

THE FEATURES OF IGBO LOCATIVE VERBS

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Abstract

*This paper sets out to examine the morphological, phonological, morpho-syntactic and semantic characteristics of Igbo locative verbs. The method adopted is purely descriptive. Locative verbs are sub-divided into two types: those that are completely bare, having only a figure and the ground, and those that take posture predicates. The two groups of verbs exhibit different case frames. Morphologically, the bare locative/non-posture locative verbs have the CV structure while the posture locative verbs have the CV + CV structure, which is formed through the combination of two different CV roots involving verbs of TCL I and TCL II. Among the locative verbs **ḍí** 'be' is unique in the sense that it is polysemous, with locative and existential meanings. Furthermore, the verb **ḍí** is exclusively [+ inanimate] while other locative verbs are both [+ animate] and [+ inanimate]. The locative verb **nò** (stay/sit) can take bare or posture reading depending on its contextual semantics. Finally, in relation to the typological classification of languages by Ameka and Levinson (2007), Igbo language seems to belong to their Type II which is made up of languages that 3 to 7 locative verbs with some contrastive semantics.*

1.0 Introduction

Traditionally, the verb is 'a doing word' and an essential component of a sentence; but to this must be added the fact that the verb, in also facilitating the location of entities in the world, is also 'a locating word'. This is further confirmed in the division of verbs into classes, one of which is the *locative verbs*. These are cross-linguistically verbs that are used to locate objects/things or beings.

This paper goes into this particular class of verbs in Igbo as follows. The next section gives an overview of locative verbs, section 3 discusses the Igbo locative verbs and the types. Section 4 examines the morphological features, section 5 the phonological characteristics, section 6 the morpho-syntactic characteristics, section 7 the semantic characteristics. Section summarizes the general characteristics of Igbo locative verbs and concludes the work.

2.0 An Overview of Locative Verbs

The locative verbs are the sub-set of verbs used to locate entities. They are used for describing the location of an entity, animate or inanimate, as well as the location of an entity with respect to another entity. Kontz-Garboden (2009, p. 246) posits that these verbs not only predicate the location of a figure and but also simultaneously attribute a particular posture to the figure. The locative verbs could also involve an agent causing an entity (the “content” or “figure” argument usually analyzed as patient and theme) to move to a place (the “container” or “ground”) argument usually analyzed as a location or goal. Locative verbs encode the relationship between a moving object – the “figure” and the location – the “ground” (Kim, Landau & Philips, 1999, p. 1). According to Pinker (1989), in addition to generally possessing similar semantic features, the locative verbs fall into at least four different syntactic subclasses based on their syntactic possibilities. The four subclasses include: non-alternating figure verbs, non-alternating ground verbs, figure-alternating verbs and ground-alternating verbs. Kim et al (1992, p. 2) illustrate this with the verb “fill”. They claim that the verb “fill” allows the ground to be a direct object, and the figure to be an indirect object as in a sentence like:

(1) John filled the glass with water.

We call this the “ground frame”. But the verb “fill” does not allow “figure frame” as in a sentence like:

(2) John filled the water into the glass.

It is important to note that other locative verbs with similar syntax to “fill” have semantic properties in common with “fill”. Verbs with the same syntax as “fill” include “cover”, “decorate” and “soak” - all describe a change of state. The change can either be one of location, resulting from motion in a particular manner, or of state, resulting from accommodating or reacting to a substance. For example, “pour” specifies how a substance moves (down ward in a stream), so its substance argument is the object (pour the water/*glass), “fill” specifies how a container changes (from not full to full) so its stationary container argument is the object (fill the glass/*water).

Structures which express location meanings may also be referred to as locatives. Locative verbs denote a preposition of locative semantics. Locatives involve the change – of – state verbs. The locative objects have basic argument structure: the affected argument is the overt direct object. Locative verbs usually take the prepositional phrase at the terminal coincidence. According to Hale (1986), the terminal coincidence is that between a figure and a ground whose edges coincide.

In their cross-linguistic investigation of locative expressions, Ameka and Levinson (2007, p. 851) are of the view that genetically, typologically and aerally related languages belong to four different types of locative predication.

- (i) *Type O*: languages that do not have verbs in their locative constructions
- (ii) *Type I*: languages that have a single locative verb
- (iii) *Type II*: languages that have a small set of (3 to 7) contrastive locative verbs that could involve postural verbs and Ground space indicating verbs
- (iv) *Type III*: multiple positional verbs

The above classifications shall be used to establish the group that Igbo language belongs to.

3.0. The Locative Verbs in Igbo

Although locative verbs in Igbo are few in number, compared with other classes of verbs, not much has been done on them, The two extant works are Mbagwu (2013) and Uwalaka (1988).

Mbagwu (2013, pp. 61-62) distinguishes the relations between the locatum verbs and location verbs. He regards the verbs that express terminal coincidence as locatum verbs, and those that express central coincidence as location verbs. Locatum verbs take suffixes that express adessive and superessive relations, and location verbs take suffixes that express illative relations and are obligatorily marked by the suffix *-nye* ‘in’. His conclusion (Mbagwu, 2013, p. 62) is that “the illative extensional suffix *-nye* which occurs with the verbs helps to reduce semantic opacity”. He claims that it is the locus in the expression of central coincidence by the verbs.

Uwalaka (1988) groups the locative verbs into the two classes of true locative verbs and quasi-locative verbs. According to her, “true locative verbs make predications about the spatial location of their associated subject NP, while quasi-locative verbs generally described the bodily positions of their associated NP (1988, p. 195). Her examples of true locatives are: *ibī* ‘to live’, *ịnò* ‘to stay’, *guzo* ‘to stand’, *ịnòkwà* ‘to remain’, while her quasi-locative verbs include *igùzò*

oto ‘to stand up’, *isēkpù àlà* ‘to kneel’ etc. Another form of locative verb categorization which seems not to have been applied to Igbo locative verbs is the division into (1) bare/non posture, (2) posture, (3) and the [+bare, +posture] locatives. This work adopts Uwalaka’s categorization and groups them accordingly as:

- i. The bare locative/non-posture locative verbs
- ii. The posture locative verbs
- iii. The [+bare, +posture] locative verbs

It is important to point out that the semantic content of these verbs cannot be determined except when they occur with a particular noun (N) or noun phrase (NP), which plays the complement role. These verbs express some actions, which individuals or things/objects perform in the sentences; but sometimes, they may also indicate stativity. Below are the Igbo locative verbs:

(3) <i>bì</i> ‘live/reside’	<i>gùzò</i> ‘stand’	<i>tukwù</i> ‘crouch’
<i>nò</i> ‘stay/be at’	<i>dàbè</i> ‘lean’	<i>nìwe</i> ‘lay’
<i>dì</i> ‘be’	<i>kòwe</i> ‘hang’	<i>kpasà</i> ‘spread’
<i>kwù</i> ‘stand’	<i>dìnà</i> ‘lie’	<i>ghasà</i> ‘scatter’
<i>sekpù</i> ‘kneel’	<i>kpoghu</i> ‘squat’	<i>sukò</i> ‘fold’
<i>makpù</i> ‘stoop’		

The grouping of these verbs is based on the semantics of their complements. Sometimes, the semantics of the verbs cannot be determined except when they occur with a particular noun phrase (NP), which plays the complement role. These verbs express some actions, which individuals or things/objects perform in the sentences; we can say that they are also “action verbs”.

3.1 The Bare Locative Verbs/Non-Posture Locative Verbs

These verbs are completely bare, that is, they do not co-occur with bodily posture in any form. In other words, these verbs occur in the sentences without involving any posture predication. Uwalaka (1988, p. 195) refers to them as “true locative verbs”. They have only the “figure” which is the subject NP and the location, which is the “ground”. The ground can also be a noun in which the figure/subject NP is located within. These types of verbs have the features [+figure], [+location - the ground] and [-posture]. Uwalaka also claims that “some locative verbs

make predication about the spatial location of their associated subject NP”. The verbs in this group include: *bì* ‘live/reside’, *nọ* ‘stay/be at’, and *dị* ‘be’. Consider the following examples:

- (4) a. *Uchè bì n’ Ọnìchà.*
 Uche live PREP Ọnìcha.
 ‘Uche lives in Ọnìcha.’
- b. *Ọ nọ n’ ụlò.*
 3sg be PREP house.
 ‘He/she is in the house.’
- c. *Akwụkwọ dị n’ àkpà.*
 book be PREP bag.
 ‘The book is in the bag.’

From the data in (4), the subject NP are assigned the case role “figure” since they are the affected entities that are located within the ground/places namely; *Ọnìchà*, *ụlò*, and *àkpà* respectively. These verbs are accompanied by the prepositional phrases, which indicate the actual location – the grounds of the figures (subject NP). The preposition “na” assigns the thematic roles of location to the figures (subject NPs) in the above sentences. The fact is that sentences with these types of verbs are syntactically incomplete without a location – the ground. Therefore, *Ọnìchà*, *ụlò*, and *àkpà* serve as the grounds where the figures described in the above sentences are located or designated. The data also indicate terminal coincidence: the entities are moved and the movement terminates onto or into something. With the emphasis on the moved entities the terminal locations are covert. These locative verbs collocate with the ground. In Igbo, it is only the locative verbs that have these semantic – syntactic characteristics and no other sub-groups of verbs.

Sometimes, the location – ground can be static in nature and co-occur with the locative verbs and the figure as exemplified in (4a and b), where the locations – grounds are static that is, the town *Ọnìchà* and the house *ụlò* are static. They cannot move elsewhere. It is only the figures that can move in order to be located in a particular ground. The locative verbs in (4a and b) can be used for animate class, that is, [+animate], whereas *dị* in (4c) goes with entities that have the

feature [-animate]. Koontz-Garbode's (2009) explanation that "locative verbs are sometimes restricted to the type of figure, often it extends to non – animate entities" is supportive of this distinction.

Furthermore, the location–ground can optionally occur as an NP without the preposition 'na', in other words, the preposition "na" can be deleted without rendering the sentence ungrammatical as in:

- (5) a. *Ùju bì Àba.*
 Uju live Aba.
 'Uju lives in Aba.'
- b. *Ọ dị ebe à.*
 3Sg be here DET
 'It is here.'
- c. *Ha nọ ebe à.*
 3Pl be here DET
 'They are here.'

The locative verbs in (4) and (5) are underspecified for posture, that is, there is no claim about whether the subject NPs (figures) are sitting, standing or lying while in the specified location – the ground. Therefore, there is loss of posture-specific meanings in the above constructions. Note that the bare locative verbs obligatorily collocate with the ground. Without the ground collocation, sentences involving bare locative verbs are syntactically incomplete and meaningless as in:

- (6) a. **Ùju bì...*
 b. **Ọ dị...*

3.2. The Posture Locative Verbs

The semantics of these verbs include the bodily postures or positions of their associated figure or the subject NP. These constructions formed with them are composed of figures (subject NP), location – the ground and posture predicate. In other words, they have the feature [+

figure/subject NP], [+ location/ground], and [+ posture], abbreviated as FLP. Uwalaka (1988, p. 195) refers to this type of verbs as “quasi–locative verbs” because of these features. These verbs attribute a particular posture to the figure. The verbs in this group include:

- | | | |
|-----|----------------------|-----------------------------|
| (7) | <i>sekpù</i> ‘kneel’ | <i>tukwù</i> ‘crouch’ |
| | <i>gùzò</i> ‘stand’ | <i>nìwe</i> ‘lay’ |
| | <i>dàbe</i> ‘lean’ | <i>kpasà/gbasa</i> ‘spread’ |
| | <i>kòwe</i> ‘hang’ | <i>ghasà</i> ‘scatter’ |
| | <i>dìnà</i> ‘lie’ | <i>sukò</i> ‘fold’ |
| | <i>kpògh</i> ‘squat’ | <i>makpù</i> ‘stoop’ |

Consider the following examples:

- (8) a. *Ezè sekpù àlà n’ ihu ụlọ.*
 Eze kneel ground PREP front house.
 ‘Eze is kneeling in front of the house.’
- b. *Ànyị sekpù àlà.*
 1pl kneel ground.
 ‘We are kneeling.’
- (9) a. *Ha gùzò (ọtọ) n’ èzi.*
 3pl stand (standing) PREP compound.
 ‘They are standing in the compound.’
- b. *Ha gùzò ọtọ.*
 3pl stand standing.
 ‘They are standing.’
- (10) a. *Ọ dàbè n’ ukwù osisi.*
 3sg lean PREP waist tree.
 ‘He/She is leaning on a tree.’

- b. *Ọ dàbè àdàbe.*
 3sg lean learning.
 ‘He/She is leaning.’
- (11) a. *Aka Uchè kòwè n’ elu ochē.*
 Hand Uche hang PREP top chair.
 ‘Uche’s hand is hanging on a chair.’
- b. *Aka Uchè kòwè èkòwe.*
 Hand Uche hang hanging.
 ‘Uche’s hand is hanging.’
- (12) a. *Òbi dinà n’ akwà.*
 Obi lie PREP bed.
 ‘Obi is lying on the bed.’
- b. *Òbi dinà edinà.*
 Obi lie lying.
 ‘Obi is lying.’
- (13) a. *Ibè tukwù n’ àlà.*
 Ibe crouch PREP ground.
 ‘Ibe is crouching.’
- b. *Ibè tukwù ètukwù.*
 Ibe crouch crouching.
 ‘Ibe is crouching.’
- (14) a. *Ànyị kpòghù n’ oche.*
 1pl squat PREP chair.
 ‘We are squatting on the chair.’
- b. *Ànyị kpòghù akpọghu.*
 1pl squat squatting.
 ‘We are squatting.’

- (15) a. *Nwa nìwè n' àkwà ya.*
 Baby lay PREP bed his/her.
 'The baby is laying on his/her bed.'
- b. *Nwa nìwè èniwe.*
 Baby lay laying.
 'The baby is lying.'

From the above data, the sentences (a) of (8) to (15) demonstrate that the posture locative verbs co-occur with the ground and the posture of the designated entity or the figure/subject NP. The locative verbs in those sentences are telic. On the other hand, the (b) sentences of (8) to (15) are complete and meaningful Igbo sentences despite the fact that the locations or the grounds do not appear or are deleted. It is important to note that when these posture locative verbs co-occur with the ground, the ground is obligatorily introduced by the preposition *na* which contains the prepositional phrase that expresses central coincidence.

3.3 [+Bare] [+Posture] Locative Verbs

Only one verb belongs to this group: *nò*. The semantics of this verb could involve or exclude the bodily posture/positions of the associated figure/subject NP. When the semantics has the feature [+bare] the constructions formed with it are not composed of figure, but when the semantics has the feature [+posture] the construction formed with it are composed of figure (subject NP), location.

Another feature is the occurrence with as in example (16) or without a preposition, as in example (17) below:

- (16) *Ọ nò n' ụlọ*
 3Sg. be PREP home
 'He/she is in the house.'

- (17) *Ha nò ebe à*
 3Sg. be PREP DET
 'He/she is in the house.'

4.0. The Morphological Features of Igbo Locative Verbs

The locative verbs vary in their morphology and are composed of either a simple verb root or a combination of two verb roots.

The locative verbs formed with the simple CV roots have a consonant-vowel (CV) structure. The verbs include:

- (18) *bí* ‘live’
nò ‘stay’
dí ‘be’

The above locative verbs occur without any inflectional prefix or suffix, and still denote location of an entity. These are morphologically free in the syntactic structures, that is, they can stand alone without any attachment of the affixes; but they collocate with the figure (subject NP), the prepositional phrase and the ground.

- (19) a. *Ha bì n’ Ònichà*
 3pl live PREP Onicha
 ‘They live in Onicha.’
 b. *Uchè nò n’ ihu ụlò.*
 Uche stay PREP front house.
 ‘Uche is staying in front of the house.’

The second group is made up of locative verbs formed through a combination of two different simple CV roots. They have the structures thus: [CV + CV] as in:

- (20) *se + kpù → sekpù* (kneel) *tu + kwù → tukwù* (crunch)
gù + zò → gùzò (stand) *nì + we → nìwe* (lay)
dà + bè → dàbè (lean) *kpa + sà → kpasà* (spread)
kò + we → kòwe (hang) *gha + sà → ghasà* (spread)
dì + nà → dìnà (lie) *su + kò → sùkò* (fold)
kpo + ghu → kpoghu (sit) *ma + kpù → makpù* (stoop)

In the above sentences different CV roots with different inherent tones are combined together to form the locative verbs. Sentence examples with some of these verbs are given below:

- (21) a. *Ezè sekpù n' elu ochē.*
 Eze kneel PREP top chair.
 'Eze is kneeling on a chair.'
- b. *Ha gùzò n' èzi.*
 3pl stand PREP compound.
 'They are standing in the compound.'
- c. *Ùju dàbè n' akùkù ajā*
 Uju lean PREP beside wall
 'Uju is leaning beside the wall.'

5.0 The Phonological Characteristics of Igbo Locative Verbs

As every word has its own unique phonological characteristics, so also do the Igbo locative verbs *bì* (live), *nò* (stay) and *dị* (be) as in the sentences below.

- (22) a. *Ùju bì n' Àba.*
 Uju live PREP Aba.
 'Uju lives in Aba.'
- b. *Ọ nò ebe à.*
 3sg stay here.
 'He/she is here.'
- c. *Ọ dị ebe à.*
 3sg be here.
 'It is here.'
- d. *Ọ dị ndụ.*
 3sg be live.
 'It is alive.'

In the above data, the locative verbs come from TCLI and TCLII respectively. The verb *bì* and *nò* are inherently low tone verbs and they still retain their low tones irrespective of the location or the ground involved in the sentences. *dí* is inherently a high tone verb but in the syntactic construction, it changes to a low tone.

In the formation of past tense, these locative verbs take the –rv suffix marker and become low tones as in:

- (23) a. *Ùju bì-rì n' Àba.*
 Uju live-rV(Past) prep Aba.
 ‘Uju lived at Aba.’
 b. *Ọ nò-rò ebe à.*
 3sg stay-rV(Past) here.
 ‘He/she stayed here.’
 c. *Ọ dí-rì ebe à.*
 3sg be-rV(Past) place DET
 ‘It was here.’

The data in (23) indicate that the figures are no longer located or designated within the ground at the point of speaking. The mapping of the rv suffix in (23c) compels the inherent tone of the verb “*dí*” to become low tone.

In the negative formation, the bare/ non-posture locative verbs take the negator *ghị* whereby the locative verb’s positioning of the figure in the specified ground is negated:

- (24) *Ò bi-ghì n' Àba.*
 3sg live-NEG PREP Aba
 ‘He/she is not living in Aba.’

The tone of the locative *bi* changes to a high tone because of the mapping of the negator *ghị*.

The verb *dí* is special among the bare/non-posture locative verbs in the sense that, it is polysemous. It indicates locative meaning as well as existential meaning. Its polysemous nature manifests in the negative formation. Consider the examples below:

(25) a. *Ò dī-ghī n' àkpà.*

3sg be-NEG PREP bag.

‘It is not in the bag.’

b. *Ọ dī-ghī ndụ.*

3sg be-NEG live.

‘It is not alive.’

The existential verb *dī* is negated in (25), but the negated *dī* in (25a) simply denies that the argument is located in the specified ground, while the negated *dī* in (25b) does not give rise to any inference that the figure does exist.

In the progressive construction, the bare/non-positive locative verbs take the auxiliary verb *na* thus:

(26) a. *Àda nà-èbī n' Àba.*

Ada AUX-live PREP Aba

‘Ada is living in Aba.’

b. *Ọ nà-anò n' ụlò.*

3sg AUX-stay PREP house.

‘He/she is staying at home.’

c. *Osisi a nà-àdị nà nkàtà*

Stick this AUX-be PREP basket

‘This stick is in the basket.’

In (26a), the locative *bí* has a high tone while in (26b), *nò* has low tone and *dī* in (26c) has a high tone.

The posture locative verbs such as *sékpù* ‘kneel’, *gùzò* ‘stand’, *tukwù* ‘crouch’, *dìnà* ‘lie down’ and so on have two different CV roots combined together to express locative meanings. Since they come from different CV roots, their tones may be different inherently that is, the tone of the CV roots may come from either TCLI or TCLII combined together. The main CV root

which bears the posture semantics selects the matching CV root that will encode posture reading. For example the verb *sekpù* has two roots thus: *se* + *kpù*. Inherently, *se* is a high tone verb and *kpù*, a low tone verb. Both of them express different meanings but when the two are combined to form a posture locative verb *sekpù* ‘kneel’, it becomes high low tone. It is obvious that this process of combining the two CV roots in order to form posture locative verbs, is applicable to other posture locative verbs in data above. Consider these examples:

- (27) a. *Òbi sekpù n’ elu àkwà.*
Obi kneel PREP top bed.
‘Obi is kneeling on the bed.’
- b. *Òbi sèkpù-rù n’ elu àkwà.*
Obi kneel-rV(Past) prep top bed.
‘Obi knelt on the bed.’
- c. *Òbi e-sèkpu-ghi n’ elu àkwà.*
Obi NEG-kneel-NEG PREP top bed.
‘Obi did not kneel on the bed.’
- d. *Òbi nà-èsekpù n’elu àkwà.*
Obi AUX-kneel PREP top bed.
‘Obi is kneeling on the bed.’
- (28) a. *Ha gùzò n’ èzi.*
3pl stand PREP compound.
‘They stood in the compound.’
- b. *Ha gùzò-rò n’ èzi.*
3pl stand-rV(Past) PREP compound.
‘They stood in the compound.’
- c. *Hà egūzo-ghị n’ èzi.*
3sg stand-NEG PREP compound.
‘They did not stand in the compound.’

- d. *Ha nà-éguzo n' ezi.*
 3pl AUX-stand PREP compound.
 'They are standing in the compound.'
- (29) a. *O tukwù n' àlà.*
 3sg crouch PREP ground.
 'He/she is crouching on the ground.'
- b. *O tùkwù-rù n' àlà.*
 3sg crouch-rV(Past) PREP ground.
 'He/she crouched on the ground.'
- c. *Ò túkwù-ghì n' àlà.*
 3sg crouch-NEG PREP ground.
 'He/she did not crouch on the ground.'
- d. *Ọ nà-étukwù n' àlà.*
 3sg AUX-crouch PREP ground.
 'He/she is crouching on the ground.'

In the 'a' sentences of (27), (28) and (29) above, it can be observed that the posture locative verbs change their tones in the grammatical constructions. Generally, it is observed that the tones of these verbs do change in the different grammatical constructions as they do not retain their inherent tones in these grammatical constructions.

6.0 The Semantic Characteristics of Igbo Locative Verbs

Every word has its own meaning in isolation, in addition to the meaning(s) it may contract as a result of its association with other words in the sentence. The non-posture/bare locative verbs by virtue of lack posture semantics; hence, they have the features: [+ figure], [+ location, – the ground] and [- posture]. These verbs indicate the specified locative reading of the figure. The verbs *bi* and *dị* express pure locative meanings without posture semantics.

Among the locative verbs, the verb *dị* appears to be unique in the sense that it is polysemous; it can express both locative and existential meanings. Hence, it can be used in its locative sense for some entities and in its existential sense for others:

- (30) a *Ọ dị ndụ.*
 3sg be alive.
 ‘It is alive.’
- b. *Ọ dị ebe à.*
 3sg be alive.
 ‘It is here.’

Sentence (30a) expresses existential meaning while (30b) expresses locative meaning.

On the other hand, the posture locative verbs do not lack posture semantics. They indicate the location and the bodily posture of the figure or the subject NP, whether the figure is sitting, standing, kneeling, leaning or hanging in the specified location or ground. The verbs have posture readings and these make it easy for the identification of the figure in the designated ground or location. Hence, the verbs have the features: [+ figure], [+ location – the ground] and [+ posture].

Another important semantic attribute of this verb type is that the figures which associated with these verbs in constructions are concrete nouns and not abstract nouns. Such concrete nouns also involve concrete motion and not abstract motion, and as such can move or change location in the designated ground.

- (31) a. *Uchè dinà n’ àkwà.*
 Uche lie PREP bed.
 ‘Uche is lying on the bed.’
- b. *Òbí sekpù n’ àkwà.*
 Obi sekpù PREP bed.
 ‘Obi is kneeling on the bed.’

7.0 Summary and Conclusion

This adopted a feature analysis approach in its examination of the morphological, phonological and semantic features of the Igbo locative verbs. Three sub-divisions of Igbo locative verbs

could be confirmed: Group 1: [+bare/non-posture], [-posture] Group 2: [+posture], [-bare/non-posture]; Group 3: [+posture], [+bare/non-posture]

Morphologically, the non-posture locative verbs occur in a simple CV root, whereas the posture locative verbs occur in combined structures thus: [CV + CV] roots. Group 3 is morphologically similar to Group 1.

Syntactically, Group 1, the non-posture or bare locative verbs, obligatorily co-occur with the ground, while Group 2, the posture locative verbs, only do so optionally. This second group requires the grounds in order to be syntactically complete and meaningful, and the ground is obligatorily introduced by the preposition *na*.

Semantically, the posture locative verbs involve bodily posture, while the non-posture locative verbs do not. Group 3 evinces a mixture of both as a result of dialect variations. The locative verb *dí* is unique in having both locative and existential meanings. Other locative verbs indicate only locative meanings. *dí* is exclusively used with inanimate objects whereas other locative verbs can be used with both animate and inanimate classes.

Tonologically, the verbs vary to an extent. Both the non-posture/true locative verbs, *bí* and *dí* that have inherently high tones, and the posture locative verbs that have a combination of high and low tones do change their tones for various grammatical reasons, either as a result of inflection or as a result of negation.

Finally, with its three locative verbs, Igbo seems to belong to Ameka/Levinson's (2007) Type II languages that should have a minimum of 3 and a maximum of 7 locative verbs. The contrastive semantics involved in these verbs is the posture-locative nature of the verb *nò* whose literal meaning is 'sit', but has the locative meaning of 'be at a place' with an implication of 'by way of sitting'.

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