

An Account of Food Names in Ngwa

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Abstract

The word food refers to any edible cooked or uncooked thing that can be consumed for energy and good living. A name is an identity mark given to an object which differentiates it from other objects in the same group, while typology is concerned with the classification of a group of things based on shared common features. Ngwa is a dialect of the Igbo language. The word *Ngwa* also refers to the people and the geo – political area known as Ngwa land. A major of the objective of this paper is: to give an account of some of the names and types of food eaten by the Ngwa people as part of their cultural heritage. Data for this paper was collected from four competent native speakers of Ngwa. As a native speaker of Ngwa, my intuition also helped in the assessment of every information that was collected. The framework on which this paper was carried out is the Language documentation framework. The choice for this framework is because it aims to gather and preserve long lasting corpora while a language is still being spoken, so that such information could be used for language or cultural preservation and revitalization. Some of the findings of this paper are: that the Ngwa people have their own food on which they thrive in spite of foreign foods that have been introduced into their environment, that the name given to every type of food may indicate the nature (liquid, solid or semi-solid), the manner of preparation, or the source of the food, it was found out too that watery soup is a most preferred type of food by the Ngwa people, and that special meals are cooked for ceremonious occasions. This paper, recommends further research and documentation of the food names and types in Ngwa land.

Keywords: *culture, food, Language documentation, names, Ngwa, typology.*

Introduction

Food is anything taken in by living things for the sustenance of life and existence. Food is part of the culture of a group of people. Food comes in different forms and tastes. Some foods are solid, while others are liquid, or semi-solid. Some foods are: sweet, bitter, tasteless, salty, pepperish, soured and so on. The mineral content found in each type of food also varies. Thus, since man cannot get all that is required for a healthy growth in a single type of food, he therefore has varied his types of food in order to get the essential minerals for his body. Moreso, eating one type of food is monotonous. The various types of food add excitement and emotional satisfaction to man. In the subsections below, one is going to present a review of the word *food*. This will be followed by a brief discussion of the theoretical framework under which data in this paper is discussed, the methodology employed in the collection of data, key words employed in the paper such as: *culture, names, typology*, and *Ngwa*.

Conceptual Review

Food in the Ngwa dialect of Igbo is called *ri/nri* Any edible thing that gives strength and life amongst the Ngwa people, is thus taken as food. Anyakoha (2016, p. 126), notes that: “Food is one of the basic

needs of man”. This implies that apart from shelter and clothing, food is a primary need of man. According to Oxford Languages (2021, p.1), “Food is any nutritious substance that people or animals eat or drink or that plants absorb in order to maintain life and growth”. This implies that food is essential to the life of any living organism. Thus, food and water are needed for nourishment and sustenance. From Britannica (2021, p.1), “Food is any substance consisting essentially of protein, carbohydrate, and other nutrients used in the body of an organism to sustain growth and vital processes and to furnish energy”. This means that without food, the required actions needed for the proper development of man cannot be activated. This internet source goes on to note that: “the absorption and utilization of food by the body is fundamental to nutrition and is facilitated by digestion”. In other words, it is not just eating some food that matters, it must be accompanied by absorption which is enhanced by digestion.

Wikipedia (2021, p.1) notes that: “Food is any substance consumed to provide nutritional support for an organism. Food is usually of plant, animal or fungal origin, and contains essential nutrients, such as carbohydrates, fats, proteins, vitamins or minerals”. This means that anything that is taken in by animals or plants which has the required nutrients for the nourishment of the organism is called food. Fao (2021, p.1), refers to food as “... something that provides nutrients. Nutrients are substances that provide: energy for activity, growth, and all functions of the body, such as breathing, digesting food, keeping warm, growth, repair of body tissues, and for keeping the immune system healthy”. Thus, without food, no living thing can function well. In other words, living things that are not properly fed, will be sick, weak, wilted, and non-functional. Beef2live (2021, p. 1), notes that: “There are seven major classes of nutrients, namely: carbohydrates, fats, dietary fiber, and water”. This indicates that the foods taken by any living thing, are sources for the mineral nutrients required for the growth of the living organism. Nutrients in food are grouped into macro and micro nutrients. Carbohydrates, proteins, fats and water are grouped as macro nutrients, while vitamins and minerals are grouped under micronutrients. Irrespective of the classification of nutrients into macro and micronutrients, most food items are mixtures of nutrients, but in varying proportions. This means that a food type could be a compound of many nutrients in different quantities. Anyakoha (2016, p. 126), Fao (2021, p.1), and Futurelearn (2021, p. 1), note the following as functions of food:

1. Food provides our bodies with what they need to stay alive.
2. Food helps in the repair of body tissues.
3. Food helps the body to grow and stay healthy.
4. Food provides the body the immune system to fight antibodies in living organisms.
5. Food gives man psychological satisfaction.
6. Food provides the required energy needed for physical and mental activities.
7. The types of food a group of people eat, give them a unique identity.

Brainly (2021, p. 1), notes that: “Improper food in man, is the food which does not have all the nutrients and isn't part of balanced diet. Also improper food contains elements which cause harm to the physical body along with different disorders like: high blood pressure, obesity, cardiovascular diseases, stunted growth, lack of blood and so on. In the classification of food, Delish (2021, p. 1), notes that: “Dairy products are: milk, yoghurt, cheese, ice cream and butter. Eggs, are not included as

dairy products. They belong in the meat, poultry, fish category, and are considered animal products”. This means that dairy products, refer to food items that are processed from milk. Having briefly considered what the word *food* means, the next section discusses the theoretical framework on which this paper is discussed.

Theoretical Framework

Language documentation is a descriptive linguistic approach with the major objective of preserving all aspects of a language, while it is still in use for recoverability purposes, so that if the language dies off, or if it is shaken by other languages with which it comes in contact, its original form can be reclaimed from the archived information on it. Language documentation gives a detailed account of all the linguistic and nonlinguistic behavior of a particular group of people. Linguistic behaviour here will include: the oral (spoken), written (graphic) and non-verbal (semiotic/sign) forms of a particular language and all the rules (grammar/principles) governing its operation. Nonlinguistic acts will include all other cultural practices that are associated with a named group of people such as: marriage, naming ceremony, burials, festivals, architecture, dress code, paintings, sculptures, culinary, tribal marks, dance, hair do, agriculture and so on. Language documentation, is also known as *Documentary linguistics*.

It is the sub-field that deals with creating multipurpose records of languages through audio and video recordings of speakers and signers with annotations, and translations, for the reservation and distribution of resulting materials. This suggests that information gotten by this approach in the study of the linguistic and cultural practices of a group of people can be used by other fields of study, such as language translation, reconstruction, language teaching, cultural preservation, archiving of facts relevant to a particular group of people, to recover endangered languages from extinction, the general preservation of a language and so on. cf. Ugorji (2020, 248). Austin (2008, p. 1) notes that Documentary linguistics is “Concerned with the method of compiling a representative and lasting multipurpose record of a natural language or one of its varieties”. What this means is that, it is that information gathered on a language by documentation can be archived for a long term research on the documented language. It also means that language documentation helps to maintain and enhance the development of languages in the current information and communication technologies. Since Language documentation allows the involvement of native speakers, this means the corpora will provide for the explicit accountability of a collected data with a high degree of correctness or accuracy: Thus; Language documentation can be used for the following purposes:

- a. for historical reconstruction
- b. for the preservation of oral literature and folklore
- c. for the preservation of poetics in a language
- d. for the preservation of the anthropological aspects of a language namely: culture, kinship, interaction, food types, styles of: (cloth, dance, hair do, shoes and so on).
- e. for educational purposes
- f. for language reconstruction
- g. to illustrate linguistic theories with real-life observations of languages in use and
- h. for the preservation of the specific features of a language and so on. ([researchgate.net/publication](https://www.researchgate.net/publication))

(2020, p. 1), and ([https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki,\(2020,p.1\)](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki,(2020,p.1))). Having seen the background guiding the data used in this paper, the next section will briefly discuss the term *culture*.

Culture

According to Lyons (1981, P. 302), “Culture may be described as a socially acquired knowledge, that is the knowledge that someone has by virtue of his being a member of a particular society”. This implies that culture is socially acquired by behaviour which one must conform to, in order to be accepted as a member of a certain group of people. From livescience, “culture is the characteristic and knowledge of a particular group, encompassing language, religion, cuisine, social habits, music and arts”. One can see that culture involves the totality of all that make up a person. From religion to music, dance, paintings, crafts, language, marriage, birth, death, name giving, taboos, and so on and this is the view that this paper adopts.

Typology

Typology refers to an analysis or classification based on types or categories of a specific thing. According to yourdictionary.com *typology* is, “The systematic classification of the types of something to their common characteristics”. This means that in typology, a thing is examined according shared features. Some examples of fields where, studies are typified are: agriculture, biology, mathematics, linguistics, medicine, education, politics, psychology and so on. A major purpose of classifying a thing into categories, is to place objects of common features into a specific group for easy identification, refining, sorting (establishment of contrasts), and drawing of conclusions about a thing. cf. <https://www.sciencedirect.com>>..., . In essence, the classification of a thing gives the inner principles upon which a thing operate, its similarities and differences with other related things of its kind. cf. . This paper, is geared towards a presentation of the names of the various types of food in Ngwa.

Names

A *name* is the word or words that are used to mark out a particular nominal, which could be a person, animal, place or thing. Collins dictionary (2022, p. 1), notes that the term *name* is “a word or a combination of words by which a person, place or thing, a body or class, or any object of thought is designated, called, or known”. This implies that names whether for animate or non –animate, human or non-human entities are used as emblems of identity and specification of a nominal or a collection of nominals wherever it/they occur. Thus, names are used to establish contrast among things that are like. Human, place and organizational names are known as proper nouns. This group of names (nouns) are always started with a capital letter in writing. Some examples of human names are: Henry, Lucy, Ngozi, Ayodele, Kabir and so on. Names of places are: Abuja, Enugu, New York, Uyo and so on. Organizational names are: United Nations Organization, (U.N.O.) West African Examination Council (W. A. E. C.) Paterson Zochonis (P.Z.) and so on. From the examples given above, one can see that the names of organizations can be abbreviated to form acronyms, which is a morphological process of word formation where a new word is formed by using the first letter of each word in the name of the organization. cf. (Ndimele 2001, pp. 100- 109), Chidi-Onwuta, G. A., P.O. Taiwo and A. Uchenna 2018, p. 3) and Udoh, I. I., O. Anyanwu and O. Eunice 2019, p. 151). Human names could have prefixes of titles preceding their names as in: Mr. Ben Bruce, Mrs. Grace Jones, Dr.

Peter Smith, Rev. Fr. Jeff Greg, Hon. Ayo Babatunde, His Excellency Victor Ikpeazu, Prof. Benson Oluikpe, Dame Patience Goodluck and so on. cf. Lyons (1977, p. 641-643) and Wikipedia (2020, p. 2). In the human family, human beings are identified by their first, middle and last names. A person's *first name* is the very first name given by his/her parents at birth. The *middle name* is the name after the most initial name of a person. The *last name* is the same thing as the *surname* or the *family name* of a person. The *full name* of a person refers to all the names by which a person can be identified. Amongst human beings, there is also what is known as the *maiden name*. The maiden name, is the name borne by a woman before marriage. Further, one finds expressions such as *marital name*, which is the name that a woman changes to, when she is married. But if peradventure she gets out of marriage, she may revert to her maiden names.

The Ngwa People

Ngwa is a dialect of the Igbo language in the Niger-Congo language family under the new Benue-Congo. cf. Williamson (1989, p. 21). The word, *Ngwa* refers to the language, the people, and geopolitical area known as Ngwa land. Ngwa people are found in Abia state in the Federal Republic of Nigeria. They are found in seven Local Government Areas of the state namely; Aba North, Aba South, Isiala Ngwa North, Isiala Ngwa South, Obingwa, Osisioma Ngwa, and Ugwunagbo. According to Nwankwo (2009, p. 180), the Ngwa homeland measures about 512.8 square miles, and has one of the most beautiful and fertile table lands of the Igbo nations in Nigeria. Research has shown that the Ngwa land is bounded in the west by the Imo River, which separates the Ngwa land from Asa Nteke in the South-West, and their Mbaise Kith and Kin in the west. Northwards of the Ngwaland are neighbouring Ọhụhụ Ụmụahịa and Bende clans of the old Bende. The Ndokis are in the South-East and Anaangs and Ibibios are in the Eastern parts of the Ngwa land. The exact date of the settlement of the Ngwa people in their present location/homeland is not known, but oral tradition has it that the Ngwa people were a group of Igbos who left Umuneoha, a place in Owerri (Owere) in search of cultivable arable land, large space of land to hunt and better trading and exchange opportunities cf. Nwankwo (2009, p. 18-19) and, Ezeibe (2009, p. 9). For the brevity of this paper, one is going to stop here on the comment on the Ngwa-Igbo people to discuss the way the data for this paper was collected. cf. Ugorji, (2020, p. 151).

Methodology

Data for this paper was collected from four native speakers aged 50-60 years who were asked to mention the names of some foods eaten by the Ngwa people and way of preparing it, while the researcher wrote down the information as they spoke. As a native speaker of this dialect of Igbo, who is familiar with the types of food eaten by the Ngwa people, my intuition was also used to assess the information gathered from my informants. In the subsection below, the types of food eaten by the Ngwa people are presented.

Names and Types of food in Ngwa

Recall that the term *typology* has been defined in (1.4), as “The systematic classification of the types of something according to their common characteristics”. Thus, the typification of a thing is based on the shared features that are common to a set. Also a *name* is the specifier by which an item is

differentiated from another of its type. In this section, a typology of food eaten by the Ngwa people are presented and discussed in relation to the name by which they are known.

Ọ̀tọ̀àbìrìkà (Plantain porridge)

Ọ̀tọ̀àbìrìkà, means plantain porridge in the English language. *Ọ̀tọ̀àbìrìkà* is cooked with unripe plantain, salt, pepper, palmoil, onions, fish or meat. This meal can be eaten at any time of the day. Shredded basil (nchúánwú), or fluted pumpkin (úgú) leaves can be added if one wishes. If not, it can be cooked plain without any leaves. It is a rich meal for normal and diabetic patients because of its high iron content. Palmwine or water can be taken after the meal.

Àsùrùàsù Àbìrìkà (Pounded cooked plantain)

Àsùrùàsù àbìrìkà, is pounded cooked unripe plantain. This type of food is prepared by pounding unripe boiled plantain in a mortar. The half-pounded unripe cooked plantain, is then mixed with fresh palmoil, salt, pepper, onions, and grounded dry fish. Fully- pounded cooked unripe plantain can be eaten with any type of soup. Cooked unripe plantain is highly recommended by doctor for diabetic patients. This meal can be eaten at any time of the day. Water or palmwine can be taken as drinks after the meal. For diabetic patients, only water can be taken as liquid after eating it.

Èghèrèèghè Àbìrìkà (Fried Plantain)

Èghèrèèghè Àbìrìkà, means fried plantain. Fried plantain can be prepared with ripe or unripe plantain. It is simply prepared by cutting ripe or unripe plantains in to small pieces and then sprinkling some salt on the cut pieces of plantain. The cut, salted pieces are then put into hot palmoil or groundnut oil for frying. The unripe fried plantain can be eaten as plantain chips. The ripe fried plantain can be eaten with stew, vegetable or egg sauce. Palmwine can be taken as drinks after this meal for non-diabetic persons only, but water for every other persons.

Àhùrùàhù Àbìrìkà (Roasted Plantain)

Àhùrùàhù Àbìrìkà, is called roasted plantain in the English language. This type of food, is prepared by roasting ripe or unripe plantain. The roasted plantain is then cut into pieces in a clean plate and eaten by dipping the cut pieces into fresh palmoil that is mixed with; salt, pepper (dry or fresh), onion and pounded or shredded basil leaves or *ùtazí*(a local herb that is slightly bitter in taste). Water or palmwine can be served with the meal. Roasted plantain can be taken at any time of the day. Roasted plantain is used locally to treat cases of high blood pressure and diabetes.

Àgwòràgwò jí (Yam porridge)

Àgwòràgwò jí, is called yam porridge in English. It is simply prepared by boiling some pieces of peeled yam in a pot until it is cooked. When the pieces of yam are cooked, palmoil, salt, pepper, onions, shredded basil (nchúánwú), or fluted pumpkin (úgú) leaves, dried fish, and meat can be added. This meal can also be eaten at any time of the day that one wishes to.

Àhùrùàhù jí (Roasted Yam)

This type of food is prepared by roasting a full tuber or some pieces of unpeeled yam on fire. When

the yam is cooked by roasting, the outer, burnt skin is scraped off. The yam is then eaten by dipping the cut pieces into palmoil that is mixed with salt, pepper, onions and shredded basil leaves. Palmwine or water can be taken as drinks after the meal.

Èghùrùèghù jí (Boiled Yam)

Èghùrùèghù jí, is translated as boiled yam in the English language. This type of food in Ngwa land is prepared by boiling some peeled or unpeeled cut pieces of yam in a pot. The cooked yam is eaten by dipping it into fresh palmoil that is mixed with; salt, pepper, onion, and pounded basil or *útàzị* leaves. It can also be eaten with stew or egg sauce. Water or palmwine can be taken after the meal. It can be taken at any time of the day by the Ngwa person.

Jí Mírí Ọkú (Yam Pepper Soup)

Jí mírí ọkú, is called yam pepper soup in the English language. This type of food in Ngwa land, is prepared by cooking some peeled pieces of yam in a pot with a large quantity of water, plenty of dry fish, stockfish, salt, pepper, onion, local spices, and shredded basil or *útàzị* leaves. Yam pepper soup is often eaten by people who are recovering from illness, breast feeding mothers, and for the stimulation of one's appetite. It is eaten mostly as a morning or evening meal.

Àsùrùàsù jí/Nrí jí (Pounded Yam)

Àsùrùàsù jí/Nrí jí, means pounded yam. This type of food in Ngwa is prepared by pounding some cooked yam. The pounded yam is formed into small balls of dough that are swallowed by dipping them into any type of soup that one chooses to eat it with such as: bitter leaf soup, uha soup, *úkàzị* soup, *úgú* soup, *ògbònò* soup, *ńsalá* soup, and so on. Pounded yam is a very special food eaten on special occasions. In Ngwa land, it is also given to nursing mothers as a special meal, because it gives strength to both mother and child and increases the flow of a mother's breast milk. It is also served with palm wine and water.

Nrí ákpú (Fufu/Cassava Flour)

Nrí ákpú, means Fufu/Cassava flour. This type of food is prepared by fermenting cassava tubers in an earthen pot or any container one may deem fit. The fermented cassava is then sieved into a basin of water. The sieved fermented cassava pulp is then drained in a tightened cotton bag. The wet flour/pulp gotten from this process, is then formed into big balls and cooked in a pot of boiling water. When one is sure that the fermented flour is properly cooked, it is then brought out and pounded in a mortar. If at the first pounding, it is found out that the flour is not properly cooked, the flour is rolled into balls again and recooked in a hot boiling water.

This is to ensure that the poisonous cyanide in the fermented cassava pulp, is completely destroyed before consumption by human beings. The cooked and pounded cassava flour can then be eaten by any type of Ngwa soup that one may chose such as: *mírí úkàzị*, 'ukazi soup' *mírí úhà*, 'uha soup', *mírí úgú*, 'fluted pumpkin vegetable soup', *mírí ògbònò*, 'ogbono soup', *mírí òlugbù* 'bitter leaf soup' and so on. The soup of the Ngwa people is called *mírí* 'watery sauce', because the soup of the Ngwa people is usually on the watery side. The Ngwa man does not prepare his soup with much

thickners. Thus, their kind of soup is called, *míírí* 'watery sauce', because of its watery nature. Pounded yam can be served with water or palmwine.

Gàrì (Cassava flakes)

Gàrì, is called cassava flakes in the English language. Gari is a type of food eaten by the Ngwa people. Cassava flakes is made by peeling, washing and grating cassava tubers. The grated cassava pulp is then put in a bag to drain and ferment for two days. This is to allow the cyanide in the cassava to be destroyed by the fermentation. After two days, the fermented dry cassava pulp cassava is sieved. After this, the sieved dry cassava pulp, is then baked in an open dry pot with a high heat under it. One may add some palmoil into the dry cassava pulp as it is being baked or it can be left plain without any palmoil. When the dry cassava pulp is properly baked, it is then spread on a mat for proper cooling so that the baked cassava flakes do not mould. The cooled cassava flakes is then stored in a dry container or bag. The baked cassava flakes can then be prepared for eating by soaking a desired quantity in a boiled water, after which it is turned with a ladle and scooped out into a plate to be eaten by dipping it into any soup one may choose, after which it is then swallowed. Water or palmwine can be taken after swallowing balls of *gàrì*.

Mpátááká / Èbèrèbè Ìgbòrò (Tapioca)

Mpátááká or *Èbèrèbè Ìgbòrò*, means *tapioca* in the English language. This type of food is Ngwa land is prepared by peeling some tubers of cassava. After peeling it, it is then cut and boiled in a pot. The cooked tubers are then sliced into smaller pieces and soaked in cold water overnight to allow for fermentation. After the fermentation process, the sliced fermented pieces of cooked cassava are then washed two or three times to ensure that the fermented starch which may contain some cyanide, is properly washed out before human consumption. The washed tapioca, is then soaked in cold water from where it is preserved for days, by draining out an overnight water and replacing it with a new fresh one. Tapioca in this plain form, can be eaten with coconut or groundnut. In another form, tapioca can be eaten by mixing it a little potash, palmoil, pepper, salt and some dry fish. Some, shredded garden egg leaves can also be added to tapioca in order to make available some minerals and vitamins in the meal. Tapioca can be eaten at any time of the day. Sometimes, it can be used as a snack in between meals. Pregnant women enjoy eating tapioca due its simple taste and easy to prepare process. Water or palmwine can be served as drink after the tapioca meal.

Írídè (Pounded cocoyam)

Írídè, means pounded cocoyam. This type of food is prepared by boiling some cut and washed cocoyam in a pot. When the cocoyam is cooked, it is pounded in a wooden mortar with a pestle to a very smooth soft dough. The pounded cocoyam is then served with any soup of one's choice such as: *míírí ùkàzì*, 'ukazi soup' *míírí ùhá*, 'uha soup', *míírí ùgú*, 'fluted pumpkin vegetable soup', *míírí ògbòrò*, 'ogbono soup', *míírí olùgbù* 'bitter leaf soup' and so on. Water or palmwine can be taken after the meal. It can be taken at any time of the day by the Ngwa person.

Èghùrùèghù Édè (Boiled Cocoyam)

Èghùrùèghù Édè, means boiled cocoyam. This type of food is prepared by boiling some cut and

washed cocoyam. When it is cooked, some fresh pepper and onion are pounded in a mortar and scooped into a clean plate. Some palmoil and salt are then added to it. The cooked cocoyam is then eaten with this sauce. Water or palmwine can be taken after the meal. It can be taken at any time of the day by the Ngwa person.

Àhùrùàhù Édè (Roasted Cocoyam)

Àhùrùàhù Édè means roasted cocoyam. This type of food is prepared in Ngwa land by placing some unpeeled, but cleaned cocoyam over the fire on a wire gauze for it to be roasted. When the cocoyam is cooked by roasting, the burnt outer layer is scraped with knife and the cocoyam is cut into small pieces. The cocoyam then is eaten by dipping it into a plate of pounded pepper, onion, oil, shredded *útàzì* leaves, and salt. Water or palmwine can be taken after the meal. It can be taken at any time of the day by the Ngwa person. It must be mentioned that cocoyam, because of its low sugar and high calcium content, it is highly recommended for diabetic patients.

Ọnọ (Three leaves yam)

Ọnọ, is called three leaves yam in Ngwa and in some dialects of Igbo such as; Owere, Mbaise, and Umuahia. Three leave yam, is mainly eaten in Ngwa land by boiling and eating it with some pounded pepper and onion in palmoil. Water or palmwine can be taken after the meal. It can be taken at any time of the day by the Ngwa person. One thing that must be mentioned about cocoyam is that it can easily induce sleep. Thus, it is eaten when there is no serious work to be done or when one is very much around the house.

Úkwà (Bread fruit)

Úkwà, means bread fruit. *Úkwà*, 'bread fruit', is a proteinous food. It could be prepared by boiling and spicing it up with salt, pepper, onion and palmoil, or by baking it. The baked bread fruit is then eaten with palmnuts or coconut. Baked breadfruit in Ngwa land, is usually eaten as a snack, while the boiled one is usually taken as a full meal. Bread fruit is also recommended to diabetic patients because of its proteinous content. Water or palmwine can be taken after the meal. It can be taken at any time of the day by the Ngwa person.

Úgbà (Oil bean seed)

Úgbà, is known as oil bean seed in the English language. *Úgbà*, is a meal that is taken as a snack and for the entertainments of visitors. This meal is prepared by boiling the oil bean seed until it is cooked. When it is cooked, it is then shredded into small bits and allowed overnight for it to ferment. When it is fermented, it is then mixed oil, potash, pepper, salt, onion, and some dry fish. Meat can also be added. The fermented oil bean seed, can be served with water or palmwine. It can be taken at any time of the day by the Ngwa person as a snack.

Conclusion

This paper has focused on the names of some types of food in Ngwa. Some of the findings of this paper is that the Ngwa people give name to a type of food based on the manner of the preparation of the food. For example: *àsùrùàsù àbìrìkà*, 'pounded cooked plantain', *èghèrèèghè àbìrìkà* fried

plantain, *àhùrùàhù àbìrìkà* 'roasted plantain', *àgwòràgwò jí* 'yam porridge', *èbèrèbè ìgbòrò* 'tapioca' are all instances where the name of the food depicts the process by which the food is being prepared. In the names of the above food types in Ngwa, one sees the morphological process of reduplication in them.

There is also interfixation in the names marked by the *-r-*, or *-rV-* interfixing morpheme. Where the vowel of the interfixing affix harmonises with the vowel of the stem. Thus, the words can be split into: *àsù-rù-àsù* 'pounded...' *àhù-rù-àhù* 'roasted...' *àgwò-r-àgwò* 'porridge ...', *èbè-r-èbè* 'shredded...'. The *-r-* or *-rV-* morpheme are infixes in the word in which they occur. Some names of food depict the nature of the food. For example: *òtò* 'porridge...', *jí mírí ókú* 'yam pepper soup', makes reference to the nature of the food, instead the process by which it is prepared. The names of other food like: *ńrì ákpù* 'cassava flour', *ńrì édé* 'pounded cocoyam', *ònò* 'three leaves yam' *úkwa* 'bread fruit', *úgba* 'oil bean seed', refer to the source from which the food is gotten. Some of the foods were found to be starchy foods such as: garri, tapioca, yam and cocoyam. Food types like plantain, contains calcium in its unripe form, but carbohydrate in its ripe form. The breadfruit and oil bean seed are food types that are proteinous in content. Meat and fish are also other sources of protein in the food of the Ngwa man.

The palmwine used as a drink after each meal served as a source of yeast, which helps in improving the visual health of the people, while the water served as a plane liquid helps to quench thirst, hydrate the body and to aid digestion. This paper has shown that dairy products such as: milk, cheese and yoghurt are not part of the food types of the Ngwa people. This paper recommends that further study be made in order to document the various types of food in Ngwa land and other places in the world.

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