Non-arbitrariness in the Tiv grammar: An appraisal of onomatopoeias and sound symbolism

Terfa Aor[1]* , Torkuma Tyonande Damkor[2] , Pilah Godwin Anyam[3]

[1]Department of Linguistics and Nigerian Languages, National Institute for Nigerian Languages (NINLAN), Aba, Abia State, Nigeria. aorterfa80@gmail.com
[2]Department of Languages and Linguistics, Benue State University Makurdi, Nigeria. damkortorkuma@gmail.com
[3]Department, of English and Literary Studies, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria. pilahanyam@gmail.com

*Corresponding author

Abstract: The study entitled 'Non-arbitrariness in the Tiv grammar: An appraisal of onomatopoeias and sound symbolisms' has debunked a long acclaimed notion that there is no co-relationship between sounds and meanings; that objects or things are called not because of the resemblance. This study substantiates that Tiv grammar has cornucopious instances of onomatopoeias and sound symbolisms which are non-arbitrary in nature. The objectives of this paper are (i) prove that there is a presence of non-arbitrariness in the Tiv grammar; (ii) classify the concept of non-arbitrariness; (iii) establish that it is easy to comprehend words or expressions that are non-arbitrarily used. Peirce's (1985) theory of sign has been used in this study to establish a convergence between sounds and meanings. This study used observation method and the data were selected using deliberate sampling. It has been found out that language is beyond arbitrariness as established by scholars. Though existed in minute instances, non-arbitrariness in language usage draws attention to such a word hence its sound aids in memorability and attention-grabbing. It has been discovered that onomatopoeias and sound symbolisms are sources of word-formation in Tiv. Non-arbitrary use of language is responsible for capturing sounding, feeling, looking, tasting or smelling of objects. This study has debunked a hackneyed dictum that human languages are solely arbitrary. This study is recommended to grammarians, linguists, lecturers, students, scholars who may want to establish a nexus between phonology and semantics (phonosemantics), discuss the iconicity in human languages and explore the efficacy of onomatopoeias and sound symbolisms as sources of word formation.

Keywords: Arbitrariness, Grammar, Iconic, Non-arbitrariness, Onomatopoeia, Phonosemantics, Sound symbolism

Biographical notes: Aor Terfa, a Lecturer II, lectures in the Department of Linguistics and Nigerian Languages at National Institute for Nigerian Languages (NINLAN), Aba, Abia State of Nigeria and a part-time lecturer at the Wisdom City Institute, Makurdi, Benue State of Nigeria. Before joining the Institute, Terfa had taught English Language in Nigerian secondary schools for fifteen years. He had spent more than two years at NINLAN. His area of specialization is Linguistic Stylistics. His areas of interest are English and Tiv morphology, phonetics and phonology, syntax and graphology. His scholarly works centered on the analyses of the English and Tiv languages.

Torkuma Tyonande Damkor holds B.A. Linguistics and M.A. Linguistics. Presently, he is doing PhD studies in Linguistics. He specialises in Morphology and Syntax. His areas of interest are: Discourse Analysis and Pragmatics. He has been teaching English Language in Nigerian Secondary Schools since 2009. He has many articles in local and international journals.

Pilah Godwin Anyam, an indigene of Kwande Local Government Area of Benue Statate of Nigeria, obtained Diploma in Social Work for Development (DSWD) from University of Jos in 1997, B.A. and M.A. English Language in 2012 and 2019 from Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. His areas of research interest among others include Morphology and Dialectology. His interest in academics and linguistic research is overwhelming. He currently works at National Animal Production Research Institute, Ahmadu Bello University, Shika, Zaria.

1   Introduction

Tiv, a tonal language spoken in the north-central geographical zone of Nigeria and part of the Republic of Cameroon, has cornucopious instances of non-arbitrariness inform of onomatopoeias and sound symbolisms. Linguists, grammarians, scholars or researchers have provided multitudinous literatures to substantiate their claims. They aver that there is no co-relationship between sounds and meanings; that objects or things are called not because of the resemblance but as a result of arbitrariness (Yule, 2007 & Lyons, 2009). But is there exception to the arbitrariness of language? Are there no instances where sounds can indicate meanings in language? If no, why is *ping pong* synonymous with table tennis? Better still, why are caw caw, *cuckoo*, *gberkôôkôô* (wood pecker) and *chakpuun* (Dane gun) named in English and Tiv languages? There are no human languages that cannot have instances of non-arbitrariness. Even if such instances are infinitesimally small, what the author wants to establish is that onomatopoeias and sound symbolisms are primary instances of this non-arbitrariness in world languages.

Considering the paucity of literatures on the non-arbitrariness of human languages, most scholars are ignorant about the nexus or convergence between sound and meaning. It has been a paradox for writers who claim that language is arbitrary but still cite minute instances of the non-arbitrariness. Linguists and grammarians such as Ullmann (1951), Lyons (1968), Nida (1975), Leanne, Johanna and John (1995), Akmajian, Demers, Farmer and Harnish (2003), Yule (2007), Lyons (2009), Algeo (2010) and Niklas (2015) cite onomatopoeia and sound symbolism for showing such an iconic connection between sound and meaning.

The significance of non-arbitrariness or iconicity in speaking, teaching and comprehension of Tiv language cannot be downgraded. As viable as icons, onomatopoeias, sound symbolisms, idiophones and phonaesthemes are in the Tiv discourse, scholars have not paid much attention to the study of Tiv phono-semantics or non-arbitrariness. As a result of lack of critical works on the non-arbitrariness in the Tiv grammar, this study therefore attempts to fill the existing scholarly gap by proving, classifying and establishing the presence and role of non-arbitrariness in the Tiv grammar.

2   Literature review

This section deals with conceptual and emipirical review and theoretical framework. Concepts of onomatopoeia and sound symbolism have been adequately explored in this section. These two concepts clearly indicated that language has both arbitrary and non arbitrary features. This study has adopted Peirce's (1985) theory of sign. According to Peirce, the sign only stands for the object it describes.

2.1   Conceptual and empirical review

Wedgwoodi (1859) establishes that apart from arbitrary words in world languages, there exists handful of words that are non-arbitrary. Wedgwoodi (1859) therefore submits that the principle of imitation foregrounds the potency of communication and brings about clarity. Wedgwoodi underscores the relevance of non-arbitrary language in our day to day communication. Ullmann (1951:35) asserts that not all words are 'purely conventional' or arbitrary in any language. Ullmann maintains that a term like *splash* in some measure expresses and describes the movement of liquid. The sounds are here a clue to the meaning. Ullmann (1951:36), therefore, dichotomises vocabulary into 'conventional and motivated'. Onomatopoeia, sound-symbolism, phonoaesthetics belong to phonetic motivation. For instance, splash is imitated by the sound and in *slide* a movement is graphically rendered by acoustic means. Lyons (1968) admits that onomatopoeic words such as neigh, bleat, hoot, crash, tinkle mimic the sounds they echo. He maintains further that that some English words are formed based on the sounds that they make – cuckoo and pewits. Lyons cites sound symbolism as showing 'constituent sounds of words and their meanings' (Lyons, 1966: 5).

Danesi (2004) and Gaines (2010) affirm that onomatopoeic words are vocal icons which stand for the sounds, actions, or movements that objects make. Iconic words describe feeling, tasting, looking, smelling qualities of objects. Nørgaard, Montoro and Busse (2010: 98) also maintain that onomatopoeic expressions 'may be seen as motivated, and hence iconic, by some kind of reflection of meaning in their form'. Innis (1985) mentions onomatopoeias and interjections which might be used to prove that the choice of the signifier is not always arbitrary. Research on non-arbitrariness has suffered a great setback because of the dominance that language arbitrariness has. That is why Perniss, Thompson and Vigliocco (2010) argue that direct imitative form-meaning is an acoustic aspect of human languages.

Dingemanse, Damián, Blasi, Lupyan, Christiansen and Monaghan (2015) define non-arbitrariness as a symbiotic relationship between form and meaning. The above six co-authors identified iconicity and systematicity as important aspects of natural language. Under iconism, they mentioned onomatopoeias and ideophones. Elam (1987: 14), McArthur (1992: 496), Sebeok (2001: 50; 153), Chandler (2005: 250) and Gaines (2010: 158) assert that 'if something is *iconic*, it represents its referents or when there is a nexus between a signifier and its denotata. The signified belongs to what words echo or mimic. Their assertions centre on onomatopoeias and sound symbolisms. Niklas (2015) identifies the iconic and indexical as the two ways of showing phono-semantics in human languages. Iconic

connections involve onomatopoeias and sound-symbolisms. The concepts of onomatopoeia and sound symbolisms have been explained below.

Onomatopoeia

Connell (1913: 178) refers to onomatopoeia as the 'resemblance between the sound of words and the sense they convey'. Connell distinguishes between direct and suggestive onomatopoeias. Direct Onomatopoeia is when the vowel and consonant sound actually imitate in their sound what is described in verse whereas suggestive onomatopoeia is when the sound of vowels and consonants does not reproduce but merely suggests what is described. Leech (1969: 97) defines onomatopoeia as 'the purely mimetic power of language – its ability to imitate other (mostly non-linguistic) sounds'. Osaka (1990) posits that onomatopoeia indicates word formation based on the imitation of natural sound. Arp and Johnson (2006: 865) state that onomatopoeic words 'in some degree suggest their meaning'.

Cuddon (2013) and Karina (2017) define onomatopoeia as a word-formation process. Aor (2020) classifies onomatopoeias into iconic, implied, lexical and reduplicative onomatopoeias. Table 1 below shows the compartmentalisation of onomatopoeias.

Table 1: Aorian /æ|ɔːrɪən/ Compartmentalisation of Onomatopoeias [Modified Version]

Onomatopoeia			
Iconic	implied	lexical	reduplicative
Sound	movement etc	phonaestheme	doubling letters

Aor elaborates that iconic onomatopoeias show sound-meaning relationship. That is to say that objects are named because of their sounds. For instance, *gberkôôkôô* (wood-pecker), *kung kung* (tambourine) are named after their sounds. Onomatopoeias are said to be implied or disguised when there is no sound-meaning interface. Such implied onomatopoeias rely on colour, smell, sight, habitat, morphology, movement, taste of animals, plants, vehicles and so on. In lexical onomatopoeias, the meaning of words depends on letters/ speech sounds and consonant clusters. For instance, 'gh' /ɣ/ words such as *fyagh, byugh*, show motion and lightning. Lastly, reduplicative onomatopoeias double their letters, syllable or words. For example, *gbeen gbe gbeen, gbuno gbu gbuno* (crooked road), *gbugh gbu gbugh*) expressing staggered movement and *gbing gbing* expressing satisfaction.

Sound symbolism

Rau (1994:18) refers to sound symbolism as 'one of the non-arbitrary aspects of the sign'. Rau buttresses that being an image icon, 'sound symbolism designates an inmost, natural similarity association between sound and meaning. Carter (2001) defines sound symbolism as a process by which we use the different sounds pronounced by our speech organs to stand for some of the sounds around us in our environment. Parault and Scwanenflugel (2006) establish that sound-symbolism show sound-meaning interface. Crystal (2008) refers to sound-symbolism as a direct association between the form and the meaning of language. Crystal mentions cases of onomatopoeia and synaesthesia as examples. Sound symbolism is also called phonetic symbolism or synaesthesia. According to Knoeferle, Li, Maggioni and Spence (2017), sound symbolism refers to the correspondence between sound and meaning.

Sharlin (2009) affirms that sound symbolism expresses the sound and movement of an object. He maintains that sounds are responsible for carrying meaning. This creates a vivid communication and an opportunity for a visceral sharing of experience. This non-arbitrary use of language vividly explains the meaning of words without the use of dictionaries.

From the above review, it is obvious that onomatopoeias and sound symbolisms relate meaning and sound. The above review showed that onomatopoeia can be lexical or non-lexical. Lexical onomatopoeias suggest the meanings by the sequence of phonemes such words contain. Non-lexical onomatopoeias are direct imitation of the sound that objects or humans make. Literatures on the discussion of non-arbitrariness range from onomatopoeia, sound symbolism, phono-symbolism, phonoaesthetics, phonaesthemes, echoism and ideophones. In this study, onomatopoeia and sound symbolism have been interchangeably used.

2.2   Theoretical framework

This study has adopted Peirce's theory of sign. According to Peirce (1985:6), a sign is a *Representamen* (something that does the representing') with a mental *Interpretant*. The sign only stands for the object it describes. In his classification of sign, Peirce (1985:9) identifies an index or a *symbol* and *icon*. Peirce (1931) states that icon stands for an object or a thing it delimits. This presupposes that onomatopoeic and sound-symbolic words are iconic signs because they simulate their referents in an acoustic way. Peirce maintains that language has both arbitrary and non-arbitrary components. He further states that non-arbitrariness is expressed through the role of icons. These icons are capable of describing sounds, movements, sight, odour, size and shape of objects. The meanings of words are explicitly made when onomatopoeias and sound symbolism are used.

The author adopted Peirce's theory of sign because it vividly describes iconic property of human languages which is non-arbitrariness. Significantly, this theory has been applied to the analysis of Tiv onomatopoeias and sound symbolisms which are highly iconic in nature. It has been used to form words based on sound-meaning correspondence; to indicate sounds of water, oil, stew; sounds of animals, birds and insects; sounds of flight, flashing, knocking and firing; sounds reflecting striking/strength/hardness and non-arbitrariness suggesting temperatures and shapes of objects.

3   Research methodology

The instrument used in this study is observation method. This method implies that the authors observe how native speakers and non-native speakers of Tiv use arbitrary and non-arbitrary words in their daily communication. With this method, the authors identified only non-arbitrary words in form of onomatopoeias and sound symbolisms. The researcher collected the data and classified them under formation of nouns based on sound-meaning correspondence; sounds of water, oil, stew in Tiv language; sounds of animals, birds and insects; sounds of flight, flashing, knocking and firing; onomatopoeias reflecting striking/strength/hardness; sounds showing movement of people, animals and objects; and onomatopoeias suggesting temperatures, urgency and shape.

To be precise, a total number of one hundred and fifty-four (154) non-arbitrary words were selected which comprised 16 words based on sound-meaning correspondence; 16 words belong to sounds of water, oil, stew; 19 sounds of animals, birds and insects; 15 sounds of flight, flashing, knocking and firing; 12 onomatopoeias reflecting striking/strength/hardness; 9 human sounds representing farting; 6 laughing sounds; 28 exclamations; 32 sounds showing movement of people, animals and objects and 17 onomatopoeias suggesting temperatures, urgency and shape. The above data were selected using deliberate sampling, selection of particular units of the universe for constituting a sample which represents the universe.

4   Findings and discussions

Formation of words based on sound-meaning correspondence

Sound-meaning nexus is minute in world languages. Its minuteness should not hinder researchers in carrying out a study that will establish such a fact. Arbitrariness as a property of human languages has been grossly contested in this study. It is an established fact that some words in Tiv language refer to the sound that such objects are named or described. A native speaker of the Tiv language does not need any explanation when words such as *ayaakyure, ayamchambe, dôôkuku, tugh-tugh, chakpuun* are mentioned. Some of these words are tabulated and explained below:

Table 1: Formation of words based on sound-meaning correspondence

S/No	Name	Description	Meaning
1	*ayaakyure*	measles/ yellow bird	a yellow coloured bird
2	*ayamchambe*	a tilapia-eating bird	a bird that eats tilapias
3	*dôôkuku*	a bird named after its sound	a bird makes *dôôkuku* sound
4	*tugh-tugh*	early in the morning	a bird name after its noise
5	*chakpuun*	Dane gun	a gun named after its sound
6	*kper or*	kill somebody	a bird named after its noise
7	*mena-ashôhô*	toads' eating snakes	a snake that swallows toads
8	*nyamkyume*	powerful animal	a ferocious animal
9	*nyam-toho*	wild animals/games	an animal that lives in the bush
10	*ruamkumen*	pounded yam	food that is pounded/crushed
11	*ruamnaham*	stirred food	food that is stirred
12	*shoko-shoko*	rattle	sound that rattle makes
13	*kpuun-kpuun*	Desert	bare land/ plain
14	*gbang-gbang*	corrugated iron	sound *gbang-gbang* makes
15	*purugh*	wing of a fowl	suggests organ of flight
16	*ufiagh-fiagh*	euphemism for God	suggesting lightning

Sounds of water, oil, stew in Tiv language

This sub-heading presents sounds that suggest the shedding of blood, dripping of water or urine, excess urination, splashed water, plunging into water, troubled water, downpour, hot oil and fried sauce. The actions of the words in the table below greatly echo their meanings. These words below constitute what is referred to as lexical onomatopoeia – the phonemes suggest the meanings of words.

Table 2: Sounds of water, oil, stew in Tiv language

S/No	Word	Transcription	Meaning
1	*ga ga ga*	**gà gà gà**	/à/ suggests oozing of blood, water, tears
2	*kese kese*	**kèsè kèsè**	/è/ suggests dripping
3	*tese tese*	**tèsè tèsè**	/è/ suggests dripping of water, rain, etc
4	*tsele tsele*	**tsèlè tsèlè**	/è/ suggests dripping of water, rain, etc
5	*tsolododo*	**Tsòlòdódó**	/ó/ suggests dripping of urine, water
6	*iuuuuuu*	**ɪú:**	/u:/ suggests flowing water
7	*Iubububu*	**ɪbúbúbú**	/u:/ suggests flowing of troubled water
8	*Uuuuuu*	**u:**	/u:/ suggests excessive urination
9	*Puchaa*	**pùtʃá:**	/a:/ suggests loud sound of splashed water
10	*duum duum*	**dú:m dú:m**	/ú:/sound made by bottle water when poured
11	*kutu kutu*	**kútú kútú**	/ú/ sound of steaming water, broth, food
12	*kudôn kudôn*	**kùdɔn kúdɔn**	/ù/, / ɔ/ sound of water in the throat
13	*Kpyom*	**kpjóm**	/ó/ sound made when sth is dropped in water
14	*kyughur*	**kju:ɣ**	/u:/ sound made when sth plunged in water
15	*Kpioo*	**kpɪó:**	/ɪó:/ sounds of a hot oil
16	*chaa/chioo*	**tʃa:/tʃɪó:**	/a:/, / ɪó:/ sounds made by a fried sauce

Sounds of animals, birds and insects

Animals, birds and insects are known for the sounds they make. These sounds comprise a major source of onomatopoeia. This type of onomatopoeia that echoes the exact noise made by animals, birds and insects is called non-lexical onomatopoeia. Someone who is conversant with the Tiv language will construe the meanings of onomatopoeias without seeing the animal, birds and insect that made them.

Table 3: Sounds of animals, birds and insects

S/No	Word	Transcription	Meaning
1	*mee/mian*	**me:/mjãn**	a goat's bleating
2	*moo/boo*	**mu:/bu:**	a noise made by cow/bull
3	*hôôn hôôn*	**hɔ:n hɔ:n**	a noise made by a pig
4	*iwuaivoooo*	**ɪwʊɑɪvjo:**	a pig's crying
5	*Baa*	**bá:**	a sheep's bleating
6	*nyiang nyiang*	**ɲɪãŋ ɲɪãŋ**	a cat's sound
7	*gbuu gbuu*	**gbu: gbu:**	barking of a dog
8	*Chwigh*	**tʃwɪ:ɣ**	squealing of a mouse
9	*tugh tugh*	**tú:ɣ tú:ɣ**	a bird named after its noise
10	*kôkôkôkô*	**kɔkɔkɔkɔ**	cackling of a hen
11	*hu-huu hu-huu*	**huhu:huhu:**	sound of Abyssinian owl
13	*vuku-vuku-vuku*	**vukuvukuvuku**	sound of pearl spotted owl
14	*kyarr-kyarr-kyarr*	**kja: kja: kja:**	sound of starred winged night-jar
15	*kper or-kper kper or*	**kpɜ:o:kpɜ:o: kpɜ:o:**	sound of barred owl
16	*kwakwa*	**kwákwá**	cackling of hen and geese
17	*kurokukôôhôô*	**kʊrɔkʊkɔ:hɔ:**	crowing of a cock
18	*oong-oong*	**o:ŋ-o:ŋ**	a buzzing of bee
19	*ngorong-ngorong*	**ŋgòrõŋ-ŋgòrõŋ**	a noise of a house-fly

Sounds of flight, flashing, knocking and firing

These sounds are made by inanimate objects such as cars, lorries, motor-cycles, bicycles, guns, lightning, horns, whistles, bells, trumpets, explosives, blaring of loud speaker, knocking, applying of brakes. These sounds produce a lot of words that are non-arbitrary in the study of word-formation in Tiv language.

Table 4: Sounds of flight, flashing, knocking and firing

S/No	Words	Transcription	Meaning
1	*fiom*	**fɪɒm**	fast movement or speeding of vehicles
2	*fiam*	**fɪám**	speeding or moving with speed
3	*fiagh*	**fɪa:ɣ**	a flash of lightning
4	*finga-finga*	**fɪŋá-fɪŋá**	a flash of lightning/winkling
5	*fugh (fugh)*	**fu:ɣ (fu:ɣ)**	fast movement of vehicle and humans
6	*kpan-kpan*	**kpàn-kpàn**	knocking at the door
7	*gbyan-gbyan*	**gbɪàn-gbɪàn**	noisy shutting of the doors/ slapping
8	*broom*	**bru:m**	sound of motor cycles
9	*vroom*	**vru:m**	sound of moving vehicles
10	*poon-poon*	**pu:n pu:n**	honking of vehicle's horns
11	*gbeleng/gbegeng*	**gbeleŋ/gbegeŋ**	sound of a bell
12	*Jagang-jagang*	**dʒagaŋ-dʒagaŋ**	sound of a bell
13	*kpuu/ diin/ kraa/ kpoo/ kpoaa*	**kpu:/dɪ:n/kra: /kpo:/ kpoa:**	sounds of various guns
14	*byugh*	**bju:ɣ**	explosive sound
15	*pii pii pii*	**pɪ: pɪ: pɪ:**	a shrill sound of a whistle

Non-arbitrary words (onomatopoeias) reflecting striking/strength/hardness

The /gb/ consonant is a velo-bilabial stop or plosive consonant. That is to say, /gb/ is made up of voiced velar and voiced bilabial plosive consonant sounds. The voicing of this consonant shows force, hardness and stamina. Therefore, the /gb/ sound echoes violent impact or fall, striking of objects, threshing of corn, plucking of mangoes, cutting of trees, hardness of shells, hard wood, strength and powerfulness.

Table 5: Non-arbitrary words (onomatopoeias) reflecting striking/strength/hardness

S/No	Word	Transcription	Gloss	Phono-symbolic words
1	*gba*	Gbá	fall	/gb/ suggests violent fall
2	*gbidye*	Gbídjé	beat	/gb/ suggests painful striking
3	*gbile*	gbílé	thresh	/gb/ suggests power striking
4	*gboor*	gbó:	pluck	/gb/ suggests violent cutting
5	*gber*	gbe:	cut	/gb/ suggests forceful plucking
6	*gbang-gbang*	gbá:ŋ-gbá:ŋ	strongly	/gb/ suggests strength
7	*gbong-gbong*	gbóŋ-gbóŋ	strongly	/gb/ suggests strength
8	*gbyende*	gbjèndè	shell	/gb/ suggests hardness
9	*gbange*	gbáŋgè	local xylophone	/gb/ suggests hardness
10	*gbaaye*	gbá:jè	iron wood	/gb/ suggests hardness
11	*gbaseela*	gbàsèl:á	wolf	/gb/ suggests strength
12	*gbinde*	gbíndè	viper	/gb/ suggests powerfulness

Human sounds

Humans are capable of emitting different kinds of sounds that are themselves onomatopoeic in nature. Sounds that humans produce are talking/speaking, weeping, ululation, humming, murmuring, coughing, sneezing, yawning, farting, whistling, exclaiming, laughing, singing, sighing, belching, groaning/screaming, snoring, whispering and crunching of teeth. In this paper farting, laughing and exclamatory sounds have been discussed.

Human sounds representing farting sounds

Table 6: Human sounds representing Farting sounds

S/No	Word	Transcription	Meaning
1	*duum*	du:m	/u:/ suggests a loud farting
2	*puum*	pu:m	/u:/ suggests a loud farting
3	*kpuum*	kpu:m	/u:/ suggests a loud farting
4	*gbuum*	gbu:m	/u:/ suggests a loud farting
5	*fuu*	fu:	/u:/ suggests a loud farting
6	*kpion*	kpɪɒn	/ɪ/ suggests a light emptying of air
7	*pish*	pɪʃ	/ɪ/ suggests a light emptying of air
8	*fsssh/pssssh*	fʃ/pʃ	/ʃ/ suggests a light emptying of air
9	*praar*	pra:	/a:/ suggests a violent emptying of air

Laughing sounds

Most non-arbitrary (onomatopoeic) words are laughing words such as *hahaha, hehehe hohoho, kwakwakwa, kaakaakaa, kpehe-kpehe and gbehegbehe*. These words show various ways that people laugh. Every language has its ways of expressing laughter. For instance, English has cackle, giggle, chuckle, gurgle, snigger, titter, guffaw and chortle.

Exclamations

Other non-arbitrary words are exclamations. Theses exclamations show disapproval, agreement/acceptance, yawning, ululation, alas, crunching of teeth, coughing, goading of animals and birds. These include *Kpash*! Ei! *Uwe*! Ai! and *Kuku*! (disapproval); *Ooooon*! *Aaaah*! *Ahoo*! *Aaaaan*! *Eenhe*! *Aya*! *Voughul*! (agreement or acceptance); *Hmmm*! *Mmmm*! (yawning); Welelele (ululation); *Oooooh*! (pains); *Ahii*! (alas); Kyua-kyua (crunching of teeth); *Ayoo*! *Ayuu*! (groaning); *Kpuhu*! *Oooshi*! (coughing), *Gbyam*! (slapping); *Shaa*! *Aase*! *Gbaa*!*Hwaa-hwaa*! *Uuse*! (goading/ driving away dogs, goats, hawks, ducks/drakes, respectively).

Sounds showing mobility of animals, people and objects

Non-arbitrariness can be seen in the mobility of animals, people and objects. The following examples are *keden-keden* (galloping of animals); *gele-gele* (fast movement of animals); *gede-gede* (cascading movement); shokoshoko (rattle-sounding movement); gudu-gudu (mass movement of people and animals); *palegha-palegha* (moving aimlessly); *kpughur, kyughur* (indicating falling objects); *gbulugha* (driving on rough roads); *kpolododo, kpulududu* and *kune-kune* (rolling objects); *ngolua* (plunging of a crab to its hole); *gbugudu* (hitting bumps).

Other movement sounds are *ngugh-ngugh* and *kur-kur* (stamping movement); *kur* (a thud); *gur* (sound of a pulled object); *kavera-kavera* (gathering of speed); *kutokuto* (moving on a hard surface); *kyan-kyan* (attention-catching gait); *kpyakan-kpyakan* (vibration of breasts); *ze ze ze* (to reel/walk in unsteady way); *zemba ze zemba* (staggering movement) and *kughkuku* (to scatter in a place), *huren nure-nu nure* (twisting), *dogon-dogon*, *gbeno-gbeno*

(crooked/winding); gôndo-gôndo (sluggish movement); gondo-gondo (sideways); fele-fele, chwang, kya-kya-kya, kpavera-kpavera (fastness or urgency).

Non-arbitrariness suggesting temperatures and shapes

These groups of words suggest the coldness and hotness of objects and their appearances or shapes that objects are being described. They are *gôgô/kôsô* (length: tallness or horizonality); *gande-gande* (watery pap, porridge, soup); *shia-shia* (breathy noise); *fesa-fesa* and *chusa-chusa* (rough); *baveraa* and *boung* (hotness); *côgh-cògh* (dirty/filthy); *dôugh-dôugh* (sagging, not taut); *gigh-gigh* (stand still); *jighila* (straight); *gbiliti* (roundish); *nyuwan-nyuwan* (rumple); *feeng* (hollowness); *gondo*; *fetee* (depth); *dôông* (tenacious/strong) and *gbing-gbing* (full/plenty).

Significance of Non-arbitrary Language

The name may by its very sound-effects, contribute to the emotive impact of the sense. Some sounds and sound combinations are particularly expressive and appropriate to the meaning conveyed: this is the secret of sound-symbolism. Iconic effects in language have phonological, morphological and syntactic significations. Brogan (1993: 860-1) states that the chosen words determine meanings. This indicates that words are capable of performing mimetic function. Yaqubi, Tahir and Amini (2018:228) state that onomatopoeias relate sounds with meaning.

Aor (2019:115) confirms that onomatopoeias boost musical intensity and mimic human and non-human sounds. They are powerful tools for enhancing vivid meanings hence the sound mimics the object it describes. Aor (2019:115) substantiates that onomatopoeias and sound symbolisms describe movement, colour, morphology, speed, movement of people, animals and objects.

5   Conclusion

Non-arbitrariness has existed from time immemorial. As a source of word-formation, onomatopoeias, sound-symbolism or phonoaesthetics were mentioned as natural-sound source. Human language came from natural cries of emotion as anger, happiness and pain. Interjections or exclamations such as *Kpash*! *Ei*! *Uwe*! *Ai*! and *Kuku*! (disapproval); *Ooooon*! *Aaaah*! *Ahoo*! *Aaaaan*! *Eenhe*! *Aya*! *Voughul*! (agreement or acceptance); *Hmmm*! *Mmmm*! (yawning); *Welelele* (ululation) were (are) used as non-arbitrary language.

Non-arbitrary use of language is not a linguistic crime but a way of seeing other aspect of language. The linking of sound with meaning brings about the understanding of what one is talking about. For instance, when *fiom*, *fiam*, *fiagh*, *finga-finga*, *fugh (fugh)* are used, the picture they paint is that of movement, motion or hurriedness. In addition to that, /gb/ phoneme found in *gbaaye, gbange, gbidye, gbílé* shows strength, hardness, toughness and force, violence, thrashing and thrashing. Also, /ŋ/ shows intensity, emphasis, strength, necessity, sound in *tsung, gbing-gbing, kwang, keng, dang, gbeleng*, respectively. The sounding of the above words is self-explanatory.

Using non-arbitrary language is vitally important hence the tedium of explaining the meanings of most words is grossly reduced. Theoretically, Peirce's theory of iconic sign can be used in analysing idiophones, sound symbolisms, onomatopoeias, icons and phonaesthetics. This study has established convergence between phonology and semantics, that is, phono-semantics. Pedagogically, this study may serve as a reference material to lecturers   and students   in the departments of Linguistics, English and Literary Studies and African/Nigerian Languages. The above analysis has demonstrated that Tiv grammar is laced with non-arbitrary aspect of the language.

References

Akmajian, A., Demers, R. A., Farmer, K. A., & Harnish, M. R. (2003). *Linguistics: An introduction to language and communication* (4th edn.). New Delhi: Prentice Hall of India Private Limited.

Algeo, J. (2010). *The origins and development of the English language* (6th ed.). Boston: Wadsworth, Cengage Learning.

Aor, T. (2019). *A linguistic-stylistic study of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's Purple Hibiscus, Half of a Yellow Sun and Americanah*. An unpublished Ph.D thesis, Department of English and Literary Studies, Ahmadu University Zaria-Kaduna.

Aor, T. (2020). Onomatopoeias as a word-formation process in the Tiv language. *The Cactus Journal of Theatre and Visual Arts*, 3 (1):203-225.

Arp, R. T. & Johnson, G. (2006). *Perrine's literature: Structure, sound, and sense* (9th ed.) Australia: Thomas Wadsworth.

Brogan, F. V. T. (1993). Onomatopoeia. In Preminger, A. and Brogan, F. V. T. (eds). *The new Princeton encyclopedia of poetry and poetics*. Princeton: Princeton University Press (860-863).

Carter, R. (2001). *Working with texts: A core introduction to language analysis*. (2nd ed.). London: Routledge.

Connell, F. M. (1913). *A text-book for the study of poetry*. Massachusetts: Norwood.

Crystal, D. (2008). *Dictionary of linguistics and phonetics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Cuddon, A. J. (2013). *A dictionary of literary terms and literary theory* (5th ed.). Oxford: John Wiley & Sons Ltd.

Chandler, D. (2005). *Semiotics: The basics* (2nd ed.). London: Routledge.

Danesi, M. (2004). *Messages, signs, and meanings:A basic textbook in semiotics and communication* (3rd ed). Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press.

Dingemanse, M., Damián, E., Blasi, M. D., Lupyan, G., Christiansen, H. M., & Monaghan, P. (2015). Arbitrariness, iconicity and systematicity in language. *Trends in cognitive sciences*, 19(10): 603-604.

Elam, K. (1987). *The semiotics of theatre and drama*. London: Routledge.

Gaines, E. (2010). *Media literacy and semiotics*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Innis, R. E. (1985). *Semiotics: An introductory anthology advances in semiotics*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Karina, D. M. (2017). English onomatopoeia in children's books: Types and readers' understanding. B.A. thesis, Department of English Letters, Santa Dharma University, Yogyakarta.

Khademi, M., Aghili, H. & Harati, H. (2014). How much correlation does exist between English and Farsi onomatopoeic words? *International journal of language learning and applied linguistics world*, 6(1):504-513.

Leech, G. (1969). *A linguistic guide to English poetry*. London: Longman Group.

Lyons, J. (1968). *Introduction to theoretical linguistics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Martin, D., & Ringham, F. (2000). *Dictionary of semiotics*. London: CASSELL.

McArthur, T. (1992). *The Oxford companion to the English language*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Nida, A. E.. (1975). *Exploring semantic structures*. Munchen: Wilhelm Fink Verlag.

Nørgaard, N., Busse, B., & Montoro, R. (2010). *Key terms in stylistics*. London: Continuum International Publishing Group.

Osaka, N. (1990). *Multidimensional analysis of onomatopoeia: A note to make sensory scale from words*. In Studia Phonologica, (xxiv), 25-33.

Peirce, C. S. (1931). *Collected papers*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Peirce, C. S. (1985). Logic as semiotic: The theory of signs. Innis, E. R. Semiotics: An introductory anthology. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Perniss, P., Thompson, L. R. & Vigliocco, G. (2010). Iconicity as a general property of language: evidence from spoken and signed language. *In Frontiers in psychology*, 1(227): 1-15.

Rau, D. H. (1994). Lexical iconicity in Tagalog. *In Philippine Journal of Linguistics*, 24(2):17-28.

Sebeok, A. T. (2001). *Signs: An introduction to semiotics* (2nd edn.). Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Sharin, N. (2009). *Sounds Like…: Understanding Japanese sound symbolism*. Bryn Mawr College.

Ullmann, S. (1951). *Words and their use*. London: Frederick Muller.

Webster's New International Dictionary of the English Language. (1958). (2nd edn.). Springfield: G. & C. Merriam Company.

Wedgwoodi, H. A. M. (1859). *A dictionary of English etymology (A-D)*. London: Trubner & Co., 60, Paternoster Row.

Yaqubi, M., Tahir, I. R., & Amini, M. (2018). Translation of onomatopoeia: Somewhere between equivalence and function. *Studies in linguistics and literature*, 2(3):205-222.

Journal of Languages, Linguistics and Literary Studies (JLLLS)