# A REVIEW OF CROSS-REFERENCING IN IGBO DICTIONARIES

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**Abstract**

Cross-reference (or Mediostructure) guides or directs the user of a dictionary to additional information about an entry. The mediostructural entries can guide the user between different texts, between the central text, text in front or back matter, or between various articles functioning as subtext in the lemma list. This paper is simply an effort to examine the use of cross-references in Igbo dictionaries in order to ascertain whether the users are provided with all the necessary information they require about a lemma, since cross-reference is considered a vital type of dictionary structure which cuts across the main types such as megastructure, macrostructure and the microstructure. More so, it is one of the pre-requisites in planning an entry in a dictionary. Three Igbo bilingual dictionaries by Igwe (1999), Echeruo (2001) and Akponye (2011) were examined for this study from which our data were drawn and five randomly selected lexical items were used in order to ascertain how they are cross-referenced in these dictionaries adopting the descriptive method. The findings of the study show that the mediostructure is not adequately presented in these dictionaries and in some cases, it is not represented at all. This, no doubt has serious implication as users of these dictionaries do not get all the required information about a lemma thereby losing vital information they need. It is also observed that there are inconsistencies in the use of typographical indicators, which although explicitly marked, leaves the users to discern the kind of information they are to get at the cross-reference address. The work concludes there is the need for Igbo lexicographers to adequately represent some information such as collocational, idiomatic information, lexico-semantic relations of entries, and sense relation, which are current issues in lexicography in general.

## 1.0 Introduction

A cross-reference (also called the mediostructure) is usually located in certain positions in an entry. It is an indicator which (explicitly or implicitly) guides the users between different places in the dictionary (i.e from one place in the dictionary to another, either within or outside the dictionary) in order to show the way to the information sought, or to supplement or deepen the information already found (Svensen 2009). The essence of cross-referencing at the end of an entry is to provide a comprehensive semantic treatment of a term which could be information on collocation, idioms, and semantic relations, etc. By cross-referencing related terms, the reader may gain accurate understanding of the nuances and limits of a particular concept of a language. Cross-reference is a standard structural principle in planning an entry in the dictionary. One of the major functions of cross-reference is to show the way to the place where the information is to be found and to also prevent loss of information in the description of certain lexical items. This

study tries to ascertain the indication of cross-reference in Igbo dictionaries since the relationship of lexical items with other entries is not properly delineated in the microstructure which shows the order or relationships between items of information (indications) that (directly or indirectly) have reference to a lemma. However, since information about a vocabulary of a language is very vital and critical in the diffusion of a language as asserted by Ogbulogo (2001), the implication is that users tend to lose some vital information that they need to know about a lemma if the lexico-semantic aspects of a lemma are not properly represented with regard to various levels of semantic relationships such as synonyms, antonym, hyponyms, and collocational and idiomatic usages. It is against this backdrop that this study is geared towards addressing these lapses in the distribution structure of Igbo dictionaries, so that lexicographers can meet up with the standard structural principles and requirements in the distribution and description of certain lexical items. The method used is simply descriptive. Five randomly selected lexical items that share same meaning or related meanings with other lexical items were used. Also, some lexical items that have common usages were also used so as to find out if additional information about these entries are represented either by use of defined/translated examples and/or with an explicit cross-reference to the lemma that share relationship with the entry. Related forms having related meanings were also examined to see if they are given parallel equivalents since this is important in a bilingual dictionary. The English dictionary serves as a control and guided our findings.

The rest of the paper is structured as follows: section two looks at cross-reference in dictionaries and the different methods of cross-referencing. While, section three discusses cross-reference in some Igbo dictionaries, section four forms our summary and conclusion.

**2.0 Cross-references (Mediostructure) in Dictionaries**

According to Gouws and Prinsloo (1998:17) in Nkomo (2007), the mediostructure is the system of cross-referencing used to establish relations among different components of a dictionary. In simpler terms, it is a cross-reference structure by which is meant "the network of cross-references which allows compilers and users of a reference work to locate material spread over different component parts" (Hartmann and James 1998:32). Svensen (2009:77) also notes that cross-reference structure is one of the seven types of dictionary structures. Others include: megastructure, macrostructure, microstructure, distributions structure, access structure and addressing structure. The mediostructure is considered a vital structure in the dictionary because

it cuts across the main structure types such as megastructure, macrostructure and the microstructure. While, the megastructure involves the order of, and relationships between the main components of a dictionary, the macrostructure of the dictionary is the order of, and relationship between the lemmas making up the lemma list. It involves the spelling and meaning side of the lemmas. The microstructure involves the structure of the entries, how they are ordered and the relationship between items of information (indications) that (directly or indirectly) have reference to a lemma. With regard to the role of the mediostructure, Nkomo (2007) explains that the:

> mediostructure serves both the maker and the user of the dictionary. It is viewed as an intersection of two practices of great disparity: dictionary making and dictionary use. As a convention, it assists the lexicographer to gather information from different sources, compress and condense it in order to save space, and distribute it in the different access positions following a clearly spelt out macrostructural and microstructural system.

A cross-reference can also be described from its position or direction. A cross-reference can guide a user in the same entry or to a place outside the entry but within the lemma list. It can also refer the user to the information contained in the outside matter; a generic term for front, back and the middle matter. Information that precedes the lemma list are the front matter, those following it are the back matter, while the middle matter is usually inserted in the lemma list such as types of illustrations and survey entries. The discussion of the outside matter in Igbo dictionaries can be found in Okeke (2022).

Different kinds of information such as information about different forms that have same meaning, related forms that have related meaning, lemmas that belong to lexical sets, cross-reference of irregular forms of verbs, and lemmas which have special meanings e.t.c. can be cross-referenced in dictionaries. The next section will present the different types of cross-reference points and addresses.

### 2.1 Types of Cross-reference Addresses

The scope of a dictionary determines the information the lexicographer should present for entries. For instance, monolingual dictionaries are designed for reception while bilingual dictionaries are meant to provide equivalence in terms of meaning and usage either in the source

language (SL) or the target language (TL) depending on the direction of the dictionary i.e L1-L2 or L2-L1

There are different types of cross-references directing the user from the cross-reference position or reference entry to where the information is to be sought known as the cross-reference address. Depending on the kind of information a lexicographer wants the user to get; the cross-reference address provides additional information about an entry. The different types of cross-reference address as identified by Svensén (2009:389) are as follows:

**a. Entry-internal cross-reference versus Entry-external cross-reference address**

The entry-internal cross-reference guides a user from one place in a dictionary entry to another within the same entry which is referred to as the microstructure, while the entry-external cross-reference address directs the user to a place outside the entry but inside the lemma list. This type of entry refers to the macrostructure.

**b. Component-internal cross-reference versus Component-external cross-reference address**

The component-internal type of cross-reference directs the user from a certain dictionary component (for e.g, dictionary lemma list, grammar), to another place within the same component, while the component-external type of cross-reference is usually a direction from a place in a certain dictionary component towards a place outside the component in question (within the same dictionary). This type cross-references to the megastructure.

**c. Dictionary-internal cross-reference versus Dictionary-external cross-reference address**

The dictionary-internal cross-reference guides the user to information from one dictionary to another place within the same dictionary; the dictionary-external cross-reference guides the user for information in a place in a dictionary to a place outside the dictionary (handbook, technical etc).

The different types of cross-references will be taken into consideration. However, our focus is on the entry-internal cross-reference and entry-external cross-reference which borders on the microstructure and the macrostructure respectively.

**2.2. Examples of Cross-references in Dictionaries**

Cross-references in *Collins Easy Learning French Study Dictionary* shows a lexical entry for 'complete'

Table 1: Entry for 'Complete'

**Complet** (fem. Complète) [kɔ̃plɛ, -ɛt] ADJECTIVE
▷See also complet NOUN
**1.Complete** □ Les oevres complètes de Shakespeare
The complete works of Shakespeare

**2. Full**
□ L'hôtel est complet. The hotel is full. '**Complet**' 'no vacancies'
□ le pain **complet** 'wholemeal bread'
Le **complet** [kɔ̃plɛ] NOUN
▷ See also complet ADJECTIVE
Suit (for man)

The above lexical entry in French 'complete' makes cross-reference to the microstructure. That is to say, it guides the user to another entry within the same lemma. This is a typical entry-internal cross-reference type. The user is directed to the cross-reference address by means of explicit cross-reference using 'see also' indicator to places showing the different usages of the lexical item when it is used as a noun or an adjective.

**Cross-reference in *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (OALDE)*, 2010**

Table 2: Cross reference of 'zip'

**3. Zip** (zip) n, v

□ noun 1 (also 'zip fastener) (both *BrE*) (also zip-per *NAmE, BrE*) [c] a thing u use to fasten clothes, bags etc. it consists of two rows of metal or plastic teeth that you can pull together to close sth or pull apart to open it: *to do up/undo/open/close a zip* ○ my zip's stuck → VISUAL VOCAB page V51
**opp** unzip

From example 3 in table 2 using the lemma 'zip', a cross-reference is made to the outside matter by means of the right-hand side arrow indicator, directing the user to picture vocabulary for more information at the cross-reference address. The example does not include the other meanings of

'zip'. The essence of this example is to show that the mediostructure also directs the user to the megastructure.

**Cross-reference in *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (LDOCE),* 1995.**

Table 3: Cross reference of 'buzz-cut' and 'definitely'

| |
|---|
| **4. buzz-cut** /'b^zk^t/ n (c) *AmE* a very short style of cutting hair – see picture at HAIRSTYLE |
| **5. def-i-nite-ly** /'definitli/, 'defənitli/adv with no chance of being wrong; certainly: *Max knows that he had definitely been wrong about Diana. "It's not worth that much, is it?" "No, definitely not!"* – see OF COURSE (USAGE), SURELY (USAGE) |

Using the lexical item 'buzz-cut' in example (4) in table 3, a user is directed to the picture of different hairstyles in the cross-reference address so as to see the short style of haircut. The lexical item 'definitely' in (5) is cross-referenced to 'of course' and 'surely' directing the user to obtain additional information especially with regard to word choices and usages. For instance, 'of course' is not used as a reply to a request for information but can be used in a friendly way to agree to something or do something someone has asked you.

**2.3. Forms of Cross-references**

There are basically two forms of cross-references; direct and indirect, otherwise called the explicit and implicit cross-references. While, explicit cross-reference clearly directs or guides the user to the cross-reference address by means of text elements such as *see also, go to, check, compare* etc. other indicators used are *arrows, section numbers, abbreviated commands, line pointing to numbered, illustrations, asterisk,* e.t.c.; the implicit form is not directly stated but it suggests a look up for more information to the user with regard to the lemma. For instance, it shows how a lemma differs from or is similar to other items in the dictionary by means of a special font variant for the text element such as enclosing the cross-reference item usually

superscript in a bracket < > or use of 'cf'. However, these topographical indicators are usually in bold, italics, type or small capitals.

It worthy to note that cross-referencing that is introduced by the words "See also" are called notional cross-references. They draw attention to a series of closely-related terms that are associated through a logical relationship of cause and effect, or of a part in relation to the whole. It may also indicate a close notional proximity to a related term, refer to terms whose meanings are either in relationships of opposition, complementarity, or of reciprocity.

### 3.0 Treatment of Cross-Reference in Igbo Dictionaries

This section draws examples of cross-references in some selected Igbo dictionaries such as Igwe (1999), Echeruo (2001), and Akponye (2011).

### 3.1 Cross-reference in *Igwe's (1999) dictionary*

Cross-reference in this dictionary is by means of section numbers indicators both in the megastructure and microstructure. Indicators such as: *see also, same as, compare* e.t.c. explicitly directs the user to the cross-reference address for additional information. Cross-reference in this dictionary is used here between sections in the front matter. It refers the user from one section number; cross-reference position to another section number, to the cross-reference address for more information. However, in the microstructure, the author makes use of explicit indicators such as 'see' and implicit indicator such as 'cf' directing the user to additional information. This is exemplified with the synonym in table 4.

Table 4: Cross-reference of **ùkwe** and **abụ**

| |
|---|
| **6. abụ** n Church or Christian songs; hymn; anthem; (see **ùkwe1**) (cross-reference position) |
| **7. ùkwe1**. n (a) hymn; song; hymonody; (b) antiphonal singing (see **abụ̀**) (cross-reference address) |

In table 4, cross-reference of the synonyms; ***ùkwe*** and ***abụ*** shows the cross-reference point to the cross-reference address for both lemmas. The number in the entry '*ukwe*' shows that there are

other senses of *'ukwe'* which makes the cross-reference specific, but there are other numberings on the lemma showing the different meanings of the verb which confuses a user since the particular meaning of the verb being sought for is not explicitly stated. This confuses a user who finds it difficult to differentiate between the lemma and sub-lemmas. Also, cross-reference is made to variants of a lemma such as in table 5

**Table 5: dialectal variation of the entry 'mmezi' and àchàlà**

| |
|---|
| **8. mmezi** vb. n. (a) = **mmema**; (b) a little extra or addition given to a buyer of something by a dealer (= **nkwazi**; cf. **mmedụ, mmezù)** |
| **9. àchàlà n. see àchàrà** (Onitsha) |

The lexical entry *'mmezi'* shows the different dialectal variations. The cross-reference is implicitly marked using the indicator '*cf*'. For the entry *àchàlà,* a cross-reference is made to the entry *'àchàrà'* where it is fully explained. Definition is not given in the entry for *'àchàlà'*, but for the Onitsha variant *'àchàrà'* where it is fully explained. The dialectal representation of lemmas in this dictionary constitutes a problem for the user. Oweleke (2013:540) in discussing Igbo dialects and the citation-form also observes that both sound and lexical variants are treated as headwords or main-entries which create unnecessary repetitions, and as a result do not save space. Hence, the study agrees with Oweleke (2013) that variants should not come as lemma but co-referenced to the lemma.

### 3.2 Cross-reference in *Echeruo* (2001)

Cross-reference in this dictionary is by means of a single asterisk (*) placed immediately before the explicit indicators such as *'same as', 'cf', 'see'*. These cross-reference positions are always after meanings and examples of the lemma directing the user to the entry that is connected to the lemma in usage, semantic relation or variants.

**Table 6: cross-references for the entries: àbà, égwù and ùghá**

| |
|---|
| **10. aba** open wound; sore with pus. *See ọ́nyá = wound (cross-reference position) |
| **11. ọ́nyá** n open wound; sore; wound that has been infected (cross-reference address) |
| **12. égwù** n (1) grave fear; state of fright; awe; dread; terror – *tụọ egwu* = have or cause grave fear; *egwu were jide ya* = he was terrified.<br>(2) Danger; source of danger – *egwu dịkwa n'obodo* = there is danger in the country.<br>Variant: **ewu** *cf **ụjọ** = fear or a less serious kind |
| **13. ụ̀ghá** n a lie or falsehood; deliberate fib * '**àsí**' (cross-reference position) |
| **14. àsí** n falsehood; lie. Variant *ashị* (cross-reference address) |

Following the examples in table 5, there are cross-references to entries that are synonymous or variants to a lemma as in *'égwù'* and *'ụjọ'*, *'asị'* and *'ụgha'* by means of asterisk indicator. This is for the Igbo-English index; however, for the English-Igbo index only lists of equivalents were given. This leaves the English user of the dictionary with incomplete information with regard to a lemma that requires an additional one.

### 3.3 Cross-reference in *Akponye* (2011)

There is no cross-referencing in this dictionary. It basically provides equivalents of the lemmas for the L1 and the L2 respectively.

Our general observations reveal that collocational information or idiomatic usages are not adequately represented for some lexical items that require it. Our look-up for the common expression *'ógólógó ákụ́kọ́'* i.e 'beating about the bush' reveal that we could neither find the information in the entry *'ákụ́kọ́'*: narrative; story; tale nor in the entry *'ógólógó'*: long, tall.

It is quite obvious from our observations that cross-reference is not adequately delineated in existing Igbo dictionaries. It is important that there should be cross-referencing showing this relationship and common usages should be explicitly marked.

Below is our proposed format for cross-referencing for collocates, sense relations and idiomatic expressions.

**Collocation**

Collocates should be cross-referenced so that the user is aware of the words the lemma frequently co-occurs with. Examples of collocates include:

15. *ányá na ḿmḭrī̱* – 'eye and water'
16. *àkụ̀ nà ụ̀bá* – 'possession and possession of assets' (wealth)
17. *ọ̀fọ́ ná ógù* – 'symbol of truth' and 'innocence' (i.e complete innocence)
18. *ogologo na akụkọ* – 'long' and 'story'

To exemplify cross-referencing of (15) – (18), we have the following:

19. **àkụ̀** (n) wealth, possession, riches, property, prosperity. ***collo***. *àkụ̀ nà ụ̀bá* 'wealth' (see *ụ̀bá*)

The entry in (19) directs the user for more information at the cross-reference address *'ụ̀bá*'. It also shows that '*àkụ̀'* frequently collocates with '*ụ̀bá'*. Also, where there are different collocates of a lemma, this should be shown according to their scale of frequencies.

Also, the example in (20) shows the entry for *ákụ́kọ́*

**20. ákụ́kọ́**: narrative; story; tale (**see**: *ógólógó*) (cross-reference position)

**21. ógólógó**: long, tall. E.g ~ **ákụ́kọ́** long story 'beating about the bush' (cross-reference address). Examples (19) & (20) guide the user to the usages.

**Synonymy**

Following Oweleke (2013:543), this study also agrees that different derivatives/variants should be entered in bold type and in parenthesis beside the lemma which should be the standard variety. This means that there will be no need for co-referencing to the variants. For instance:

22**. ụ́lọ̀** house → (***úlọ̀, ụ́lộ̀, ụ́nọ̀, ụyọ̀, ụ́yọ́, ọ́rọ̀***)

23. **árū̱** abomination → (***árū̱, álṵ́, aɽụ***)

However, where there are irregular derivatives, they should be co-referenced to the standard variety since they are synonymous. For instance see the method in (24);

24. **àchàrà** – bamboo (**Syn**: *ọtọ̄sị, ùkùtẹ̀, ọ̀kọ̀rọ̀*). Note: Syn. refers to synonyms.
This method will solve the problem of multiple entry of varieties of a word as headwords.

**Antonymy**
Oppositional relationship of an entry should be explicitly shown. For instance;

25. **ọ́má** n thing/person that is nice, good, pleasant… (**opp.** *ọ́jọ̀ọ̄*)
26. **ụ̀tọ́** n taste; flavor; tastiness; sweetness… (**opp**. *ílú*)

In (25) & (26), the semantic relation is explicitly marked by use of abbreviated opposite which should be in boldtype and in parenthesis immediately after the definition of the lemma. This clearly gives the user a clue to the meaning relationship. Other antonyms include;

27. **nwokē/nwaànyì** (man/woman)
28. **ogologo/mkpumkpu** (tall/short)
29. **di/nwunye** (‘husband/wife) etc.

Following the proposal for the above entries, the user is guided either within or outside the lemma to information concerning common usages and semantic relationships which a lemma shares with other lemmas or sub-lemmas. This is one way of enhancing successful retrieval of information by the user.

**4.0 Summary and Conclusion**
This study has tried to explore the mediostructural aspect of Igbo dictionaries. The findings reveal that idiomatic and collocational information are not clearly delineated in Igbo dictionaries. Also, various topographical indicators are used to show cross-reference system which are explicitly marked; however, in a bid to save space, there are lots of condensation in Igwe’s (2001) dictionary which is unfriendly to the user, thereby affecting textual comprehension and

cohesion. The use of section number indicators for the cross-reference system is also not clearly outlined as the essence of cross-referencing system is to create textual cohesion and to establish relations among different components in the dictionary. Also, there are inconsistencies in the use of topological indicators in Echeruo's (1999) dictionary which leave the users with no clue to the kind of information they expect to get at the cross-reference address such as semantic relations like antonyms, synonyms etc. There is no cross-reference system in Akponye (2011). This paper advocates for the use of cross-reference system that is user-friendly.

An additional point is that collocational information and idiomatic usages are neither addressed nor cross-referenced which are regarded as the problematic areas for language users. In the light of the above observations, it is vital that the mediostructure should be given prominence in Igbo dictionaries so as to avoid total loss of essential information the users need to retrieve from the dictionary.

This paper concludes by recommending the explicit cross-referencing system that is clearly marked showing common usages and semantic relations. The use of standard forms for the lemma and other variants immediately after the lemma not only save space, but also gives the user an idea of the variants of the lemma. This paper is therefore an effort to bring to the fore the need for future lexicographers not to overlook the main components that make up the mediostructure. While we commend the efforts of existing lexicographers in the development of the Igbo language through compiling dictionary, further research is needed to continue advancing the field of Igbo lexicography and creating more effective, user-friendly dictionaries.

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