COLLOCATION IN IGBO: AN EXAMINATION OF THE ROOT 'GBA'

Chinenye .E. Onuoha

Abstract

Collocations consist of two words that stand in a relationship with one another. Although collocations are made up of more than one word, they only express one meaning. Collocations provide connections that help learners to deeply understand a word's meaning and furthermore to add it to his or her current vocabulary. This work studies the lemma 'gba' in four Igbo dictionaries with the aim of discovering if the arrangement of this dictionary entry is the same in the four different dictionaries, bearing in mind the positioning of the collocations (are they represented as lemma, sublemma or examples). From this study, it has been discovered firstly that the Igbo dictionaries do not have a uniform arrangement of collocations. However, the dictionaries show a similarity in one out of the four points examined; the collocations are placed under the first word (the lemma 'gba' and not under its complements). This work therefore concludes there is not sufficient information on collocation in Igbo dictionaries both for the Igbo native speakers and for the second language learners.

1. Introduction

Collocation is a pair or group of words often used together. Collocation as a technical term in linguistics is most commonly associated with the name of J. R. Firth, although he was not the first linguist to use it neither is he the only one that has used the term. However, within corpus linguistics, Firthian collocation is the one that is most frequently referred to. (Gill 2011:39).

Collocations consist of two words that stand in a relationship with one another. One of the words (the semantically dependent "collocate") modifies the meaning of the other (the semantically autonomous "base"). According to Gill (2011:41), The base–collocate classification is usually described formally by part of speech, e.g. adjective+noun, verb+noun, etc… Regarding collocations as a combination of a base and collocate can be seen to be of practical importance for the inclusion of collocations in dictionaries. This is not unproblematic. Importantly, it is not always obvious which of the words should be considered the base and which the collocate. For instance, in *a pack of dogs*, should the base be *park* or *dogs*? Either one could be said to qualify the other, the former as a quantifier (*how many* dogs?), the latter as a qualifier (a pack of *what*?). A dictionary

user would presumably look under the headword *dog* to discover what to call a group of dogs (cf. Hausmann 1985), but this does not entirely solve the problem.

Gill (2011:6) asserts that 'although collocations are made up of more than one word, they only express one meaning. In most definitions, this meaning must be semantically complete, i.e. express a single thought or concept.' In his words, 'Collocations can be viewed as co-creating meaning (in Firth) or as modifying meaning (in the Russian tradition). Collocation may also sharpen the focus of the constituents' meaning. (2011:42).

In trying to explain the nature of collocates, McCarthy (2005:6) points out that 'some collocations are fixed, or very strong, for example, *take a photo,* where no other word than take collocates with photo to give the same meaning. However, some other collocations are more open, where several different words may be used to give a similar meaning, for example, *keep to/ stick to the rules.* Note that the study of collocation in this work is focused on the lexeme 'gba'. The work examines the simple 'gba' as a verb root and complex 'gba' with complements. The purpose of this study is to discover if the arrangement of this dictionary entry is the same in the four different dictionaries, bearing in mind the positioning of the collocations (are they represented as lemma, sublemma or examples), whether the collocation is usually placed under the first or second word (base or collocate), the way the parts of speech are marked and evidences of collocational span. In the next section of this work, we shall examine different views on collocation, the reasons why we study collocations, the different types of collocation, the importance of collocations to language learners and how collocations are placed in English dictionaries.

2. Literature Review

Robins (2000:64) defines collocation as "the habitual association of a word in a language with other particular words in sentences." In *Cohesion in English*, Halliday and Hasan (2001:317) argue that collocation, a means of cohesion, is "the co-occurrence of lexical items that are in some way or other typically associated with one another, because they tend to occur in similar environments." For example, the word *doctor* implies such words as *nurse*, *medicine*, *symptom*, *hospital*, etc. The *night* is closely related with *darkness*.

However, Nation (2004:32) regards collocation as "words that often occur together" or the company a word keeps. He points out that, ''In corpus linguistics and computational linguistics, collocation defines a sequence of words or terms that co-occur more often than would be expected by chance. Being sub-type of a phrase, collocation is also a term in phraseology''.

Collocation is a type of syntagmatic relation that occurs in a sentence, even though not all syntagmatic relations are collocation. In order to better understand collocation, we have to make a distinction on the one hand between other free word combinations and collocation and on the other between collocation and idiom. Free combinations refer to the temporarily-made phrases based on certain grammatical rules to express certain ideas. For example, *kill a cow* where *kill* can be replaced by *sell*, *buy*, etc. and *cow* can be replaced by *goat*, *sheep*, etc. is a free combination. The combination is grammatically acceptable and semantically clear. The combination of *kill* and *cow* is accidental depending on the meaning the speaker wants to express.

The other distinction between collocation and idiom should be clarified. Idioms are fixed expressions with frozen meanings, thus fixed collocations, whereas collocations are mostly compositional in that the meaning can be calculated by putting the meanings of its component words together.

Richard (1985:183) summarizes what is meant by mastering a word: 1) knowing the frequency of the word in oral and written language; 2) knowing the grammatical patterns of the word; 3) knowing its associated network with other words. Among these three criteria, the latter two have something to do with our discussion. Among these three criteria, 2) is about colligation and 3) collocation. It is difficult or impossible in most cases to have such a thorough knowledge of a word. But these criteria are important in that they point out the importance of deepening the understanding of a word. So far as collocation is concerned, its importance in English teaching and learning is manifested in various ways.

Schmid (2003:239) outlined a step-by-step definition of collocation as follows:

1) More than one word

The first criterion needed for a definition of *collocation* is self-evident: At least two words must be involved. One word alone cannot form a collocation, because there is nothing for it to collocate with. Collocations can of course consist of more than two words; although it is probably true to

say that both the majority and the prototypical instances of collocations are two-word combinations.

2) Adjacency

Second, the words in question should be adjacent, as has been the case in most of the examples given so far. Problems arise with collocations like *keep one's promise* and *keep one's distance,* in which a collocation between the verb '*keep'* and the nouns '*promise'* and '*distance'* can be suspected, although they are not adjacent.

3) Combined recurrence

Words that are adjacent in a given text are only eligible for the status of collocations if they do not occur next to each other by mere chance but because they are frequently used in this particular combination. In short, collocations should be recurrent word combinations. As mentioned in Section 2, there are linguists who do not apply this criterion but define *collocations* simply as combined occurrences (rather than recurrent combinations). Like Herbst (1996: 383), rightly points out, that definitions of this type somehow miss the point. For one thing, the *langue*-related relevance of collocations is not captured by such definitions - even though it can of course be included by introducing subcategories such as *usual* and *unusual* collocations. Again, it is not clear what is gained by calling co-occurrences of words *collocations,* when the term *combination,* or indeed *co-occurrence* itself, covers the same range of phenomena. This does not mean that the idea of recurrence is unproblematic, though. Theoretically clear and plausible as this criterion is, it is also extremely difficult to operationalize.

However, since the advent of corpus linguistics research has benefited from more objective possibilities of dealing with the question of recurrence in word combinations.

Gill (2011:42) expliains that the Firthian concept of collocation is the one that most corpus linguists refer to; and since computers have greatly facilitated access to information about language, it is inevitable that corpus linguists should have dedicated so much of their energy to collocation. Indeed, collocation lies at the heart of corpus query software applications and the analysis of concordances.

The most important contributions of computers to the study of collocations are (i) retrievability and (ii) quantification. As far as retrievability is concerned, corpus query software extracts all instances of a node, each in its original context, and therefore with all its attested contexts. This means that high-frequency collocations whose salience is middling or low can be extracted in addition to those whose salience is high and which are therefore intuitively recoverable. In particular, it is possible to identify grammatical collocations including low-salience support verb constructions (*take a look*, *have a go*) and combinations such as *Friday night* or *Monday morning* which look compositional on the surface but which carry cultural implications as collocations which are not suggested by their constituents.

Within corpus linguistics, a word combination can be considered as a collocation if it occurs recurrently in the data, which means at least twice (Sinclair 1991) though Clear considers three occurrences as the minimum requirement (1993: 277). Co-occurrence need not be contiguous nor need its sequencing be fixed, but the collocates are expected to occur within five words left or right of each other, and the closer they are, the more significant their relationship.

> Collocations are also recurrent combinations of words, making them institutionalised lexical items or, at the very least, institutional word combinations, just like idioms are. Some collocations are completely non-compositional (though perfectly analysable). This is the case with binominals and compounds (salt and pepper, blood red). Others are semi-compositional, including most verb-noun collocates, which can tolerate a high degree of morphological and syntactic position change, and "long distance collocations" (Siepmann 2005) which are spaced out over longer stretches of text (e.g. not only … but [also]).
> The salient meaning of a collocation also differs from the sum of the salient meanings of its constituents, even though this difference is often masked by familiarity. For example, contact lenses do not resemble other types of lenses used in optics due to their size, material and flexibility; and contact is made between the lens and the eyeball rather than between visual perception and the object viewed. Collocations may be transparent or opaque, and here again familiarity interferes: fish and chips does not refer to any fish accompanied by chips, but to a certain kind of fish (typically cod, haddock or plaice) which has been dipped in batter and deep-fried; and it is served with thick-cut potato chips, not with French fries, and typically bought as street-food from a fish and chip shop (cf. Cruse 1986: 39–40). Finally, collocations may express untruths if compared to a literal reading: where is the height in highly dangerous, the having in have a look, the ink or vehicle in a pen drive? (Gill 2011:24).

The words that form a collocation may not be immediately adjacent to each other. Example; The decision to use the atomic bomb was made by President Truman. However, the number of words that separate the components (usually 0-5 words) is taken into consideration. This is referred to as the collocational span. (cf. Svensen 2009:160).

2.1 Types of Collocations

There are several types of collocations as outlined by McCarthy (2005:11). Some of them include:

1) Adjectives and nouns: There are adjectives that are used with particular nouns. Examples:
   - Jean always wears red or yellow or some other **bright colour.**
   - We had a **brief chat** about the exams but didn't have time to discuss them properly.
   - Unemployment is a **major problem** for the government at the moment.
   - Improving the health service is another **key issue** for government.
2) Nouns and verbs: these consist of nouns and verbs that often go together. Below are some examples that have to do with economics and business.
   - The **economy boomed** in the 1990s. [the economy was very strong]
   - The **company** has **grown** and now employs more people than last year.
   - The **company** has **expanded** and now has branches in most major cities.
3) Noun + noun: There are a lot of collocations with the pattern a… of …, examples include:
   - As Sam read the lies about him, he felt **a surge of anger.** [literary: a sudden angry feeling]
   - Every parent feels **a sense of pride** when their child does well or wins something.
   - I felt **a pang of nostalgia** when I saw the old photos of the village where I grew up.
4) Verbs and expressions with prepositions: Some verbs collocate with particular expressions. Examples:
   - As Jack went on stage to receive his gold medal for the judo competition, you could see his parents **swelling with pride.** [looking extremely proud]
   - I was **filled with horror** when I read the newspaper report of the explosion.
   - When she spilt on her new skirt, the little girl **burst into tears.** [suddenly started crying]

5) Verbs and adverbs: some verbs have particular adverbs that regularly collocate with them. Examples:
   - She **pulled steadily** on the rope and helped him to safety. [pulled firmly and evenly]
   - He **placed** the beautiful vase **gently** on the window ledge.
   - 'I love you and want to marry you,' Derek **whispered softly** to Marsha.
   - She **smiled proudly** as she looked at the photos of her new grandson.
6) Adverbs and adjectives: Adjectives often have particular adverbs which regularly collocate with them. Examples:
   - They are **happily married.**
   - I am **fully aware** that these are serious problems. [I know well]
   - Harry was **blissfully unaware** that he was in danger. [Harry had no idea at all, often used about something unpleasant]

   Svensen went further to identify other types of collocation that are not included in the work of McCarthy. They are;

7) Verb and noun (direct object):
   Mount an attack, draw a conclusion, commit a crime, make/take a decision, raise doubts, conduct/perform an experiment, exert/wield influence, give/deliver a lecture, inflict pain, break/keep a promise, impose/inflict punishment, achieve/produce a result, break/observe a rule, emit/produce a sound, arouse suspicion.
8) Noun and noun:
   Swarm of bees, flock of sheep, gust of anger, beam/ray of light, grain of rice, speck of dirt. (cf 2009:164).

2.2. Why do we study Collocations?

There are three reasons why we study collocations, according to McCarthy (2005:6). They are;

a) It gives you the most natural way to say something: smoking is **strictly forbidden** is more natural than smoking is strongly forbidden.
b) It gives you alternative ways of saying something, which may be more colourful/ expressive or more precise: instead of repeating It was **very** cold and **very** dark, we can say It was **bitterly** cold and **pitch** dark.

c) It improves your style in writing: instead of saying poverty **causes crime,** you can say poverty **breeds crime,** instead of saying **a big meal,** you can say a **substantial meal.** You may not need or want to use these in informal conversations, but in writing they can give your text more variety and make it read better.

It is explicitly suggested in the introduction of *Oxford Collocations Dictionary for Students of English* (2003:vii) that "for the student, choosing the right collocation will make his speech and writing sound much more natural, more native-speaker-like, even when basic intelligibility does not seem to be at issue". There is a big difference between writing and speaking in English and writing and speaking in good English. The difference is to a great extent decided by the knowledge of and command of collocations. In a sense, the publication of the specialized dictionary itself clearly demonstrates the importance of collocation in English learning. To conclude, to use good (idiomatic) English, learners of English must learn collocation.

Collocation also provides a good way to memorize new words. Taylor cited in (Nation 2004:38) when giving the reasons for studying words in collocation, posits that "words which are naturally associated in context are learnt more easily than those not so associated; vocabulary is best learned in context; context alone is insufficient without deliberate association...."

It is pointed out in *Oxford Collocations Dictionary for Students of English* (2003:vii) that "the precise meaning in any context is determined by that context: by the words that surround the combine with the core word---by collocation." For example, *handsome* can be used in different contexts. *A handsome man* is a good-looking man; *a handsome woman* is a physically strong woman; *a handsome reward* is a large amount of reward; *a handsome present* is a generous present. Only one meaning of *handsome* can be realized by the specific collocates in a given context.

Collocations provide connections that help learners to deeply understand a word's meaning and furthermore to add it to his or her current vocabulary. While giving a clue to memorize new words the method to learn words by collocations also instructs learners to use right words in right time and place.

2.3. Collocations in English Dictionaries

A good learner's dictionary will give you information on collocation. Sometimes the information may be highlighted in some special way. In other cases, the examples used in the dictionary include the most common collocations. For example, in the Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary (CALD), common and useful collocations are given in bold type. A good dictionary will also tell you if a collocation is formal or informal. For example, CALD indicates that **to take somebody up on an offer** is an informal collocation (**accept an offer** would be a more formal alternative. (cf McCarthy 2005:10).

We understand that the base–collocate view of collocation is not simply a matter concerning positioning in dictionaries, but has semantic implications too. Viewing the constituents of a collocation as semantically unequal has repercussions on how the meaning itself is perceived. The implication is that a base is coloured by its collocate, but not changed, and that the collocate contributes a nuance or indeed changes its meaning. Again, this is problematic, because not all collocations behave this way. (cf. Gill 2011:41).

Benson et al. (1986a) provide both grammatical and lexical collocations in their *BBI Combinatory dictionary of English*. According to them, "grammatical collocations consist of 'a dominant word (noun, adjective, verb) and a preposition or grammatical structure such as an infinitive or a clause', while lexical collocations 'normally do not contain prepositions, infinitives and clauses' but typically 'consist of nouns, adjectives, verbs, and adverbs''. It is important we note that only grammatical collocations include a "dominant word", because this suggests that the constituents of lexical collocations have equal semantic status. What is necessary is that the collocation has psychological salience as a unit (Benson et al. 1986b: 253).

There are a number of reasons why it is usually difficult for language learners to point out collocations in an L2 dictionary. One of the most important reasons is the interference of the language learner's L1. The errors occur as a result of the attempt of the learners to make use of their L1 knowledge. For example, when English students of Igbo are not competent enough, they try to make use of English instructions or rules which leads to collocation errors in writing the Igbo language. Difficulty in picking out collocations in a new language could also be facilitated or

caused by the attempt of the learners to generalize the knowledge of the language acquired, that is, they try to formulate rules based on their learning experiences in order to apply these rules to new language materials. Or put it in another way, they tend to extend the use of a grammatical rule or linguistic item beyond its accepted uses. When it comes to collocation, they tend to generalize the use of a particular word in a right collocation to make wrong collocations. For example, *give up* is a correct collocation; learners tend to generalize the use of *give* in this phrase because it is used in other prepositions like *give out, give in, give away* to make new phrases like **give behind* and **give between*, which are actually not correct in English. Svensen (2009:166) provides another difficulty in identification of collocation by non-native speakers. He points to the fact that 'a collocation in a given language does not necessarily have a collocational counterpart in another language'. That is, a word that is used as a collocation in one language may not be used as a collocation in another language. therefore, collocational information is very vital for the purpose of production and reception of dictionaries. It has been asserted that the quality of a reception dictionary can, at least be related to the number of collocations listed under the collocators, and the quality of a production dictionary can be related to the number of collocations listed under the bases. (Mittmann 1999:103 cited in Svensen 2009:169). He further explains that collocations can be difficult to recognize in dictionaries not only because they are presented without any particular marker, among other types of word combination (Svensen 2009:183).

2.4. Collocations and Dictionary Types

Svensen (2009:170) describes the different dictionary types and the different collocational information they require.

a) Monolingual dictionaries:

In principle, L1 dictionaries are intended for both production and reception. This implies that they should provide information about the choice of collocators with given bases (production) as well as the meaning of certain collocators that may be difficult to understand (reception). A collocation that may cause interpretation problems should be shown under the collocator as well even though L1 users do not usually have problems with the meaning of collocations.

L2 dictionaries are also intended for the purpose of production and reception. This means that they, too, must also provide information about possible collocators with certain bases as well as about the meaning of collocators that may be difficult to understand. L2 dictionaries are mainly

used for language learning, therefore, collocational information should be amply provided in the entries for the bases, since the users will often have doubts as to the correct expression.

b) Bilingual dictionaries:

L1→L2 dictionaries are intended for the reception of foreign-language text from the translation into the user's native language. This means that collocational information must be provided only where there are problems of interpretation or equivalence, that is, transparent and immediately translatable collocations need not be included.

L1→L2 dictionaries are used for production in a foreign language and for translation from the native language into a foreign language. Since the target-language collocator is often unpredictable, there is a great need for collocational information. In this type of dictionary, all types of relevant collocations need to be included, transparent or not, directly translatable or not. In such dictionaries, collocational information should be provided under the base, since it is about the base that one wants to say something.

Having described the concept of collocation in this section, we shall in the next section examine collocation in the four Igbo-English dictionaries.

3. Data Presentation and Analysis

Here, collocations in the Igbo dictionaries are examined with the purpose of finding out the positioning of collocation in Igbo dictionaries, how collocation are marked for parts of speech in Igbo dictionaries, if the collocation in these dictionaries are marked or unmarked.

The data used in this work is extracted from four Igbo-English dictionaries. These dictionaries include;

a) Bilingual Dictionary of the Igbo and English Languages with Thesaurues 3rd edition by Oliver Akponye.
b) Igbo-English Dictionary by Egemba Igwe
c) Igbo-English Dictionary: A Comprenhensive Dictionary of the Igbo language by Michael J.C. Echeruo.
d) Nkowaokwu Igbo n'okwu Bekee [Igbo-English Dictionary by Geoffreey .E. Emenako.

The four dictionaries shall be examined differently to find out the positioning of the collocations of the *gba* verbs, whether the collocations are placed under the first or the second word, the marking of parts of speech and indications of collocational span, from which draw our conclusions.

3.1. Dictionary 1: Bilingual Dictionary of the Igbo and English Languages with Thesaurues 3rd edition by Oliver Akponye.

This is a bilingual dictionary (for the purpose of Igbo speakers and non-Igbo speakers who would like to learn Igbo as L2).

What is the position of collocation in this dictionary?

Having carefully studied the lemma 'gba' in this dictionary, it is evident that all the collocations of the lemma are placed as independent lemmas and not given as examples of usage. Each of them stand as a lemma. Example:

Table 1: *gba* verb and its complements.

No	Simple 'gba' with complements	Complex 'gba' with complements
1	Gba nkiti	Gbaakwa àmà
2	Gbaa afọ̀	Gbaakwa àjà
3	Gbaa àmà	Gbaakwa ákáébē
4	Gbaa ìz ù	Gbaakwa n' èzí
5	Gbaa òdìbò	Gbajuo ọ̀zọ́

The collocation is placed under the first word (which is the verb 'gba') as seen in the above examples.

The marking of parts of speech:

The collocations in this dictionary are marked for parts of speech in such a way that the simple 'gba' with complements are categorized as verbs. Example: (pg. 66,67)

Gbaa afọ̀ --- v

Gbaa ọ̀tọ́ --- v

While some of the complex 'gba' are categorized as verbs, others are classified as adverbs, verbs. Eg:

Table 2: Complex *gba and their parts of speech*

Complex 'gba'	Parts of speech (POS)	Page no
Gbaakwa afọ̀	V	67
Gbaghi afọ̀	V	71

Collocational span:

There are only two instances of collocational span (as reviewed in the literature as a situation where the components of collocation are separated by 0-5 words) in the collocational pattern of 'gba' in this dictionary. Eg:

Table 3: *gba* verb in a collocational span

Collocation	page no
Simple: gbaa (onye) mbu	66
Gbaakwa (onye) mbu	67

3.2 Dictionary 2: Igbo-English Dictionary by Egemba Igwe

This is a learners' dictionary proposed for Igbo learners.

Position of the collocation:

In this dictionary, most of the components of collocation are presented as lemmas. Eg:

Table 4: Collocations as Lemmas

Simple 'gba'	Complex 'gba'
Gba ajuju	gbakasa ahu
Gba miri	gbasa miri
Gba ufufu	igbawa obi ime

There are two cases of collocations that do not occur as lemma, instead they occur as examples.

Table 5: Collocations as examples

Page no	Collocation	Headword
192	Ịgbā mbọ̀	Ịgbā ngù
199	Gbakeri ala	Gbakeri

There is also another way of presenting the collocations, not as lemma but as sublemma; derived forms of the lemma. Example in page 20

Lemma : gbàno

Sublemmas: Ịgbàno aka

Ịgbàno ukwu

Ịgbàno obì

The collocations are placed under the first word 'gba' in this dictionary.

The marking of parts of speech:

The marking of the parts of speech of collocations in this dictionary is very poor because the author (lexicographer) does not reflect the part of speech of the collocations all through the dictionary (specifically the lemma 'gba'). It only shows the lemma 'gba' and identifies it's a verb but the derivations of the verb in the form of collocations are not categorized and this is not suitable for the proposed users of this dictionary.

Eg; lemma: gba --- v

Collocations: igba egbe, igba aka, igba aku, igba ajuju, igba asu etc are not marked. There is no indication of collocational span in this dictionary.

3.3 Dictionary 3: Igbo-English Dictionary; A Comprenhensive Dictionary of the Igbo language by Michael J.C. Echeruo.

There is no specification of the users of this dictionary.

Position of collocations:

All the components of collocation in this dictionary are presented as lemmas. Eg:

Table 6: More collocations as Lemmas

Simple gba	Complex gba
Gbaa afa	Gbapu ezi
Gbaa afo	Gbaluo iru
Gbaa aghara	Gbakilie ana
Gbaa aji	Gbagharia anya

The collocations are also placed with the first word (the verb 'gba').

The marking of parts of speech:

The parts of speech of all the collocating structures are all and duly represented as verbs not minding the part of speech of the collocate. Eg: Table 7: Collocations and their Parts of Speech

Collocation	Parts of speech
Gbaa akwuna	Verb
Gbaa anya mmiri	Verb
Gbaa isi akwara	Verb
Gbasie ike	Verb

There is also no trace of collocational span in the entries.

3.4 Dictionary 4: Nkowaokwu Igbo n'okwu Bekee [Igbo-English Dictionary by Geoffreey .E. Emenako.

This is a bilingual dictionary (it is purposed for both Igbo and English users).

Position of collocations:

This dictionary has a different arrangement in terms of the positioning of the collocations. This is because, the base-collocate are neither presented as lemmas nor sublemmas like the other dictionaries. Instead, the simple 'gba' is presented as a lemma alone without its complement, so also the complex 'gba' is presented as a lemma with no complement with it. However, some of the complements of collocation are presented as examples;

Table 8: *Gba* as lemma without complements

Simple 'gba'	Lemma	Page	Complex 'gba'	Lemma	Page
Gbaa mmiri	Gbaa	68	Gbasaa aka	gbasaa	72
Gbaa afo	Gbaa	68	Igbaru mmiri	gbaruo	72
Gbaa mbo	Gbaa	68	Gbata mmiri	gbata	72
Gbaa mgba	Gbaa	68	Gbazinye ego	gbazie	73
Gbaa akwukwo	Gbaa	68			

Collocational span:

There are also complements that are collocating with the lemma (both simple and complex) but are not adjacently written together, rather, they are separated by a few words. Eg:

Table 9: More *gba* verbs in collocational span

Collocator- collocate	Page
Gbaa….ọsọ́	68
Gbaa….egbe	68
Gbaa….afo	68
Gbaruo…onu	72
Gbaruo…ihu	72

This dictionary exhibits the highest occurrence of collocational span amongst the four dictionaries in study. It is also under the first word 'gba' that the collocations are placed. This is the same in all the dictionaries used in this work.

The marking of parts of speech:

In the marking of parts of speech, the lemmas (the simple and complex 'gba' in isolation) are marked as verbs while the complements that are separated from the
lemmas are marked as nouns. Eg:

Table 10: Parts of speech of the lemmas and their complements

Lemma	POS	Complement	POS	Page
Simple- gbaa	Verb	Ọsọ́	noun	68
Simple- gbaa	Verb	Afọ́	noun	68
Complex-gbafuo	Verb	Afọ́	Noun	69
Complex-gbakiri	Verb	Ala	Noun	70

4. Summary and Conclusion

This work studies the lemma 'gba' in four Igbo dictionaries. As already mentioned in the introduction, the purpose of this study is to discover if the arrangement of this dictionary entry is the same in the four different dictionaries, bearing in mind the positioning of the collocations (are they represented as lemma, sublemma or examples), whether the collocation is usually placed under the first or second word (base or collocate), the way the parts of speech are marked and evidences of collocational span. From this study, it has been discovered firstly that the Igbo dictionaries do not have a uniform arrangement of collocations. In the positioning of the collocations, while some dictionaries use them as examples, other dictionaries use them as headwords. The Bilingual Dictionary of the Igbo and English Languages with Thesaurues 3rd edition by Oliver Akponye and the Igbo-English Dictionary: A Comprenhensive Dictionary of the Igbo language by Michael J.C. Echeruo use them as headwords (lemma). Igbo-English Dictionary by Egemba Igwe represents some as lemmas, some as sublemmas and others as examples. Nkowaokwu Igbo n'okwu Bekee [Igbo-English Dictionary by Geoffreey .E. Emenako do not

represent them as lemmas or sublemma instead they are used as examples while the rest complement the lemmas but are separated by the collocational span.

In marking the parts of speech, Akponye's Bilingual Dictionary of the Igbo and English Languages with Thesaurues categorizes simple 'gba' as verbs and complex 'gba' as verbs too, Igwe's Igbo-English Dictionary did not classify the parts of speech of all the collocations at all, this is not commendable especially for the fact that it is a learners' dictionary. Echeruo's Igbo-English Dictionary represents all the collocations as verbs not considering the parts of speech of the collocates, while Emenako's Nkowaokwu Igbo n'okwu Bekee [Igbo-English Dictionary marks the base (lemmas) differently from the collocates (complements). The collocators are categorized as verbs while the collocates are categorized as nouns. This is to say that the four Igbo dictionaries all mark the parts of speech of collocations in different ways.

However, the dictionaries show a similarity in one out of the four points examined; the collocations are placed under the first word (the lemma 'gba' and not under its complements). This is encouraging for both Igbo speakers and those learning Igbo as they can immediately refer to the lemma 'gba' when searching for a possible collocation. Only Akponye and Emenako's dictionaries show evidences of collocational span, although Emenako's Igbo-English Dictionary exhibit a higher frequency of occurrence than Akponye's Bilingual dictionary.

This work therefore concludes there is not sufficient information on collocation in Igbo dictionaries both for the Igbo native speakers and for the second language learners. Igbo lexicographers should be guided on the principles of collocation in dictionary making in order to improve the standard of our native language dictionaries because apart from helping the language learners, these dictionaries could also be archived and aid in preserving our language from future endangerment.

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