

A PRAGMATIC ANALYSIS OF ENGLISH AND IBIBIO IDIOMS

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Abstract

The purpose of the study is to investigate the idiomatic expressions and their pragmatic functions in the conversations of Ibibio English speakers in the light of Speech Act Theory. The study adopts a qualitative linguistic analysis method of research. After analyzing the 16 Ibibio conversations the study reveals several idiomatic expressions fulfilling 11 (eleven) pragmatic functions: asserting, vowing, reporting, scolding, entreaty, complaining, agreement, informing, claiming, and opposing and daring. These pragmatic functions have been classified based on four of Searle's speech acts: (1) representatives, (2) expressives, (3) commissives and (4) directives. Hence, the study shows that idiomatic expressions fulfill a satisfying number of pragmatic functions which in turn operate in facilitating conversations among speakers as they are stored in their memory and easily retrieved in diverse contexts. In addition, the study shows the high usage of negative pragmatic functions such as complaining, deploring, describing negative issues in comparison with positive ones in the conversations of Ibibio English speakers. It has been also observed that these positive and negative functions shed light on a multitude of cultural aspects in the Ibibio society. The study suggests pedagogical implication: the result that the idiomatic expressions perform various pragmatic functions and fulfill cultural aspects provides a rationale for including them in the Ibibio language as their main aim is to use the language appropriately and achieve cultural competence as well.

Key Words: Idioms, Ibibio Language, Ibibio Speakers, Speech Acts and Pragmatic Functions

Introduction

Idioms are generally defined as language-specific, relatively-fixed expressions where the meaning of the whole is not transparent from the meaning of the constituents of words (Lewis, 1997). A number of studies consider idioms as one subcategory of the more general lexical approach of formulaic language (DeCarrico, 1992). This lexical approach marks a difference between dealing with vocabulary as a stock of individual words with fixed meanings and lexis, which include not only single words but also combinations of words or lexical phrases that are stored in our mental lexicons and retrieved as unanalyzed wholes (Lewis, 1993). Some linguists call this combination of words "formulaic sequences" (FSs) and deal with them as a big umbrella that includes under it numerous sets of multi-word units that are arbitrarily used by native speakers. FSs are much more than strings of words linked together but it is obvious that much of the communicative content of language is tied to these phrasal expressions. They are also linked to a single meaning/pragmatic function, which gives them

considerable semantic and pragmatic utility (Schmitt, 2008). This study is posed to answer the following questions: what are the speech acts types found in the Ibibio Idioms? What are the social functions of the speech acts identified in the data? What is the preponderant of the speech act types found Ibibio Idioms?

The objectives of this study is to show how idioms interact within the Ibibio language to meet the communication needs and meaning interpretation using insights from J. L. Austin's pragmatic tool. This study is significant because it seeks to show the effectiveness of speech act theory as framework for the understanding, interpretation and analysis of idioms. The scope of the study covers idioms in Ibibio in four domains randomly sourced from seven Local Government Areas of Akwa Ibom State through Face-to-Face Communications.

1.2 Statement of the Research Problem

Some studies have investigated idiomatic expressions in spoken and written data, but few studies have only investigated idioms in Ibibio in

online and hard copy newspapers, and even these few studies have not analyzed the pragmatic functions of idiomatic expressions in Ibibio.

Consequently, many scholars have over the years provided literatures on the linguistic composition, structure, uses as well as meaning of idioms. Existing research on idiom to the best of my knowledge seems to revolve around the linguistic branches of morphology, syntax and semantics. For instance, Dabrowska (2018); Yusifova (2013); Booij (2002); Udosen, Offiong and Ekah (2017) and Mensah (2001) are extensive in their analysis of the structure of idioms - as words, phrases, sentence and their meaning but have ignored the pragma-sociolinguistic dimension which situates this linguistic device in the context for a more appropriate usage and interpretation. Pragmatic analysis argues that context, situation, and the society are factors that constrain the way language and its idiomatic expressions are used and subsequently interpreted. Against this backdrop, the intention of this study is to account for how context, societal norms, cultural values, environment, events, tasks, situations interact with language in the interpretation of idioms in the English language.

2.0 Review of Related Literature

2.1 Studies on Idioms

Existing linguistic studies centre on Idioms from different theoretical perspectives by different scholars, nationally and internationally. Scholars such as Ehineni (2016); Lawal (1997); Ogunwale (2012); Sotunde (2009); Olatunji (2005) and Delano (1983) have worked on different areas of Idioms, using diverse linguistic parameters. From the pragmatic perspective, Ehineni (2016) carried out a research on A Discourse and Structural Analysis of Yoruba Idioms. His work reveals how idioms are used to achieve different discourse acts and communicative goals by speakers. According to him, native speakers use the idiom as a linguistic strategy of negotiating deep ideas and intentions and also, Yoruba idiom is structurally characterized by some lexical and grammatical devices which help to reinforce its communicative intelligibility and textuality. Thus, his work examines the Yoruba idiom both functionally and formally and underscores that it is a culturally and linguistically rich significant part of Yoruba speech community. Ehineni (2016) study did not investigate speech act, hence, this study.

Lawal (1997) in his paper titled A Pragmatic Study of Selected Pairs of Idioms analysed twelve idioms. He uses the six hierarchical contexts of utterance to analyze the twelve idioms which are cosmological,

sociological, social, psychological, situational and linguistic so that listeners can interpret them appropriately. Although, he did not employ speech acts in the analysis of the idioms, this is the gap this study tends to bridge. Ogunwale (2012) in his work An Inferential Model Analysis of Idioms with Leadership Lexis explains how idioms can achieve in the management of leadership position in the society. He analysed his idioms within the semantic framework of Inferential Model Analysis. Ogunwale (2012) study is relevant to this study as this present study also deals with the interpretation of idioms' meaning according to context of use.

Further, Sotunde (2009) study in Idioms and Philosophy explains how idioms are philosophical. According to him, every idiom restates a philosophical reality of life. The philosophy of life which revolves around a good life consisting of personal comfort and pleasure commensurate with the fruit of a person's honest enterprise. The name given to this philosophy is goodlifeism. He analyses 2,500 idioms but he did not employ speech acts theory in his work. Olatunji (2005) in his work "Features of Yoruba Oral Poetry" also analysed idioms in his work, he describes the sociological context and content of idioms. Delano (1983) analyzed Yoruba idioms based on content and contexts. According to him, appropriate and correct usage of idioms is important in life. He did not employ speech acts in his work. This study has briefly explored reviews of different scholars on idioms without recourse to Austin's and Searle's Speech Act framework. This study is posed to demystify the intended meaning of idioms emanating from Ibibio speakers of the English language.

3.0 Theoretical Framework

3.1 Speech Act Theory

As a pragmatic tool, this study adopted J.L Austin's (1962) Speech Act Theory to explicate the meaning inherent in the Ibibio idioms. The two influential works in the area of pragmatics are Austin's *How to do things with Words* and Searle's (1969) theory of speech Acts (Oishi, 2006). Austin and Searle argued that language is used to "do things" and to perform actions. In the famous lectures that were published as a book entitled *How to do things with Words*, Austin (1962) presented a new picture of analyzing meaning. To Austin, meaning is described in a relation among linguistic conventions correlated with words/sentences, the situation where the speaker actually says something to the hearer, and associated intentions of the speaker. Actually, he directed the attention of linguists to the concept of acts behind utterance and meaning. Austin (1962)

argued that there are three kinds of acts which occur with everything we say. They are locutionary act, illocutionary act, perlocutionary act.

The locutionary act refers to the literal meaning of an utterance or the actual words, such as 'it is cold in here' referring to the temperature. The illocutionary act refers to the speaker's intention and the effect of the locutionary act or the function fulfilled by the locution (e.g. asking someone to turn on the heater). The perlocutionary act/effect refers to the effect of the utterance on the thoughts or the actions of another person (e.g. someone getting up and turning on the heater). The term 'speech act' has come to refer to the second kind of act, i.e. the illocutionary act since it is the one that presents the richest interpretations within pragmatic.

Essentially, Searle (1969) is much more concerned with revealing the linguistic mechanisms of the process of communication (which he achieves through a fairly thorough study of illocutionary acts). In an attempt to systemize Austin's work, Searle (1969) proposed a typology of speech acts based on felicitous conditions (the social and cultural criteria that have to be existed for the act to have the desired effect) and which became very influential. Thus, Austin and Searle's position can be formulated by saying that all forms of utterances not only express propositions, but also perform actions. Searle's typology of speech acts is actually rooted in a range of illocutionary verbs that occur in a given language. According to Searle, the speaker can perform by means of five types of utterances /speech acts as in the following classifications:

1. **Representatives:** The representative class of speech acts is to commit the speaker (in varying degrees) to something's being the case, to the truth of the expressed proposition. All of the members of the representative class are assessable on the dimension of assessment which includes true and false such as (swear, conclude, boast, suggest, put forward, deduce, complain).
2. **Directives:** The speaker's attempts to get the addressee to do something (invite, ask, order, command, beg, pray, entreat, invite, permit, advise)
3. **Commissives:** Acts which commit the speaker to some future course of action (promise, plan, vow, bet, oppose).

4. **Expressives:** Acts which express a psychological state (condole, apologize, deplore, welcome, thank).
5. **Declaratives:** Acts which bring about the immediate changes in the institutional state of affairs and tend to rely on extra-linguistic institutions, such as christening, declaring war, excommunicating, sentencing (a convict to capital punishment), pronouncing (a couple husband and wife). Like Austin, Searle's taxonomy of performatives includes five types of performatives but they only seem to coincide totally on this and on the fact that the 'commissive' type (in the name given to it as well as in the type of performatives included within it) is equal for both Austin and Searle. The importance of speech act theory in relation to this study is that it enabled the researcher to determine the speech acts behind the idiomatic expressions uttered by the speakers. In other words, it paved the way to analyze the *Ibibio* idioms within a theoretical framework in order to determine their pragmatic functions.

3.2 Research Method

The researcher adopted the qualitative method of data analysis since the research aimed at discovering how situation and contexts aid in the interpretations of meanings of idioms made by the speakers. Data for the study were purposively elicited from online and hard copies of Newspapers. Being purposive allows the researcher to select only respondents that are knowledgeable in the use of *Ibibio* idioms. The idioms are classified into four domains; (i) Idioms of admonition, instruction, warning and appeal; (ii) Idioms of criticism, mockery and resentment; (iii) Idioms of knowledge, information and assertion and (iv) Idiom of compliment, praise and encouragement each containing four (4) idioms.

4.1 Data Presentation and Analysis

Sixteen (16) idioms in different human endeavours were presented to reflect: (i) Idioms of admonition, instruction, warning and appeal; (ii) Idioms of criticism, mockery and resentment; (iii) Idioms of knowledge, information and assertion and (iv) Idiom of compliment, praise and encouragement each containing (4) idioms.

S/n	Idioms of admonition, instruction, warning and appeal in Ibibio
1.	Enọima! men etap ndien, men etab. Adodo die? Ayem iwod idem? (Enọima! Swallow saliva, swallow saliva, what is it? Do you want to kill yourself?)
2.	Mma mbok ku uñkpak iwad; ndad mmo utọ akak adado ke uwak awo se ibi idi? (Mma, please don't pluck my cray hair; where will I get so much money for the much people am expecting?)
3.	Se mi Papa, tre adinam yak awo uben anam ukpoppo nsa. Mkpọtie ado ifañ self? (See! Papa, stop allowing people to disrespect you.)
4.	Nko ami mmuubo fien fAt mbid, duok adudu ke ikọ ado. Asak ayem adiben akak isok mme udọ-abod? (I think I have told you to fold the mat and heave a sigh on the case; do you still want to take your money to the police?)

II	Idioms of criticism, mockery and resentment in Ibibio
5.	Amewewene akan ekpu ufok abasi sia aduusakko unie three thousand Naira se anọ anwan mfo adep afoñ esob ibaan. (You are as wretched as a church mouse as you cannot have three thousand Naira for your wife to but church women wrapper)
6.	What! Ekpekab ebo ke akenọ anie iwuod awo, Uto iwuod mfañ ado ke anọ important document abo anim? What! I wish you had given it to someone with a head. Is it that leafy head you gave important document to keep?
7.	Amesimme aboho, akere ke udo fien adoho aben ntaatam aben utuad? Udiọñoke ke ayin eka mmi ke do? Iwuod ufono. (You are very stupid. You thinking am like you that carries ntaatam and utuad? Don't you know she is my sister? You are crazy)
8.	Ukite mkpo kaña, ayem ado ntoño ubiak-uman. (You have not seen anything yet. This is the beginning of birth pang)

III	Idiom of knowledge, information and assertion in Ibibio
9.	Kpoñ idem ke Eka Iniobong ado abañ isoñ isiikaha ñkpọ. (Don't bother, Iniobong's mother is a fixed pot, she does not travel.)
10.	Udiọñoke ke ndidño afon ke idem uyin? (Don't you know that planting of fruit trees is good during childhood?)
11.	Diọño ke eto idaha ikpoñ ikappa akai (Realize that a single tree cannot make a forest)
12.	Nsido yak aben uyaya ekpad usen ndepe akeduok ke ntak zip? Yak nwed atoño ke mbuunọ ekpod inan. (Why did you throw away the beautiful bag I bought recently? When school resumes, I will pay you deaf.)

IV	Idioms of compliment, praise and encouragement in Ibibio
13.	Kom etaño! Awoden itaba adodo! Eka udeme ayin ami ado ata awoden ooh. Se mbiomo se etak ayin aben ñkañ keed. (What are you saying! A seven-in-one man! Eka Udeme, this your son is a real man ooh. Look at the load a little child carried at once.)
14.	Good! Yes! ayaara awodeen adodo. Mbok yak ekwak ubok eno akparawa ado, anam aboho. Yak usoro aka iso. (Good! Yes! That is Ayara awoden. Please let's clap for that young man, he has done well...)
15.	Ibohiimem inọ nkparawa mfin. Se mi, Ekpe Awo, akpedu ukotto usoro mfin ami, mmekod idem mmi (It won't be easy for boys today. Look here Ekpe Awo, if you don't invite me for the party today, I invite myself.)
16.	Ete Sam akedo ukpoñ ayin; idommodom awo, iwaahawaak awo (Ete Sam was a wall gecko; he does not bite anyone; he does not scratch anyone)

4.2 Data Analysis

This section of the study uses J.L Austin's (1962) Speech Act Theory to analyse the Ibibio idioms.

Idioms of admonition, instruction, warning and appeal in Ibibio

Datum 1

Locution: Enọima! men etap ndien, men etab. Adodo die? Ayem iwod idem? (Enọima! Swallow saliva, swallow saliva, what is it? Do you want to kill yourself?)

Illocution: Directive (making entreaties)

Perlocution/Interpretation: the speaker is requesting (advising) the addressee (Enoima) to calm down and stop talking so as not to offend her husband. When one swallows saliva, talking cannot take place. As an idiom, the expression is used to quiet a loquacious person.

Datum 2

Locution: Mma mbok ku uñkpak iwad; ndat mmo utọ akak adado ke uwak awo se ibi idi? (Mma, please don't pluck my gray hair; where will I get so much money for the much people am expecting?).

Illocution: Representative (asserting).

Perlocution/Interpretation: Ideally, gray hair (iwad) is only found on the head of the aged and symbolizes wisdom. To pluck it off is considered disrespectful. As an idiom, it means to mock at the person. This idiom is performing an act of assertiveness. The implication of this idiom is the speaker is telling his interlocutor not to make mockery of his financial state.

Datum 3

Locution: Se mi Papa, tre adinam yak awo uben anam ukpoppo nsa. ñkpo itie ado ifañ self? (See! Papa, stop allowing people to use you for games).

Illocution: Expressive (Complaint).

Perlocution/Interpretation: the effect of this idiom on the addressee is that the addressee should take precaution in order not to be used as an elderly man. Nsa' is an object of pebbles, shell or seeds used for fun play by young boys and girls. As an idiom, to allow oneself to be used for such a game means to make oneself an object of mockery.

Datum 4

Locution: Nkọ ami mmubo fien fad mbid, duok adudu ke ikọ ado. Asak ayem adiben akak isok mme udọ-abod? (I think I have told you to fold the mat (calm down) on the case; do you still want to take your money to the police?)

Illocution: Commissive (agreement)

Perlocution/Interpretation: the effect of this idiom is for the addressee to know that there has been an agreement already to settle their case without involving a third party. In the rural area, it is common for people to relax outside on a mat in the evening then fold it up at bedtime. As an idiom, to fold the mat means to end a quarrel.

Idioms of criticism, mockery and resentment in Ibibio

Datum 5

Locution: Ameweuwene akan ekpu ufok abasi sia adusakkọ unie three thousand Naira se anọ anwan mfo adep afoñ esob ibaan. (You are as wretched as a church mouse as you cannot have three thousand Naira for your wife to buy church women wrapper

Illocution: Expressive (scolding)

Perlocution/Interpretation: the effect is on the addressee to know that he cannot be as poor as a church rat not to buy wrapper for his wife. Ideally, there is usually no food in the church so any mouse that stays there will always lack food. As an idiom, refers to a person that is wretchedly poor.

Datum 6

Locution: What! Ekpekab ebo ke akenọ anie iwuod awo, Utọ iwuod mfañ ado ke anọ important document abo anim? (What! I wish you had given it to someone with a head. Is it that leafy head you gave important document to keep?)

Illocution: Expressive (asserting)

Perlocution/Interpretation: The speaker is expressing her attitude towards a gateman which a vehicle particulars were given to. As an idiom, to refer to a person's head is being made up of leaves means that the individual is a nonentity.

Datum 7

Locution: Amesime aboḥo, akere ke udo fien adoho **aben ntaatam aben utuuad?** Udiogoke ke ayen eka mmi ke do? Iwuod ufono. (**You are very stupid. You thinking am like you that carries ntaatam and utuuad? Don't you know she is my sister? You are crazy**)

Illocution: Expressive (scolding)

Perlocution/Interpretation: ñtaatam and utuuad are common insects nobody bothers about. As an idiom, to say that a man usually carries ñatata and utuuad means that he is promiscuous. The effect of this idiom is to caution the addressee to be mindful of what he says.

Datum 8

Locution: Anyem akap ado ñtoḥo ubiak-uman, anye amaadia iḥiḥak ubok General do. (**This one is just the onset of labour pain as he has offended the General's hand**)

Illocution: Representative (statement).

Perlocution/Interpretation: this is a factual statement that the addressee should know that more troubles await him for impregnating an Army General's daughter. Labour pain is usually very excruciating so to refer to an already bad situation as just the onset of labour pain.

III. Idioms of knowledge, information and assertion in EnglishIbibio

Datum 9

Locution: Kpoñ idem ke Eka Ini-aboḥo ado **abañ isoñ** isiikaha ñkpo. (Don't bother, Iniobong's mother is **abañ isoñ** (fixed pot), she does not travel.) Imaika Calabar ..., ika Port Harcourt...idiika common Etinan, idiehe, asak anḥ excuse. (**Don't bother because Eka Iniobong is a fixed pot, she does not go anywhere. We have gone to Calabar..., we have gone to Port Harcourt and even Etinan, she didn't come but always gives excuses**).

Illocution: Representative (assertion).

Perlocution/Interpretation: the effect is for people to know that Iniobong's mother is immovable. Abañ isoñ is an unmovable gigantic pot usually kept at a corner of a town hall for the storage of palm wine to be consume during their meetings. As an idiom

here, it means someone who does not like travelling.

Datum 10

Locution: Udiḥoḥo ke **ndidḥo afon ke idem uyin?** (**Don't you know that planting of fruit trees is good during childhood?**)

Illocution: Representative (informing).

Perlocution/Interpretation: the speaker is informing his listener on the need to start up a thing at early stage in life. Generally, fruit tress takes many years before it begins to bear fruits and if the planter is young, he will enjoy the fruit for a long time but if planted at old age, may never taste of the fruit in his life time. As an idiom, it encourages one to do something on time.

Datum 11

Locution: Diḥoḥo ke **eto isiidaha ikpoñ ikappa akai** (**Realize that a tree cannot Become a tree standing all alone**)

Illocution: Representative (claim).

Perlocution/Interpretation: this is factual assertion used to address the listener of the importance of togetherness. The denseness of big and large trees, shrubs, animals of different kinds and sizes is what make a forest and never a single tree. As an idiom, it means that there is limit to what a single person can achieve.

Datum 12

Locution: Nsido yak aben uyaya ekpad usen ndepe akeduok ke ntak zip? **Yak ñwed atḥo ke mbuunḥ ekod inan.** (Why did you **throw away the beautiful bag I bought recently? When school resume, I will pay you deaf ears**).

Illocution: Commissive (vows).

Perlocution/Interpretation: The speaker has vowed not to buy another school bag for the child when school resumes. As an idiom, it means that the speaker will have no interest when the child cries over a school bag.

IV. Idioms of compliment, praise and encouragement in Ibibio

Datum 13

Locution: Kḥ etaño! Awoden itibaba adodo! Eka udeme ayin ami ado ata awoden ooh. Se mbiomo se etak ayin aben ñkañ keed. (What are you saying! A seven-in- one man! Eka

Udeme, this your son is a real man ooh. Look at the load a little child carried at once.)

Illocution: Representative (statement).

Perlocution/Interpretation: This is a factual statement. The effect of this idiom is for the listener to know that he is embedded with strength. If a single person carries out a task meant for more people, such a person is seen as being endowed with the strength of seven people. As an idiom, it means the person is extremely powerful.

Datum 14

Locution: Good! Yes! **Ayaara awodeen adodo.** Mbok yak ekwak ubok eno akparawa ado, anam aboho. Yak isorọ aka iso... **(Good! Yes! That is ayara awoden (a real man). Please let's clap for that young man. Let the celebration continue ...**

Illocution: Representative (reporting).

Perlocution/Interpretation: The speaker is reporting a situation. The effect of this idiom is for the audience to know that the persona (groom) is not just a man but 'a real man'. As an idiom, to refer to a male as man means that he has perform a greater feat too difficult for an average man.

Datum 15

Locution: Ibohiimem inọ nkparawa mfin. Se mi, **Ekpe Awo**, akpedu ukotto usorọ mfin ami, mmekod idem mmi **(It won't be easy for boys today. Look here Ekpe Awo (lion), if you don't invite me for the party today, I invite myself.)**

Illocution: Directive (dare).

Perlocution/Interpretation: The speaker is addressing a youngman who has been given the attribute of a lion. The speaker dares the addressee that he will still attend his party uninvited. The lion is acclaimed the most powerful animal. To refer to a man as a lion means that he has done something beyond the strength of the ordinary person.

Datum 16

Locution: Ete Sam akedo ukpoñ ayin; idommodom awo, iwaahawaak awo (Papa Sam was a wall gecko; he does not bite anyone; he does not scratch anyone.

Illocution: Representative (assertion).

Perlocution/Interpretation: The speaker is making an assertion concerning a deceased. The effect of this idiom is for the audience to know that 'Papa Sam' has always been a peaceful man while on earth. The wall gecko is a noiseless and seemingly harmless small lizard whose presence in the house is rarely noticed. To refer to a human being as a wall gecko is an idiomatical means to say such a person very harmless and peaceful.

4.3 Discussion of Findings

Based on the research questions the study posed to answer. The study identified four types of illocutionary acts found in the data. According to J. Searle's classification of speech act, they are; Directives, Representatives, Commissive, and Expressives. The following idioms are found under directive.

1. Directive

Directive speech acts are used to make the addressee or hearer do something particularly what the speaker wants. Directives show entreaties and dare. Examples include;

- Enọima! **men etap ndien, men etab.** Adodo die? Ayem iwod idem? **(Enọima! Swallow saliva, swallow saliva, what is it? Do you want to kill yourself?) [datum 1].**
- Ibohiimem inọ nkparawa mfin. Se mi, **Ekpe Awo**, akpedu ukotto usorọ mfin ami, mmekod idem mmi **(It won't be easy for boys today. Look here Ekpe Awo (lion), if you don't invite me for the party today, I invite myself.) [datum 15].**

The directive speech acts appeared under the domains of idioms of admonition, instruction, warning and appeal in Ibibio and Idioms of compliment, praise and encouragement in Ibibio respectively.

2. Representatives:

Shardama (2015) citing Searle (1969) explains representatives as speech acts that tell when the speaker asserts a proposition to be true. Representatives comprise statements of facts, making claims, reporting, assertions which demonstrate the speaker's belief in whatever he is saying (Sharndama, 2015). Examples include;

- Mma mbok **ku uñkpak iwad;** ndat mmọ uto akak adado ke uwak awo se ibi idi? **(Mma, please don't pluck my gray hair; where**

model for the use of other languages. This study sought to account for how through pragmatic analysis, speakers of Ibibio can leverage on contextual hints- socio-cultural norms and values, environment, events, tasks, situations, speakers etc. in the interpretation of idioms in order to meet their specific communication needs, to show how the occupational, traditional, historical, beliefs and socio-cultural information of the Ibibio people can be revealed through the use of idioms; how through idioms the Ibibio can conceptualize and expression worldview. The study which was carried out within the theoretical framework of Relevance theory revealed pragma-sociolinguistics as suitable framework for the study of idioms. The study also reveals idiom as means to gain insight into the historical, traditional and the belief system of a society and a suitable means to meet specific communication needs through the framework of pragma-sociolinguistics. My submission is that learning Ibibio and English idioms should be introduced early enough in the curriculum of learners.

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