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PAUL HORWICH'S DEFLATIONARY DEFLATIONISM AND THE IGBO CONCEPT OF *EZIOKWU*: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

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Abstract

This is a comparative philosophical analysis of Paul Horwich's variant of deflationism – minimalism – and the Igbo concept of *eziokwu*. Traditionally, there are theories of truth that have been promoted by different schools of thought which have fostered an unceasing philosophical debate about the nature of truth. Hence, the problem this research addressed is the human quest to adequately comprehend and precisely articulate *what truth is* or *what is the nature of truth*? In doing this, this paper aimed at ascertaining the epistemic pros and cons of both Horwich's and the Igbo concept of truth (*eziokwu*), the former representing a variant of the Western philosophical view of truth and the latter representing a variant of African thought system on truth. This study adopted the method of content analysis and qualitative research design to articulate the Igbo concept of *eziokwu* in juxtaposition with Horwich's deflationary theory of truth. The study found that *eziokwu* transcends the parochial or minimalist concept of truth as postulated by Horwich. The study showed that *eziokwu* is not merely conceptualized as a criterion for understanding and asserting the truth of a proposition or as a concept solely significant within the bounds of epistemology as a theory of knowledge and as a necessary condition for knowledge. On the contrary, the study showed that unlike the Western inflationist and deflationist theories of truth, *eziokwu* cuts across, the metaphysical, ontological, ethical and cultural milieu of the Igbo. Hence, the study recommended that the Igbo concept, which does not essentialize truth merely from any given perspective like the Western theories of truth, should be accorded equal attention as a broader theory of truth.

Keywords: Deflationary, Deflationism, Igbo, *Eziokwu*, Comparative Analysis.

Introduction

Like many other material and non-material things that man incessantly craves, knowledge has been an essential need of man. The human quest for knowledge, certainty and truth is

as old as the history of man and is critical for the justification of our claim to knowledge. Primarily, regardless of how epistemologists decide to approach the question what is knowledge or what is the *nature* of knowledge? Reference must surely be made to truth. But what then is truth? Surely, knowledge requires belief but not all beliefs constitute knowledge. Belief is necessary but not sufficient for knowledge. Sometimes, we are mistaken in what we believe, hence, while some of our beliefs are true, others are false. The human quest to fully comprehend and precisely articulate what truth is has been a perennial issue not just within epistemology or philosophy but in nearly all cultures, creeds and discourses. The philosophical question; what is truth? It is an old question that appears new each time it is raised. Paul Horwich categorically asserts that: "In every area of inquiry; whether it be physics, psychology, philosophy, history, aesthetics, or anything else - one of our principal goals is truth" (Horwich, 2010, p. 1).

Historically, a meticulous observation of philosophical discourse would reveal that philosophers as far back as the time of the Sophists and Plato, down to the modern and contemporary era have been concerned with the problem of truth. Some of these philosophers' conceptualization of truth differ and some are similar. Philosophers, including Plato and Aristotle, have focused on these questions rather than providing a comprehensive definition of truth. They are credited with the correspondence theory, viewing truth as a feature of statements that accurately reflect reality (Hestir, 2017, p. 4). Paulinus Ekeh notes that, "there is no absolute agreement among philosophers on the correct account of truth, yet distinctions between 'true' in propositions and 'true' in expressions are essential" (2019, pp. 1-2). Various theories, such as correspondence, coherence, and pragmatic theories, continue to shape the philosophical debate on truth (*Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 2020). There is also other non-Western philosophical conceptualization of truth. For instance, in the South East of Nigeria, among the Igbos, there is the concept of *eziokwu* which is not merely a linguistic substitute for the Western or English term truth, but like any other concept, it embodies its own peculiarities, meaning and contextual hermeneutical interpretation. To accentuate then distinctive characteristics of *eziokwu*, which represents the Igbo concept of truth, it will be placed in juxtaposition with the deflationary theory of truth for a comprehensive comparative analysis. This approach is chosen because, unlike inflationist theories, the deflationary theory posits that truth inherently possesses no ontological nature. The detailed comparison aims to highlight the unique peculiarities of *eziokwu* by contrasting it with a perspective that denies truth's fundamental being.

Inflationism and Deflationism

Inflationism or inflationary theory of truth is a philosophical position among philosophers who hold that truth has an underlying nature that needs to be discovered. Hence, exponents of this view of truth consider the task of a theory of truth to be that of unravelling truth's nature and they also see truth as a substantive property of statements or propositions (Boongaling 2015, p. 15). Unanimously, inflationists believe that truth has a specific nature. However, their point of divergence is with regard to what that nature is supposed to be, and whether such a nature could be analyzed. These theories are correspondence theory, coherence theory, pragmatic theory, and verificationist theory (Boyles et al. 2013, p. 2). Deflationism or deflationary theory of truth refers to the cluster of theories of truth such as: redundancy theory, disappearance theory, no-truth theory, disquotational theory, and minimalist theory. "But whatever version we pick, one overall claim seems to be basic among them: viz., that truth has no specific nature. One motivation for accepting this kind of theory is its anti-metaphysical stance" (Boyles et al. 2013, p. 3). Deflationists see the

inflationists' project of looking for the nature of truth as a theoretical dead-end, since for them, truth has no nature.

Horwich on Deflationism (Minimalism)

In the third chapter of his work entitled, *A Defense of Minimalism*, Horwich aims to clarify and defend his minimalist thesis on truth, stating that, "the meaning of the truth predicate is fixed by the schema, 'the proposition that p is true if and only if 'p'" (Horwich, 2010, p. 35). He refers to his theory as the 'minimal theory' and the surrounding discussion as the 'minimalist conception' (Horwich, 1991, p. 6). Horwich addresses criticisms of minimalism, showing them as irrelevant or surmountable, and argues that minimalism has significant implications for semantics, psychology, and the philosophy of science. Mainly, in expressing his position of minimalism, Horwich responds to the several criticisms of minimalism found in the works of Davidson Greenfill, Field Whit, Gupta Sunil, Richard Brown, and Soames Will, and in a classic paper of Dummett's. However, before addressing these criticisms, he implores us to consider biconditionals like:

<snow is white> is true $\leftrightarrow$ snow is white
and
<lying is wrong> is true $\leftrightarrow$ lying is wrong
that is, instances of the equivalence schema
<p> is true $\leftrightarrow$ p (Horwich, 2010, p. 36).

Horwich states out that it can be argued that such biconditionals are epistemologically fundamental – "we do not arrive at them, or seek to justify our acceptance of them, on the basis of anything more obvious or more immediately known. It can be argued, in addition, that our underived inclination to accept these biconditionals is the source of everything else we do with the truth predicate" (Horwich, 2010, 36). For instance, from the premises and then invoke the relevant instance of the equivalence schema:

What he said is that he was abducted and what he said is true.
We are prepared to infer he was abducted. This particular use of the word
'true' is explained by supposing that we first employ Leibniz's Law to get
from our pair of premises to
< He was abducted> is true (Horwich 2010, p. 36).

Horwich argues that no additional fact beyond the commitment to the equivalence schema is necessary to explain the use of the truth predicate. He asserts that, the meaning of 'true' is determined by this schema, as the meaning of any word is linked to the way it is used. Horwich's minimalist thesis is based on two claims: the fundamental role of the equivalence schema in using 'true' and the idea that a word's meaning arises from what explains its use (Horwich, 2010, p. 37). Although this reasoning may require further support, Horwich's primary aim is to defend the minimalist conclusion that the meaning of 'true' derives from the equivalence schema (Horwich, 2010, p. 38). Horwich makes some fundamental clarification of peculiarity minimalist proposal thus:

Several different kinds of theory, with very different explanatory objectives, might appropriately be labeled 'theories of truth'. So, it is important to be clear about what sort of theoretical work the minimalist proposal is not meant to do and should not be blamed for failing to do. In the first place, it is not intended to provide an explicit definition of the word 'true', neither descriptive nor stipulative; it does not offer a way of re-articulating the

contents of sentences containing the word; indeed, it implies that no such reformulations are possible. In the second place, the proposal does not amount to a substantive reductive theory of the property of being true something in the style of 'water is H₂O' - which would tell us how truth is constituted at some underlying level (Horwich, 2010, p. 38).

Furthermore, Horwich argues that searching for a comprehensive theory of truth is misguided, as his minimalist approach focuses on the word 'true' rather than truth itself. He states that his approach specifies the non-semantic fact responsible for the meaning of 'true', which is its role in the equivalence schema (Horwich, 2010, p. 39). Although minimalism may seem weak or obvious, Horwich asserts that it has significant philosophical implications. He believes that all facts involving truth can be explained by the minimal theory, countering traditional approaches like correspondence, coherence, and pragmatic theories, which add unnecessary content (Horwich, 1999, p. 6). Horwich further argues that these traditional theories do not undermine the correctness of the equivalence schema but question its completeness. He contends that these inflationary theories unnecessarily inflate the concept of truth with additional content, which is either unnecessary or mistaken (Horwich, 1999, p. 7). To illustrate his point, Horwich suggests imagining different dimensions, on which alternative accounts of truth can be characterized, each varying in theoretical commitment (Horwich, 1999, p. 10). Ultimately, Horwich defends his minimalist conclusion that the meaning of 'true' is sufficiently captured by the equivalence schema, challenging the need for more complex theories.

Horwich argues that minimalism denies the need for a conceptual analysis of truth and does not offer a definition in unproblematic terms (Horwich, 1999, p. 10). He contends that truth, reference, and satisfaction are not complex or naturalistic properties, rejecting the idea of a substantive, reductive theory of truth (Horwich, 1999, p. 11). Furthermore, minimalism dismisses the possibility of formulating a finite, non-trivial theory of truth, as the basic theory consists of an infinite number of biconditionals like '(p) is true if p', which cannot be explicitly formulated due to their vast number (Horwich, 1999, p. 11). Lastly, Horwich asserts that truth is conceptually independent of other notions such as assertion, verification, or meaning, emphasizing its purity within the minimalist framework (Horwich, 1999, p. 11). Horwich categorically asserts that his account of minimalism shall:

Take the less theoretically loaded view with respect to each of these dimensions of commitment. The theory of truth it proposes involves nothing more than the equivalence schema; it is non-compositional; it denies that truth and reference are complex or naturalistic properties; and it does not insist on an eliminative account of truth attributions. In this way minimalism aims for a maximally deflationary theory of truth, which, though complete, has no extraneous content theory about truth, the whole of truth, and nothing but truth (Horwich, 1999, p. 11).

Horwich holds that the minimalist critique of various truth theories (correspondence, coherence, pragmatist, etc.) is not that they are false, but that they fail to meet the explanatory demands of an adequate theory of truth. Specifically, they do not explain why instances of the equivalence schema are true. Horwich suggests that minimalism reverses this explanatory approach, asserting that all facts about truth can be derived from the equivalence biconditionals, which should therefore form the basis of a theory of truth

(Horwich, 1999, p. 12). Horwich believes the fundamental principles of minimal theory of truth is expressed in the following axioms of the theory as expressed in these propositions as:

- (1) (Snow is white) is true if snow is white)
 - and
 - (2) (Lying is wrong) is true if lying is wrong);
- that is to say, all the propositions whose structure is
- (E) (p) is true if p (Horwich, 1999, p. 17).

Horwich explains that to arrive at the 'propositional structure' of truth, we start with an axiom, dividing it into two parts: a sentence (e.g., 'Snow is White') and the schema '(p) is true if p' (Horwich, 1999, p. 18). Horwich acknowledges that the minimal theory might seem unsatisfactory because it does not explicitly define what truth is, lacking principles like "(x) (x is true if ... x ...)" (Horwich, 1999, p. 18). However, the minimalist thesis argues that all facts involving the truth predicate can be explained using only the equivalence schema, without requiring a specific account of the nature of truth (Horwich, 1999, p. 23). Horwich posits that the minimalist conception views the truth predicate's function as enabling explicit formulation of schematic generalizations. He explains that our understanding of the word 'true' is shaped by using it according to the equivalence schema: "(p) is true if p" (Horwich, 1999, p. 37). This practice defines the concept of truth and is fundamental to minimalism. As a theory, minimalism avers that truth consists of instances of this schema, providing the foundation for understanding the meaning and function of the truth predicate (Horwich, 1999, p. 37). Horwich emphasizes that truth is not a complex or naturalistic property but rather a property of a different kind. Although 'is true' is a valid English predicate, he insists that truth does not fit traditional notions of property, aligning with the minimalist stance (Horwich, 1999, p. 37).

The Igbo Conceptualization of *Eziokwu*

Attempts to philosophically conceptualize what truth is, is not exclusive to the Western philosophical tradition. Among the Igbos of the South Eastern region of Nigeria, the concept of truth is not only critical for knowledge acquisition but also permeates into the general Igbo philosophical tradition and thought system. As Ignatius N. Onwuatuegwu in his work, entitled, *A Philosophical Appraisal of Igbo Epistemic Metaphysical Notion of Truth* (2022) rightly notes that, "the Igbo equivalent of the English word for truth is known as *eziokwu*. Its value in Igbo thought system is such that it encroaches into every aspect of the lives of the Igbo people. For instance, the Igbo maxim '*eziokwu bu ndu*' (truth is life), shows the level of importance to which the Igbo people place on truth, to the extent of equating truth with life" (Onwuatuegwu, 2022, p. 1). Furthermore, explaining the preponderance of the Western conception of truth over *eziokwu*, Onwuatuegwu points out:

From the origin of the Igbo tribe up onto the development of Igbo scholarship, the Western conception of truth has been dominant. This could be justified based on the colonialization of the Igbo and in a broader sense, other non-Western peoples. Given this development, it became a fortiori on the Igbo as a people to begin to reflect critically on truth as a concept which exists independently of Western conception or understanding (Onwuatuegwu, 2022, p. 1).

Eziokwu, the Igbo word for truth, combines '*Ezi*', meaning correct, genuine, right, or good, with '*Okwu*', meaning word or speech. Onwuatuegwu explains that *Eziokwu* can signify 'good

talk, correct sentence, right word, or the appropriate statement', representing true utterances without contradictions (Onwatuwegwu, 2022, p. 2). In the Igbo thought system, the relationship between truth and existence is profound. The popular phrase '*Ezi Okwu Bu Ndu*', translates to 'a true word is life', implying that truth is life (Otakpor, 2006, p. 16). This concept is viewed as a basic truth, guiding rule, or moral principle, establishing a standard of correctness (Otakpor, 2006, p. 17). Truth in Igbo Philosophy is deeply connected to their understanding of reality, where all forces interact dynamically, with God as the absolute force and truth, distributing the vital force that sustains the universe. Thus, truth has a metaphysical foundation (Ukagba, as cited in Otakpor, 2006, p. 57). Truth in the Igbo language is '*ezi okwu*', where '*ezi*' (short for '*ezigbo*') means good, and '*okwu*' means talk or word. In Igbo tradition, a talk's goodness is based on its truthfulness. '*Ezi*' signifies correctness, order, and genuineness (Osuagwu, 2003, p. 3). Thus, '*eziokwu*' refers to what accurately corresponds to reality. The root '*zi*' relates to showing, directing, or rectifying, symbolizing straightness, like the naturally straight '*uzi*' tree (Osuagwu, 2003, p. 4). For the Igbo, '*eziokwu*' (truth) is integral to life, encapsulated in the saying '*Eziokwu bu ndu*' (truth is life) (Okonkwo, 2021, p. vii).

On his part, Ejeh Paulinus C. in his work, entitled, *A Critical Examination of the Concept of Truth in Igbo Thought System* (2019) maintains that *Eziokwu*, in other words means the correct response to a question or "as Nze rightly points out that the common understanding, (among the Igbo) is that '*eziokwu*' - truth is used to represent utterances (that is, the lack of inner contradictions) that are true" (Nze, 1994:4, as cited in Paulinus 2019, p. 4). On the other hand, the conceptualization of what *Eziokwu* is, better understood when juxtaposed with its Igbo opposite terms, *Obughi Eziokwu*, (it is not good talk), or *Asi* (lie). Hence, "among the Igbos, truth means *Eziokwu*, which literally translates to 'good talk'. For the Igbo, to be is to be true to what one really is. The Igbo puts this ontological principle in the maxim: *Eziokwu Bu Ndu* (Truth is life; life is truth)" (Paulinus, 2019, pp. 4-5). Unlike many Western philosophical conceptualizations of truth that attempts to define truth epistemically, the Igbo conceptualization of *eziokwu* in addition to its epistemic perspective also conceptualizes truth from an ontological and ethical ground. It is due to this that Paulinus submits:

In Igbo, ethico-ontological praxis, not only in the moral sense is the utterance of truth an affirmation. In the ontological order, the true is the living. Truth is authenticity, (*Ugwu ndu*). Not to be in the truth is not to be in life, in dynamism, self-manifestation and the vital energy. It is to die. Only the true lives. The untrue disappears into the falsehood of non-being (Paulinus, 2019, p. 5).

From a metaphysical perspective, Onwatuwegwu asserts that, truth holds great significance in the Igbo thought system due to its relationship with reality. The phrase '*eziokwu bu ndu*' (truth is life) reflects this, extending from a simple understanding to a metaphysical one. For the Igbo, '*eziokwu*' (truth) is a divine attribute, with God seen as the ultimate example of truthfulness (Onwatuwegwu, 2019, p. 3). Thus, a truthful person ascends to the gods after death and becomes an ancestor who intercedes to God on behalf of their relatives, making truth both epistemic and metaphysical (Onwatuwegwu, 2019, p. 3).

In his *Traditional Igbo Politics in the Context of Ezi Okwu Bu Ndu*, Lawrence Ogbo Ugwuanyi affirms that Truth is vital in Philosophy as it forms the foundation of knowledge and wisdom. He argues that philosophy, as the love of wisdom, is essentially the love of truth, since wisdom arises from interpreting reality through truth. However, the

presentation of truth varies across cultures and aspects of life. In Igbo cosmology, understanding the meaning of truth, *ezi okwu*, is crucial, particularly in how it is valued within their thought system (Ugwuanyi, as cited in Otakpor, 2006, p. 95). The place of truth in the Igbo thought system according to Ugwuanyi can be better understood by looking at the meaning of truth in the context of Igbo cosmology. He explains thus:

Given the organic nature of the Igbo society, its physical/metaphysical, human/spiritual, material/immaterial compositions, its ontological quality as 'an entity composed of gods, the divinities, the ancestors, the earth, the population and power', the Igbo thrives on a set of binding principles. At the heart of these principles is the principle of truth. Hence, the popular Igbo wisdom *ezi okwu bu ndu*: truth is life (Ugwuanyi, as cited in Otakpor, 2006, p. 99).

Ugwuanyi maintains that, *eziokwu* in the Igbo thought system is the foundational basis for trust, which in itself is the nucleus of Igbo communal philosophy of life (Ugwuanyi, as cited in Otakpor, 2006, p. 103). Little wonder in his *Ezi Okwu Bu Ndu: Reflections on the Place of Truth in Igbo History*, Odigwe A. Nwaokocha argues that the maxim *Ezi Okwu bu ndu* (Truth is life) has deep roots in Igbo culture and language, dating back to their emergence as a distinct cultural group. Though the language has evolved, it remains a unifying force among its speakers. Nwaokocha explains that, while *eziokwu* is often translated as 'truth', it literally means 'good statement' or 'good talk', as *ezigbo* means good in Igbo, reflecting the cultural nuance of the concept (Nwaokocha, as cited in Otakpor, 2006, p. 109). The absence of a single Igbo word for truth does not imply that the concept is foreign to their worldview. Nwaokocha emphasizes that the maxim *ezi okwu bu ndu* (truth is life) highlights truth's central role in life, asserting that societal survival hinges on accurate knowledge from the past (Nwaokocha, as cited in Otakpor, 2006, p. 109). This ancient saying underscores the belief that life is sustainable only when objective facts guide daily actions. The maxim raises critical epistemological questions about the nature of truth and its foundational role in knowledge and societal cohesion. He points out:

This seems to tally with the Akan concept of truth, Kwasi Wiredu insists that truth has something to do with agreement. The question that arises is: agreement with what? Is it with the ethos of society as handed down and established by the people? The lore, mores, norms and *ethos* of any given society will appear to be unwritten, silent, yet powerful constitution to which everything must strive to conform (Nwaokocha, as cited in Otakpor, 2006, p. 114).

Among the Igbo it is either there is conformity with the *ethos* of *ezi okwu* or there is not, those who fail to conform, struggle against the forces of society, which society is ever ready to defend and sustain. *Ezi okwu bu ndu* teaches the Igbo people that every abominable act is an offence against the land and society at large. Such offences are seen as capable of destroying societal wellbeing and so are to be avoided.

Horwich's Deflationism (Minimalism) and *Eziokwu*: A Comparative Analysis

Paul Horwich firmly supports the deflationary theory of truth, favouring minimalism over other deflationist theories like the Redundancy theory, Tarski's theory, Sentence-Variable theory, Pro-sentential theory, and Misquotation theory. This comparative analysis examines Horwich's deflationism (minimalism) and the concept of *eziokwu* under the following headings.

- i. **Propositions as the Medium of Truth:** Horwich's minimalist conception of truth is distinguished by two key features. First, he views propositions as the primary medium of truth (Horwich, 1999, pp. 17–18). He avers that an explicit definition of truth for propositions cannot be provided (Horwich, 1999, pp. 26–31), stating that, "the meaning of 'true' can only be determined by our disposition to assent to the infinitely many (non-paradoxical) instances of the following schema: (E) The proposition that p is true if and only if p" (Dodd 1997, p. 267). Horwich's minimalist definition suggests that truth is a fundamental idea that resists further analysis. The T-schema (truth-schema), which links a sentence to its truth condition, adequately expresses truth without requiring further philosophical justification. While the concept of truth is crucial in language and communication, Horwich contends it lacks profound metaphysical foundations. Propositions are central to Horwich's minimalist concept because they serve as the framework for understanding and evaluating truth. In his view, propositions are abstract entities that represent the content of sentences and bear truth value. Sentences convey propositions when making assertions about the world. A proposition is true if it accurately reflects reality; otherwise, it is false. Horwich's minimalist theory emphasizes a straightforward, deflationary explanation of truth, avoiding complex metaphysical or epistemological commitments. Propositions, as the building blocks for evaluating truth, enable a direct understanding of reality within the limits of language and representation. Little wonder why *Eziokwu*, the Igbo concept of truth, on the other hand, extends beyond mere true propositions, embodying the ontological principle expressed in the maxim *Eziokwu Bu Ndu* (Truth is life). George Uzoma Ukagba explains that for the Igbo, words are dynamic, creative forces with a profound impact on existence. Words have an ontological relationship with humans and can influence the world around them (Ukagba, as cited in Otakpor, 2006, p. 57). In Igbo thought, truth is also viewed as authenticity (*Ugwu ndu*), with the belief that only those who live in truth truly exist, while falsehood leads to non-being (Paulinus, 2019, p. 27). The Igbo concept of truth encompasses logical, ontological, moral, and cosmological dimensions, making it as complex as the notion of life itself (Otakpor, 2006, p. 15). Understanding Igbo truth requires considering their ontology, anthropology, and language. Critics of Horwich's minimalism argue that relying on propositions to determine truth raises ontological issues, particularly for those skeptical of abstract entities. This presents challenges in establishing the ontological commitment within Horwich's minimalist framework.
- ii. **The Nature of Truth:** The Igbo concept of truth, *eziokwu*, signifies utterances without contradictions (Nze, 1994, p. 4), differing from Horwich's minimalism, which simplifies truth to the schema (T) 'S' is true $\leftrightarrow$ S, avoiding deep metaphysical or epistemological commitments (Burgess, 1997, p. 263). Horwich's minimalist view sees truth as a basic, unanalyzable concept crucial to language and communication, where a statement is true if it accurately reflects reality. This approach contrasts sharply with the Igbo ontology of truth, which integrates truth with life itself, extending beyond simple ontology to include moral, religious, epistemological, and socio-political dimensions (Otakpor, 2006, p. 17). The Igbo perspective suggests a richer and more complex understanding of truth, viewing it as essential to all aspects of life. This contrasts with Horwich's minimalism, which, by reducing truth to a few basic principles, may lack the explanatory power needed for understanding truth's significance in complex fields like Ethics or Mathematics. Critics are of the view that, Horwich's minimalism may be inadequate for addressing contentious issues that a robust theory of truth should tackle. In contrast,

eziokwu offers a comprehensive view that challenges the simplicity of Horwich's framework, highlighting the need for a deeper engagement with truth's complexities. However, it is obvious that Horwich's Minimalism seem to have logical expressions in symbolizations and principles, which can be seen in biconditional propositions like '(p) is true if p' lacking in the Igbo Conceptualization of truth in the concept *eziokwu*, etc.

- iii. **The Question of Adequacy:** Horwich's minimalism faces criticism for its adequacy as a truth theory. Critics criticize it that, a minimally contentious theory fails to address the complex nature of truth, particularly in areas like modal logic, ethics, and mathematics. By reducing truth to a few basic principles, Horwich's theory may lack the explanatory power needed to tackle significant philosophical issues. In contrast, *eziokwu*, the Igbo concept of truth, offers a broader perspective, integrating ontological, ethical, and anthropological aspects. It views truth as intertwined with life, suggesting that an adequate truth theory must go beyond minimalism and engage deeply with the complexities and nuances of truth in various contexts.
- iv. **The Correspondence Relation:** The Igbo concept of *eziokwu*, unlike Horwich's minimalism, states that, a proposition is true if it corresponds with fact. Horwich's minimalism is a rival to correspondence theory, viewing truth as an insubstantial property tied to its logical and linguistic utility (Virdi, 2010, p. 39). In contrast, *eziokwu* endorses the idea that truth involves a correspondence relation and is understood as a substantial (relational) property. On a deeper level, the Igbo thought system believe that, '*Eziokwu Bu Ndu*' (Truth is life), meaning the absence of truth is death. In Igbo society, truth is equated with justice, and the gods are approached to reveal it. Unlike Horwich's minimalism, which requires logical consistency; *eziokwu* must correspond to reality and remain true from any perspective. The Igbo adage '*Ikpe mara eziokwu, aka azu di ya*' (when the truth is guilty, a bribe is involved) reflects this value. In the Igbo ontology of truth, truth and life are intertwined; one without the other leads to chaos in human affairs. This belief spans moral, religious, epistemological, legal, political, sociological, and metaphysical dimensions (Otakpor, 2006, p. 17). To be human is to be true to one's nature, touching on various aspects beyond the physio-biological. Truth is seen as life, authenticity, goodness, kindness, and beauty. It is demanded of an Igbo person to bear the truth, not merely as a moral commitment but as an ontological one (Otakpor, 2006, pp. 17-18).
- v. ***Eziokwu*, Minimalism, and Relativism:** In Igbo thought, *eziokwu* is objective. Any subjective truth is not truth. It must be faultless and stand out. Igbo thought rejects half-truths; '*eziokwu*' must be straight. The truth is powerful and, if denied, will eventually prevail. Truth-bearers are heroes, and ancestors are revered for their truthfulness. Truth qualifies one for sainthood and immortality. Horwich's minimalist theory of truth does not explicitly define truth. Unlike other theories, it lacks principles like '(x is true if ... x ...)' and does not specify what makes a proposition true. This makes it susceptible to claims that it cannot explain general facts about truth, imposing a metaphysical outlook. Deflationism, associated with Horwich's view, suggests that truth lacks significant explanation or metaphysical foundations. Critics contend that this could trivialize truth and lead to relativism, diminishing its objectivity and value.
- vi. **The Criteria of Truth:** Horwich's deflationism avoids addressing phenomena such as reference, logical validity, assertion, and the aim of inquiry, which are typically crucial in theories of truth. His minimalist theory treats instances of the equivalence schema (ES) as epistemologically and explanatorily fundamental, suggesting that, as language users,

we naturally accept these instances. However, this view is seen as shallow and oversimplistic. Armour-Garb (2013) criticizes this approach, questioning the purpose of the truth predicate if ES instances fully capture the concept of truth (Armour-Garb, 2013, p. 55). Horwich posits that, the truth predicate allows us to express claims otherwise inexpressible, highlighting its utility. Yet, this minimalist perspective does not offer a substantial understanding of truth. Minimalists, including Horwich, avers that, a proposition's truth depends on extra-linguistic factors but do not elaborate on this dependency. Contrastingly, the Igbo concept of *eziokwu* is more comprehensive, encompassing ethical, ontological, and metaphysical dimensions. The Igbo belief, '*Ezi okwu bu ndu*' (truth is life), integrates moral, religious, epistemological, legal, political, sociological, and metaphysical aspects. Thus, *eziokwu* is not merely an epistemological notion but a holistic concept central to the Igbo worldview.

Conclusion

The study concludes that the Igbo concept of *eziokwu* (truth), unlike Paul Horwich's minimalism which is a variant of the deflationist theory of truth, is more of an all-encompassing concept, broader and deeper in outlook than the various Western conceptualization of truth. Unlike Horwich's minimalism that aims to clarify and defend a certain 'minimalist' thesis about truth, which maintains that the meaning of the truth predicate is fixed by the schema 'the proposition that p is true if and only if p', while *eziokwu* in fact, transcends this parochial or minimalist concept of truth. *Eziokwu* is not merely conceptualized in the light of an understanding of truth of a proposition or solely within the bounds of Epistemology as a theory of knowledge, rather, unlike the Western inflationist and deflationist theories of truth, it cuts across, the metaphysical, ontological, ethical and traditional milieu of the Igbo thought system and worldview.

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