Perspective-Taking With Directional Suffixes in Igbo

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Abstract

The study of the interaction between space and language has led to numerous findings especially in the cognitive sciences. The domain of space is reflected in language through the linguistic forms (nouns, verbs, adverbs, prepositions, e.t.c.) that are used to show direction. In Igbo, extensional suffixes have been shown to involve directionality. However, none of the studies have touched on the construal associated with this class of affixes. Consequently, this paper explores the phenomenon of directional affixes in Igbo viz a viz how they encode different perspectives of a directional-motion scene. The study analyzes a corpus of Igbo texts and employs a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods to examine the usage patterns of directional affixes with a special focus on the construal expressed by these suffixes. The findings show that this class of suffixes involve two different perspectives or viewpoints of the directional scene. The first and primary perspective involves focusing on the direction toward the speaker as the deictic center, while the second perspective is secondary and less specific.

Key words: Igbo; Space; Direction; Deixis; Suffixes; Perspective

1. INTRODUCTION

Directional affixes are morphemes that attach to verbs, indicating spatial relationships and perspectives. This paper aims to analyse how these affixes contribute to the nuanced expression of perspective-taking in Igbo using the Cognitive Grammar concept of construal. Directionality is closely tied to the notion of deixis. Deixis is a linguistic term that refers to the way language can be used to indicate specific elements of a speech situation, such as time, place, or participant roles. This can be essential for establishing reference and understanding in spoken or written language. There are three main types of deixis: *person*, *spatial*, and *temporal*. Deixis is closely related to directionality in communication because it provides important cues about the spatial, temporal, and personal aspects of a discourse. Through deixis, speakers and writers can guide the listener or reader's understanding by directing their attention to specific elements of the context. For instance, saying "I am here" uses person deixis to convey the speaker's presence, while saying "It happened yesterday" uses temporal deixis to indicate when an event occurred. While the connection between deixis and directionality is implicit, we are more concerned with directionality in spatial deixis.

In some languages, directionality can be expressed using affixes. These affixes can convey various directional meanings, such as motion towards a location, motion away from a location, or motion in specific directions. The deictic function of extensional suffixes in Igbo has long since been noted by Lord (1975) with several more recent studies (Onukawa 1999, Uchechukwu 2008, Emenanjo 2015, e.t.c..) equally confirming the directional semantics expressed by these affixes. However, none of the studies have dwelt on the perspectives involved in the expression of the directionality by the affixes recognized in the language as 'directional'. Being that these suffixes not only express directionality as shown in the literature but also show different perspectives of directionality,

this work attempts to show how the Cognitive Grammar concepts of construal and perspective can shed more light on the nature of directional suffixes in Igbo. The paper develops as follows: section 2 gives an overview of some literature on deixis and directionality in other languages and Igbo, while section 3 dwells on the Cognitive Grammar concepts of construal and perspective. Section 4 focuses on the treatment of the directional suffixes in Igbo using the Cognitive Grammar tool of 'perspective'. Section 5 concludes the work.

2. DEIXIS AND DIRECTIONALITY

This section intends to briefly highlight the current situation of Igbo studies on directionality. To do so, we start by briefly explaining the concept of deixis and how it relates to directionality as well as showing some studies on the subject matter.

2.1 Deixis and Directionality

Deictic expressions have many different uses for pointing to things. One common use is called "exophoric" use, where deictics point to something in the nearby physical context. The way we show these ideas in language can be very different across languages. Linguists have looked at how this varies and what limits there are. Particularly in the context of spatial deixis, which is the most extensively studied and considered the prototype of deixis (Levinson et al. 2018), there's considerable variation in the semantic features embedded in deictic expressions. Spatial deixis, functioning as a reference form, serves to position a referent in relation to the "deictic center" and directs the attention of the recipient(s) to that referent for the purpose of conveying information about it. Languages exhibit considerable diversity in terms of the types of information encoded in demonstrative forms that pertain to referent identification, as has been documented by numerous previous typological investigations (e.g., Anderson and Keenan 1985, Diessel 1999, Dixon 2003, Levinson and Wilkins 2006, Weissenborn and Klein, 1982).

The most commonly observed distinction involves relative distance from the speaker, as evidenced by two-term systems like the English demonstratives "this" and "that." Accordingly, "this" is used to indicate a referent that is more "proximal" or nearer to the speaker, while "that" refers to a referent that is more "distal" or farther away from the speaker. Similarly, "here" designates an area encompassing the speaker, whereas "there" refers to a spatial region more distant from the speaker. Other languages demonstrate disparities between the number of pro/adnominal demonstratives (like "this") and demonstrative adverbs (like "here"). For instance, Indonesian distinguishes only two pro/adnominals, namely "ini" for 'this' and "itu" for 'that' but includes three adverbs: "sini" for 'here', "situ" for 'there' (close to the addressee?), and "sana" for 'there' (far away). In addition

to relative distance, spatial deictics in some languages introduce further deictic features such as visibility (see Anderson and Keenan 1985), elevation (e.g., Schapper 2014), or absolute frames of reference (Diessel 1999, Levinson and Wilkins 2006). In certain extensive systems, such as Inuktitut (Denny 1982) and Yup'ik (Anderson and Keenan 1985), it's customary for demonstratives to encode other non-deictic properties as well, including animacy, humanness, gender, number, and boundedness (Diessel 1999).

At this point, it is important to distinguish between two distinct, yet related terms associated with deixis: *directionals* and *locatives*. A "directional" typically refers to a grammatical element (such as an affix, adverb, or preposition) that indicates the direction or movement of an action or object. It is used to specify the path or trajectory of an action or to show the direction in which something is moving. For example, in the sentence "*He walked towards the park*," the word "*towards*" is a directional indicating the movement of the subject (*he*) in the direction of the park. On the other hand, a "locative" refers to a grammatical element that specifies the location or position of an action or object. It is used to indicate where an action takes place or where something is located. For instance, in the sentence "*The cat is on the table*," the word "*on*" is a locative specifying the position of the cat relative to the table. From the foregoing, the difference between both terms is that while directionals encode some aspect of motion, locatives do not. In some languages, the distinction between directionals and locatives may be clear-cut, while in others, they may overlap or be expressed in the same way. In this paper, no clear-cut distinction is made between directional and deictic-directional suffixes as both terms are interchangeably used throughout the work.

Talmy (1983) and Langacker (1987) and other scholars have noted that the process of positioning objects in relation to each other involves recognizing some form of uneven relationship between the object we're trying to position and the reference object. These asymmetrical relationships can be based on factors like size, containment, support, orientation, order, direction, distance, motion, or a combination of these. People are not only interested in describing where things are located in their surroundings, but also in conveying the direction of entities' movements through space. Movement in space is inherently connected to directionality. The perception of the direction of movement is always in relation to the backdrop against which it's observed. The way we perceive motion visually is also influenced by the background. Motion entails recognizing recurring shifts in spatial connections, encompassing changes in object location, orientation, and shape, or variations in the viewing angle from which objects are seen. Directionality is integral to movement. This becomes evident in our

comprehension of motion, which hinges on detecting shifts in the position or orientation of entities. The fact that motion is understood through our perception implies the existence of a standpoint that serves as a reference point for specifying directionality. Consequently, our understanding of the direction of entity movement relies on the capabilities of our visual and conceptual systems. Entities are oriented toward or away from us based on whether we perceive them as consistently transitioning to positions closer or farther away from us.

Belkadi (2021, p.166ff) reveals that languages all around the world use deictic directionality in one manner or another to situate events in space. A motion situation, or event, is one in which the position of a figure in relation to the ground is continuously changing (Langacker 1991; Fagard et al. 2013). This change in a figure's position typically involves a path, which is defined as the area connecting the figure to the ground and includes the concepts of source, traversal, and objective (Talmy 2000b; Zlatev 2007). Furthermore, the speaker, the recipient, a logophoric subject, or a well-known place could all serve as this deictic ground. According to her, the *ventive* (also referred to as *proximal* or *venitive*) and *itive* (also referred to as *distal* or *andative*) are the two most typical types of deictic direction, in which the deictic ground is, respectively, the goal (or desired goal) and the source. English's "*go*" and "*come*" verbs are common examples of verbs that indicate deictic direction. The verb "*go*" expresses iterative direction and designates a motion without a deictic anchor as its endpoint. In contrast, the verb "*come*" conveys ventive semantics whereby the position of the deictic anchor is its goal. For the remainder of the paper, we make no fine distinction between directionals and deictic directionals in Igbo.

2.2 Directional Suffixes in Igbo

The notion of directional suffixes in Igbo is not a popular subject matter. However, the

group of suffixes that fall under this category have been discussed by different authors in different ways. The central theme from which all discussion of the Igbo suffixes emanates is the distinction between verbs and suffixes, especially when they co-occur as compounds. Uchechukwu (2008, p.392) observes that, the distinction between *Verb1+Verb2* and *Verb+Suffix* compounds is not always clearcut. As a result, there is some doubt about defining a formal distinction between the two. Green and Igwe (1963, p.53) and Lord (1975, p.33) suggest that some suffixes in a Verb+Suffix environment have a verbal origin. Green considers the distinction between verb and suffix to be "largely semantic" (Green 1964, p.94), but he still utilizes the vowel harmony factor to identify _ta/_te as a suffix in examples (1a) and (1b) below:

1. a. Óbì kụ́-tà-rà   m   áká.
Obi hit-on-rV(past) I   hand.
'Obi hit me with his hand.'

b. Úchè bù-tè-rè ìtè áhù.
Uche carry-to-rV(past) pot det
lit. 'Uche carried the pot (in the direction of the speaker).'
'Uche delivered that pot.'   (cf. Uchechukwu, 2008, p.392)

The suffixes *-ta/-te* have been analysed in the literature as extensional suffixes. These suffixes have been described as the class-maintaining type of derivational affixes; in that they do not change the word class of the words to which they are attached. Upon close examination of these Igbo extensional suffixes, a fascinating observation emerges. Some of these suffixes possess distinct meanings, creating the impression of standalone lexical units. However, the differentiating factor is that these suffixes attach morphologically to verbs. Notably, their consistent conveyance of meanings across all instances mirrors the behaviour of conventional lexical items. Consequently, their meanings and positions display the stability characteristic of suffixes. When approaching these suffixes from this perspective alone, they seem akin to typical lexical components. Nevertheless, upon scrutinizing their contextual application, their status as suffixes becomes evident. Conversely, delving deeper into their semantics reveals a nuanced complexity not quite similar to that of individual lexical items. This intricacy arises due to the multitude of extensional suffixes present. While each Extensional Suffix (ES) maintains its unwavering meaning, a comparison highlights that one (*-ta/-te*) holds a greater association with directional meaning within the language. Uchechukwu (2008, p.392) observes that a suffix pair like *-ta/-te* has the primary function of expressing prepositional meanings in a Verb+Suffix construction. However, this feature is suppressed by including it in the group of extensional suffixes. He goes on to categorize suffixes like *-ta/-te* as 'prepositional markers.'

Welmers (1970) explanation of Igbo base formatives notes that semantically, they indicate motion or direction of various sorts, completion, inception. and comparable modifications of the action indicated by the preceding independent root or roots. Again, he makes no claim that every morpheme involved in Igbo verb bases has been unambiguously identified, but clearly, that a morpheme class of 'base formatives' can be recognized as distinct from verb roots as seen in (2).

2. Two-syllable verb bases in which the second syllable is not attested as an independent verb root, but is a suffix (Welmers 'base formatives') are:
With /-ta/ indicating action performed in the direction of the subject or speaker, or in his interest:
-zụ 'buy' : -zụta 'buy and bring, buy for oneself'
-wè 'take, pick up' : -wètà. 'bring'
-mụ̀ 'study' : -mụta 'learn, master'
-dọ 'pull' : -dọta 'attract, be attractive to'
-nwe 'obtain, get': -nweta 'receive' (Welmers, 1970, p.54)

As seen in (2), the suffix *-ta* is recognized by Welmers as a directional suffix. Additionally, he notes that the

direction expressed by the suffix is towards the speaker or subject. This observation is similar to Uchechukwu's example (1b). Onumajuru's (2008) classification of Igbo ES which is based on the Onicha dialect, attempts organizing the Igbo ES into different functional groups based on their morphosemantic features. She outlines seven sub-classes and a miscellaneous class of 'leftovers' which cannot adequately be put into these seven groups. The labels for her classes are *imperativeness, temporality, direction, contact, evaluation, reflexives, termination, distribution, causative, primal, and dispositional*. Of particular concern to us is her class of 'direction' as shown in (3).

2. Directive: this involves motion, locatives, dative and benefactive e.g.

motion = go   as in   bugo 'carry up'

dative   = ta   as in   wete 'bring for', chọta 'find'

locative = debe as in kpùdebe 'come nearer/closer'

benefactive = lu as in   wètalu 'bring for' (c.f. Emenanjo, 2015, p.237)

Here, the suffix *-ta* is described as 'dative', while the suffix *-go* is described as one of 'motion'. Her classes have been criticised for two major reasons. Firstly, some of her ES are verbs. Furthermore, her choice of names for some of her sub-classes of ES are quite confusing as shown in (3) above.

On the other hand, Onukawa (1999b) classifies the ES in Igbo into two broad classes: *i. inner formation:* these ES appear near the verb roots; *ii. outer formation:* these ES appear next to the class I ES followed by clitics before inflectional affixes. In his Class II ES, the suffix *-tA* is glossed as 'DIRECTION(AL)'. This is shown in (4):

3. a. bi + kọ + tA = bikọta
 live CONGREGATIVE DIRECTIONAL   'live together'
b. rị + go + tA = rigote
 climb upwards DIRECTIONAL 'climb up (towards)'
Uchè bikō rigote n'elū. 'Uche please climb up (towards the speaker).' (c.f. Onukawa 1999b, p.120ff)

Following from (1- 4), a few assumptions can be made. Firstly, there appears to be a general understanding of the directionality function of Igbo suffixes (as shown with *-ta*). The suffixes expressing the semantics of direction in Igbo constitute a class of their own. Furthermore, there is no consensus on what they should be called. This is evident in the different labels like 'prepositional markers/suffixes', 'dative markers/suffixes', 'direction(al) markers/suffixes', and 'motion markers/suffixes.' Finally, in relation to the suffix *-ta*, the literature seems to suggest the perspective expressed by this directional suffix (towards the speaker). So, we shall proceed by stating that although the different labels used for the suffix are indeed related with their subtle nuances, they all express direction. For this reason, we proceed to refer to them as 'directional suffixes' in Igbo.

Emenanjo (1978, 2015) gives a detailed list of extensional suffixes in Igbo. Among his list of suffixes

are a few suffixes he identifies as possessing directional meanings. They are shown in (5).

4. -go 'DIRECTIONAL up(wards)' e.g.   ịrịgo 'to climb upwards'
-gbe 'DIRECTIONAL up(wards)' e.g.   ịrịgbe 'to climb upwards'
-li(-ni) 'DIRECTIONAL up(wards)' e.g.   mbuli '(the act of) carrying up'
-ta/-te 'DIRECTIONAL' e.g.   ịzụ̄ta 'to buy for'
(adapted from Emenanjo 2015, p.239ff)

From the above, only three suffixes are presented as 'directional' as *-go* and *-gbe* are dialectal variations of the same suffix. However, more directional suffixes exist in Igbo. These are found in an Igbo annotated corpus created by Onyenwe et al (2014) used for this study. It was fully archived as an electronic text corpus in 2020. It contains five genres: religious texts, novels, news, poems, and essays, and is made up of 383,682 tokens (running words).

The data elicited from the corpus shows that there are general directional suffixes and specific directional suffixes as follows:

5. DIRECTIONAL: -ta/-te ; -ga, -nye
DIRECTIONAL (down): -da, -tu
DIRECTIONAL (up): -go
DIRECTIONAL (outward): -pụ

Clearly, the list above shows a few more suffixes that express direction. Except for *-ta/-te* shown in (1-2), sentence examples of the other directional suffixes are presented in (7).

6. a. Chigọzie ma-bà-gà   n'ime ụlọ̀

 Chigozie jump-enter-go   inside house
 'Chigozie jumped/rushed into the house'
b. Ọ da-bà-nyè   n'ọkụ.
 S/He fall-enter-give   in fire
 'S/He fell into the fire.'
c. Ọ   na-ewe-da   onwe ya.
 S/He PROG-bring-fall' self 3SG
 [Lit: S/He is bringing himself/herself down]
 'S/he is humble.'
d. Nwanne m nwanyị̀, biko we-tu-ō   obì   n'alà
 Sibling 1SG woman, please bring-down-IMP heart   in ground
 [Lit: My sister, please bring down your heart.]
 'My sister, please calm down.'
e. Ọ gà-rà kpọ-go-ta   nne ya nà nna ya   nà be ya.
 S/He go-PST call-up-DIR mother 3SG   and father 3SG   to house 3SG.
 [Lit:He called up his mother and his father to his house.]
 'He brought his parents to live with him.'
f. Okwu gà-ada-pụ-ta n'ụgbọala ahụ̄
 Talk FUT-fall-out-DIR PREP-car DET
 [Lit: Talk will fall out on the car.]
 'An issue concerning the car will arise.'

From the examples above, different directions are expressed by the different suffixes. *-ga,* and *-nye* in (7a and 7b) encode a forward linear direction from the speaker along the horizontal plane. *-da,* and *-tu* (7c and

7d) express a downward motion along the vertical axis, while *-go* (7e) expresses an upward motion. *-pụ* involves outward motion from a particular source as seen in (7f). Furthermore, more that one directional suffix can cooccur with the verb. This is seen in (8):

> 7. a. Obì dọ̀-gò-tà-rà eriri ahụ̄.
> Obi pull-up-DIR-PST rope DET
> 'Obi pulled up the rope.'
> b. Ada we-dà-gà-rà Obì egō.
> Ada take-down-go-PST Obi money
> 'Ada took down the money to Obi.'

In (8a), two directional suffixes (*-go* and *-ta*) occur in a sequence. However, while both forms specify directionality, *-go* specifies the path (upwards) along which the motion occurs. On the other hand, *-ta* appears to encode a more general meaning of motion in addition to the direction of the speaker who serves as the deictic center or anchor. Similarly, (8b) shows the occurrence of two directional suffixes (*-dà* and *-gà*). In the sentence, *-dà* expresses the direction or path (down) of the motion event, while *-gà* encodes the direction of the motion event (away from the speaker).

Additionally, we intend to show that these two distinct perspectives (*towards the speaker* and *away from the speaker*) can be expressed through the usage of these suffixes. To do so, we introduce the concept of construal and perspective in the next section while highlighting a few Igbo studies on the subject matter.

3. CONSTRUAL AND PERSPECTIVIZATION

Evans (2007, p.40) describes construal as an idea central to Cognitive Grammar which relates to the way a language user chooses to 'package' and 'present' a conceptual representation as encoded in language, which in turn has consequences for the conceptual representation that the utterance evokes in the mind of the hearer. Construal can be thought of as a way a speaker chooses to package and present an idea or scene, for purposes of encoding in language, which in turn has consequences for the conceptual representation that the utterance evokes in the mind of the speaker. In choosing one conceptual or linguistic alternative rather than another, the speaker "construes" her thoughts in a specific way (Radden and Dirven, 2007, p.22ff). Langacker (1987, p.138ff) reveals that an expression's meaning does not consist solely in the conceptual content it evokes (let alone in truth conditions or the objective situation it describes), but equally significant is how that content is 'construed.' Hence, two expressions may invoke the same conceptual content yet differ semantically by virtue of the construals they impose.

Langacker (1987, pp.487-88) defines the construal relationship as follows: ''the relationship between a speaker (or hearer) and a situation that he conceptualizes and portrays, involving focal adjustments and imagery.''

In this definition, the construal relation basically involves an individual (speaker or hearer), on the one hand, and a conceived situation, on the other. Similarly, Langacker (2008, p.43) explains that the term 'construal' refers to our manifest ability to conceive and portray the same situation in alternate ways. He outlines four broad classes of construal phenomena. They are, specificity, focusing, prominence, and perspective. We shall dwell on the last class of construal phenomena - perspective, as it relates the most to the thrust of this study. Langacker explains that if conceptualization (metaphorically) is the viewing of a scene, perspective is the viewing arrangement. He goes further to define viewing arrangement as the overall relationship between the "viewers" (the speaker and the hearer) and the situation being "viewed". This relates to the position from which a scene is viewed, with consequences for the relative prominence of its participants (Langacker, 1987, p.117). Evans (2007) explains that perspective relates to the way in which a scene is viewed, including the relative prominence of its participants. To illustrate this point, he uses an active and passive pair of sentences as shown in (9):

> 8. a. Max ate all the tomato soup [active]
> b. All the tomato soup was eaten by Max [passive] (c.f. Evans 2007, p.162)

The differentiation between these two sentences revolves around a change in viewpoint, achieved by altering the level of importance or prominence attributed to the participants within the profiled relationship between the agent (Max) and the patient (the soup). The relationship between construal and perspective lies in the fact that how something is construed—how it is mentally represented and interpreted—directly influences the perspective from which it is viewed or presented. Different construals can lead to different perspectives. In other words, the way something is understood or construed impacts how it is perceived and the angle from which it is approached. Conversely, the perspective chosen to present or view something can also influence the way it is construed by directing attention to certain aspects and downplaying others. In the following section, we highlight a few studies in Igbo that touch the issue of construal and perspective.

The first study that applied the concept of construal to Igbo is Uchechukwu (2007) in his treatment of subject-object switching phenomenon in the language. In his paper, Uchechukwu made presented two construals associated with the conceptualization of the SOS phenomenon: the *agent-oriented* and the *patient-oriented* construals.

> 9. a. Èmeka nà - akọ̀ ọkọ b. ọkọ nà - akọ̀ Èmeka
> Emeka AUX- scratch itch Itch AUX- scratch Emeka
> [lit: Emeka is scratching itch.] [lit: Itch is scratching Emeka]
> 'Emeka is scratching (himself).' 'Emeka is itching.'
> (c.f. Uchechukwu 2007, p.73)

The agent-oriented construal is expressed by the citation form *-kọ̀ ọ̀kọ* 'to scratch (someone/oneself)' as seen in (10a), while the patient-oriented construal is expressed by the citation form *-ọ̀kọ ịkọ̀* 'to itch' as shown in (10b). Drawing from this findings, Uchechukwu and Egenti (2015) apply the Cognitive Grammar concept of construal to effectively identify and delve into the Igbo experiential verbs. In essence, they note a distinct viewpoint inherent to Igbo experiential verbs, one primarily centered around the patient. They ultimately suggest acknowledging this viewpoint as a valuable tool to investigate various semantic aspects of Igbo verbs overall. In the light of this, the concept of construal is applied to the directional class of suffixes in Igbo with a view to showing the different possible perspectives expressed by them.

4. PERSPECTIVE-TAKING WITH IGBO DIRECTIONAL SUFFIXES

The data drawn from the corpus shows that Igbo has a class of directional suffixes that can be into two groups based on the deictic center. The ones expressing directionality or motion towards the speaker also known as *proximal* (*-ta/-te*) and those expressing directional or motion away from the speaker meaning (*-da*, *-tu*, *-go*, *-ga*, *-nye* and *-pụ*). the latter are called *distal*. They are discussed one after the other.

4.1 The Proximal Perspective

The proximal perspective involves viewing the scene relative to motion in the direction of the speaker. The suffix *-ta/-te* is the only proximal directional suffix in the language. This suffix is also the only suffix that has been recognized as directional by other Igbo scholars. Furthermore, the suffix occurs as a harmonizing pair.

10. Mgbè e-wè-tà-sì-rì   ihe nile…
time 3PL-take-DIR-completely-PST thing all
'When they finish bringing all the items…'

From (11) above, the direction is explicitly understood to be in the direction of the speaker. This is different from (12) where the direction is implicit.

11. Osità bà-*tà* n'ụ́lọ̄ ya.
Osita enter-DIR PREP.house 2SG.
[lit: Osita entered into his house.]
'Osita came into his house.'

Here, the verb *-bà* 'enter' means motion in the direction of an enclosed space through some form of opening. However, the addition of *-tà* to the verb helps add a specific viewpoint from which the motion scene is viewed. So, the scene is viewed from within the *house* where the speaker observes the entry of *Osita*. A different perspective of this scene involves viewing the entry from outside the *house* as shown in (13):

12. Ọ bà -nyè-rè   n'imē ụ́lọ̄.
3SG. enter-into-PST inside house
'S/He went into the house.'

From (13), the suffix *-nyè* offers a different perspective of the scene as opposed to (12). It is important to note that the suffix *-nyè* does not evince the proximal perspective. Recall the suffix is a harmonizing one. The counterpart *-te* is shown in (14).

13. Ihe   ga-ebute   ya n2'ụzọ ụtụtụ
Thing FUT-bring-DIR SG PREP-first morning
'Something will make him come early in the morning.'

The sentence in (13) can also be glossed as '*something will bring him in the morning.*' Obviously, the suffix *-ta/-te* performs the deictic function of shifting our viewpoint or perspective in the direction of the speaker like the English deictic verb *come*.

4.2 The Distal Perspective

The Distal perspective involves a viewpoint that highlights the movement or direction from the speaker or deictic center or source. Unlike the proximal perspective, which is expressed by just one suffix, the distal perspective is expressed by more than one suffix with each one specifying a particular direction (as shown in 7).

14. Gịnị wè-gà-rà ya be Sọpụrụchi?
What take-go-PST 3SG home Sopuruchi?
'What took him/her to Sopuruchi's house.'

In (15), the suffix *-gà* specifies direction towards an anchor (Sopuruchi) that is neither the speaker nor addressee. Another instance of this perspective is shown in (16).

15. Onye bùrù ụzọ̄ kwa-tùo ibe ya?
Person   carry-PST first push-down companion 3SG?
'Who pushed down the other first?'

In (16), the suffix *-tu* simply specifies the direction (downwards) in which the action on *pushing* occurs. In both (15) and (16), the perspectives expressed do not involve the speaker as the deictic center or goal.

Interestingly, whenever *-ta/-te* cooccurs with another directional suffix, the perspective from which the scene is viewed is always proximal. This is shown in (17).

16. Obì dọ̀-gò-tà-rà eriri ahụ̄.
Obi pull-up-DIR-PST rope DET
'Obi pulled up the rope.'

In (17), although two directional suffixes (*-go* and *-ta*) occur together, the event is viewed from a higher altitude. Also, the location of the speaker is at a higher point on the vertical axis. It is from this point that the scene is viewed. This perspective is made possible through the presence of the suffix *-ta*. The perspective changes when the suffix is absent as seen in (18).

17. Nwata ri-gò-rò n'elū oche.
Child climb-up-PST on top chair
'A child climbed on a chair.'

Although the direction of motion 'upward' in (18) remains the same as (17), the viewpoint is different. This is because, the scene is viewed from a lower altitude or source from which the position of the entity *nwata* gradually changes or elevates as expressed by the verb.

A schematic diagram showing the different directional suffixes and the perspectives they encode is shown below:
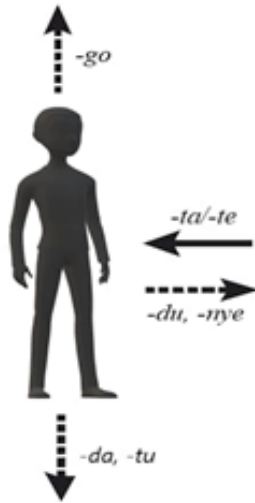

Figure 1
A schematic representation of the Igbo directional suffixes

In the figure above, the dotted arrows show the direction of the suffixes which express the distal perspective, while the bold arrow shows the viewpoint encoded in the promixal suffix *-ta/-te.*

5. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Deictic directional affixes allow speakers to shift perspectives and provide crucial contextual information. They are closely tied to the deictic center, which is typically the speaker's perspective. These affixes can indicate various directions, such as movement towards the speaker (proximal), away from the speaker (distal), or perpendicular to the speaker (medial). Additionally, they can convey notions of ascent, descent, and lateral movement. This paper has explored the intricate system of perspective-taking with deictic directional affixes in Igbo. It is observed that the directional suffixes in Igbo enable us to view a motion scene from two possible perspectives. The proximal perspective which involves focusing on the motion towards the speaker is expressed by *-ta/*-te, while the other suffixes express the distal perspective. Furthermore, when both perspectivizing suffixes combine, the proximal perspective is always expressed. This leads us to believe that the proximal perspective is the major perspective while the distal perspective can be regarded as secondary. Through grammatical analysis, pragmatic

implications, and cultural insights, we have highlighted how these affixes contribute to the language's ability to convey different viewpoints and spatial orientations. Further research in this area could delve into the cognitive mechanisms that underlie perspective-taking and the cross-linguistic variations in spatial expression while deepening our understanding of the intricate interplay between language, culture, and cognition.

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