

## Spatial Frames of Reference in Igbo

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As humans, one of the fundamental tricks of cognition is the spatial nature of our thought. One major area of research in modern linguistics and the cognitive sciences is concerned with finding out how spatial concepts and relationships are expressed in language. Spatial frames of reference evince the salient ways and perspectives through which our understanding and cognition of space is manifested in language. It is widely agreed that languages of the world fall into three basic attested frames of reference in the domain of space (Levinson, 1996; 2003). However, African languages have had little to no representation in the studies carried out in this area. This study intends to fill this void in Igbo. Consequently, the study attempts to categorize the conceptualisation of the domain of space in the Igbo language in line with the given frames of reference in the literature and a uniform spatial schema (Tenbrink, 2011). Based on this, Igbo sentence examples gotten from recorded conversations of Igbo speakers in Awka (Anambra, Nigeria) are used to show the different possible frames of reference. Consequently, it is discovered that the intrinsic and relative frames indeed manifest in the language, although one might argue that they are both intrinsic. Furthermore, Igbo also shares the absolute reference frame (Senft, 2017). However, the absolute reference frame found in Igbo involves a dichotomy in relation to the vertical axis (up and down) unlike some other languages that use compass directions such as north, east, south and west. Hence, constructions like *ńgbágo* (upper region or uptown) and *ńgbádà/ńgbédè/ńdịdà* (lower region or downtown) are commonly used for spatial location in Igbo.

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