CHARACTER. Hence, metonymy frequently interacts with metaphor, producing layered conceptualizations. In the presentation of data below, all but high tones are marked.

4.0 Data Presentation and Discussions

Table 1 : Afọ ‘stomach’ expressions in Igbo

S/N	Afọ ‘stomach’ Expressions	Meaning
1	Egwù a dīghī àtụ afọ Ò buruuzò	‘undaunted brevity in the face of adversity’
2	Irījū āfō	‘ being in a state of wealth / affluence’ Also refers to pregnancy
3	Inwē afọ ọjūjū	‘being in a state of satisfaction’
4	Inwē afọ ọma	‘being kindhearted’
5	Afọ itā mmiṛī	‘extreme wickedness’
6	Afọ njō	‘extreme bitterness’
7	Iweitō āfō	‘being extremely angry’
8	Ụraijū onye nwūrū ānwū afọ	‘being eventually satisfied by erstwhile desires/ cravings’
9	Ṅsiadīghī anọ n’afọ esi isi	‘Only open matters can be addressed’
10	Ịbụ afọ ejuana	‘being insatiable’

Table 2: ọkpukpu ‘bone’ expressions in Igbo

S/N	Ọkpukpu Expressions	Meaning
1	Ibū isiọkpukpu	‘to be stubborn’
2	ìbèrè ùrù bèrè ọkpukpu	‘utilizing both profit and loss
3	Iwe ibà n’ọkpukpu	‘excessively angry’/ deep irritation or grievances
4	Iwe erūghī n’ọkpukpū	‘not being seriously irritated/ shallow irritation’
5	Nkitā adīghī àtā ọkpukpu a nyàwàrà yà n’olu	Relates to inability to tamper with what is put under one’s care.
6	Ibū sòsò ọkpukpu	‘skinny/ excessive loss of weight ‘being in a state of unprofitability’
7	Ọkpukpu nwa anụmànụ adīghī ike mà onye nwēyā nòdu yā nso (An animal’s bone is not strong when its owner is near).	Relating to social dynamics, revealing that people act differently when their superiors or owners are present. Often speaks to respect, power dynamics, or fear of authority.
8	Nkita siri si tųpuru ya ọkpukpu hapu zịara ya ọgu ya na ndi mmụọ	Relates to intrinsic ability capable of surmounting challenges.

The data in tables 1 and 2 above, with respect to semantic domains clusters around two key body parts namely Afọ (stomach) linked to emotions, morality, satisfaction, and human disposition and

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Ọkpụkpụ (bone) associated with resilience, anger, stubbornness, social dynamics, and physicality thus reflecting how Igbo culture uses the body as a metaphorical map for human experience. Thematically, the expressions are grouped as follows:

1) Anger & Hostility

i. Afọ i- tā mmirī
Stomach pre-dry water
Stomach dried of water
'extreme wickedness'

ii. Iwe i- tō āfō
Anger pre-swell stomach
Stomach swollen with anger
'extreme anger'

iii. Afọ njō
Stomach bad
Bad stomach
'wickedness'

iv. Iwe i- bà n' ọkpụkpụ
Anger pre-enter PREP bone
Anger entering the bone
'deep irritation'

v. Iwe e- rū- ghī n' ọkpụkpụ
Anger pre get NEG PREP bone
Anger not reaching the bone
'shallow irritation'

In the expressions in 1i- v, anger is linked to the stomach and bone showing how emotions are embodied in Igbo thought. The instance in 1i evokes the dehydration metaphor in which lack of water maps onto lack of empathy or compassion hence LACK OF WATER equals LACK OF HUMANITY. The conceptual metaphor ANGER IS A PRESSURIZED SUBSTANCE IN A CONTAINER accounts for 1ii thus increasing anger results in the imagined expansion (Swelling) of the stomach. In 1iii, the conceptual metonymy (STOMACH FOR MORAL DISPOSITION) combined with the CONTAINER schema is evoked. Hence, ruthlessness is conceptualized as negative contents within the stomach. Emotional intensity is conceptualized in terms of depth of bodily penetration thus the DEEPER the MORE SEVERE as instantiated in 1iv while the opposite applies in 1v because shallow emotional states fail to reach the deepest bodily structure.

2) Kindness & Satisfaction

i. Inwē afọ ọma

To have stomach good

‘Kindheartedness’

ii. Inwē afọ ọjūjū

To have stomach full

‘satisfaction’.

iii. Irī jū āfọ

To eat full stomach

‘Wealth/ affluence/ pregnancy’.

In 2i- iii, the stomach is linked to generosity, fulfillment, and abundance, suggesting that well-being and kindness are tied to

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nourishment and fullness. In the examples, the conceptual metonymy STOMACH FOR DISPOSITION combined with the CONTAINER schema applies. Both moral goodness and fullness are conceptualized as positive contents within the stomach.

3) Resilience & Bravery

i. Egwù adīghī àtụ afō Ò buru ụzò
Fear does not catch stomach it come first
The stomach is not afraid to take the lead
'undaunted brevity in adversity'.

ii. Nkitā siri si tųpuru yā ōkpūkųpų hapųziara yā ògù ya nà
ndim̄m̄m̄

Dog said throw it bone leave it fight with
spirits

'intrinsic ability to surmount challenges'.

3i and ii show that bravery and resilience are expressed through metaphors of stomach and bone, emphasizing inner strength and endurance.

4) Social & Moral Commentary

i. Ñsi a- dī- ghī anò n'afò esì isì
Excreta pre-be- neg stay in stomach smell
Excreta does not smell from the stomach
'only open matters can be addressed'.

ii. Ōkpūkų nwa anụmànụ a-dī-ghī ikē mà
onye nwē yā nọyā ñsō

Bone child animal pre-be-neg strength when
person own it stay it close

‘power dynamics shift when authority is present’.

iii. ìbèrè ụrù bère ọkpukpu
to cut flesh cut bone
‘balancing profit and loss’.

These expressions reveal Igbo philosophy about transparency, authority, and balance in social life. For instance 4ii employs symbolic reasoning about power relations where although bone symbolizes strength and resistance, that strength is shown to be relational not absolute. 4i encodes the embodied cognitive insight that profiles the STOMACH AS A CONTAINER schema with the ability to completely conceal substances that may cause latent harm. The expression is further grounded in embodied knowledge of smell as an external sensory cue.

5) Physical & Existential States

i. ìbū sòsò ọkpukpu
to be only bone
‘extreme thinness/unprofitability’.

ii. Ìbụ afo e ju ala
to be stomach neg full land
‘to be insatiable’.

iii. Ụra ijū onye nwū-rū ānwū afo
Sleep full person die-rv death stomach
‘eventual satisfaction of desires’.

The body becomes a metaphor for existential states such as greed, poverty, or delayed fulfillment.

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Linguistically, we observe such metaphorical mappings as *afọ* ‘stomach’ being mapped into emotions, morality, satisfaction (2i-iii,5iii) while *okpukpu* ‘bone’ maps into resilience, stubbornness, anger, and social relations (1iv-v, 3ii,4ii-iii,5i).

Some expressions are also seen to carry multiple meanings for instance *Irījū āfō* ‘wealth/ pregnancy’ in addition to the observed contrastive pair *Iweibà n’okpukpu* versus *Iwe erūghī n’okpukpu* depicting (deep vs. shallow anger) degrees of anger respectively. Additionally, anger appears to be measured by its physical reach thus while certain degrees of anger remain in the stomach, deep irritation enters the bone.

Culturally, with regard to the embodiment of emotion, Igbo worldview locates emotions in physical organs, showing a holistic view of body-mind connection. Furthermore, some expressions highlight values like kindness, transparency, and resilience. Authority and power relations are also seen to be encoded in metaphors (bone weakens in presence of owner).

On a comparative basis, the Igbo language, similar to other African languages, uses body metaphors to encode abstract ideas. The stomach as a metaphor for desire and morality parallels English expressions like “gut feeling” or “stomach for something.” Hence, while English uses gut feeling for intuition, Igbo uses the stomach to define moral character such as *afọ ọma* (good stomach/ Kindness) versus *afọ ọjọọ* (bad stomach/ wickedness). Furthermore, the bone as a metaphor for strength and stubbornness parallels English “hard-headed” or “backbone.”

The study presents a rich tapestry of Igbo metaphorical expressions where stomach (*afọ*) and bone (*okpukpu*) serve as symbolic anchors for emotions, morality, resilience, and social dynamics.

These metaphors embody Igbo cultural philosophy, linking physical organs to abstract states of being, and offering insight into how language encodes worldview.

Following below is a conceptual graph-style visualization using text-based nodes and connections to illustrate the relationships between themes and metaphorical expressions related to afọ ‘stomach’ and ọkpụkpụ ‘bone’ in Igbo culture

[Stomach (afọ)]

- |
- |-- Anger & Hostility
 - | |-- Afọ itā mmirī (extreme wickedness)
 - | |-- Iweitō āfō (extreme anger)
 - | |-- Afọ njọ (bitterness)
- |
- |-- Kindness & Satisfaction
 - | |-- Inwē afọ ọma (kindheartedness)
 - | |-- Inwē afọ ọjūjū (satisfaction)
 - | |-- Irījū āfō (wealth, affluence, pregnancy)
- |
- |-- Resilience & Bravery
 - | |-- Egwù adīghī àtụ afō Ò buruuzò (undaunted bravery)
- |
- |-- Social & Moral Commentary
 - | |-- Ñsiadīghī anò n’afọ esì isì (only open matters can be addressed)
- |
- |-- Physical & Existential States
 - | |-- Iḅu afọ ejuana (insatiability)
 - | |-- Ụrajū onye nwūrū ānwū afọ (eventual satisfaction of desires)

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[Bone (ọkpụkpụ)]

- |
- |-- Anger & Hostility
 - | -- Iweibà n'ọkpụkpụ (deep irritation)
 - | -- Iweerūghī n'ọkpụkpụ (shallow irritation)
- |
- |-- Resilience & Bravery
 - | -- Nkitā siri si tụtụrụ yā ọkpụkpụ hapụziara yā ọgù ya nà ndiimmūō (intrinsic ability to surmount challenges)
- |
- |-- Social & Moral Commentary
 - | -- Ọkpụkpụ nwa anụmànụ a-dī-ghī ikē mà onye nwē yā nọọ yā n̄sō (power dynamics shift with authority)
 - | -- ibèrè ụrù bèreọkpụkpụ (balancing profit and loss)
- |
- |-- Physical & Existential States
 - | -- ibu sòsò ọkpụkpụ (extreme thinness/unprofitability)

[Shared Themes]

- |
- |-- Anger: Different depths and qualities embodied by stomach and bone
- |-- Resilience: Inner strength and endurance in adversity
- |-- Social Philosophy: Transparency, authority, and balance

Following from the above discussions, one discovers that *afọ* is also used to denote kindness and wickedness. Phrases like “Ọ nwere afọ ọma” (someone with a good stomach) imply that the person is kindhearted while Ọ nwere afọ ọjọọ (someone with a bad stomach) depicts wickedness and lack of empathy. Conceptual metonymy (STOMACH FOR MORAL DISPOSITION) combined

with the CONTAINER schema explain these expressions where moral goodness is conceptualized as positive contents within the stomach and vice versa.

Some expressions in Igbo incorporate *afo*. For instance, “*afo juru ya/ O rijuru afo*” (full stomach) can mean contentment or satisfaction, extending beyond physical fullness to emotional or psychological contentment. Most times *iriju afo* is used to refer to pregnancy where the protruding belly is conceptualized as ‘contentment to full capacity’.

The expressions *afo oma/ afo ojoo* literally ‘good stomach/ bad stomach’ are used to indicate that the stomach is metaphorically linked to both goodness and wickedness.

Okpukpu is commonly used to represent strength and resilience. For example, “*isi okpukpu*” literally bony head is a metaphor for someone who is strong headed and adamant.

The analysis of *afo* (‘stomach’) and *okpukpu* (‘bone’) in Igbo reveals rich metaphorical and idiomatic uses that reflect the cultural and cognitive dimensions of the language. *Afo* is closely associated with emotions, desires, and well-being, while *okpukpu* symbolizes strength, resilience, and ancestral heritage. Through an understanding these conceptualizations, we gain deeper insights into the Igbo worldview and the ways in which language and culture are intertwined. This study contributes to the broader discourse on the relationship between language, cognition, and culture, offering valuable perspectives on the universal and culture-specific aspects of body part metaphors.

5.0 Conclusion

This study has delved into the rich and intricate conceptualizations of body parts in the Igbo language, focusing specifically on *afo* (‘stomach’) and *okpukpu* (‘bone’). Through the analysis of

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metaphorical and idiomatic expressions, we have uncovered the deep cultural and cognitive underpinnings that shape the usage of these terms.

The findings reveal that *afo* is not merely a physical organ but a symbol of emotions, desires, and well-being in Igbo culture. Its metaphorical extensions to represent courage, intuition, and contentment highlight the embodied nature of cognition and the cultural significance of the stomach as a center of both physical and emotional life.

Similarly, *okpukpu* emerges as a metaphor for strength, resilience, and ancestral heritage. The idiomatic expressions involving bones emphasize the value placed on endurance and the deep respect for lineage and ancestry in Igbo society. These findings illustrate how bones are seen as carriers of both physical strength and cultural essence, reflecting a worldview that honors the past and its influence on the present.

The study's implications extend beyond the Igbo language, offering valuable insights into the embodied nature of cognition and the ways in which language encapsulates cultural knowledge. The use of body part terms as metaphors and idioms provides a window into the cognitive and cultural frameworks that shape human experience. Future research could build on these findings by exploring other body part terms in Igbo and comparing them with those in other African languages. Such studies would further elucidate the universal and culture-specific dimensions of body part metaphors, deepening our understanding of the intricate interplay between language, culture, and cognition.

In conclusion, this study has demonstrated the profound ways in which the Igbo language conceptualizes body parts, reflecting the

rich cultural heritage and cognitive processes of the Igbo people. By examining the metaphorical and idiomatic uses of *afo* and *okpukpu*, we gain a deeper appreciation of the ways in which language serves as a mirror of the human mind and culture.

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