

## Lesson 13B

# Greetings II

By

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### MORNING GREETINGS

Although a direct translation for “Good morning” (*Ụtụtu ọma*) is now popular, it is just that: a direct-translation expression from English language. In traditional societies, morning greetings are about inquiring whether one’s relatives have embraced a new dawn, or whether the family has “come out” from sleeping because sleep, in Igbo theosophy, is a cousin of death. In most cases, the inquiry is about the entire family, not just the person being addressed.

Various greetings take on dialectical dressing, but they convey the same sense of inquiring whether all members of the household have risen from sleep. In urban areas, the singular you (*i*) often replaces the plural you (“*unu*”). The following examples will suffice:

**Unu abọọla chi?**            Have you awakened?  
**Ee, anyị abọọla.**            Yes, we have awakened.

**Unu abọkwaa?**            Have you also arisen?  
**Ee, anyị abọọ!**            Yes, we have arisen.

**Unu afutakwa?**            Have you come out?  
**Ee, anyị afutala!**            Yes, we have come out.

**Unu asaala chi?**            Have you come out?  
**Ee, anyị asaala chi!**            Yes, we have come out.

**Unu agbapeele?**            Have you opened (the door)?

**Ee, anyị agbapeele?**  
Yes, we have opened (the door).

**Chi abọkwaa?** Has the day broken?  
**Ee, chi abọọ!** Yes, the day has broken!

**Ọ bọkwaara unu!**  
Did it break for you (all)?

**Ee, ọ bọọ!** Yes, it has broken!

There are many dialectical differences in morning greetings, but they all convey the sense of emerging from the forced trip to the land of spirits, where death and other unknown spirits rule. Below are singular and plural forms of popular morning greetings.

<b>Ị bọọ?</b>	<b>Unu abọọ?</b>
<b>Ị bọkwaa?</b>	<b>Unu abọkwaa?</b>
<b>Ị tetekwe?</b>	<b>Unu etetekwe?</b>
<b>Ị tetego?</b>	<b>Unu etetego?</b>
<b>Ị fụtakwalu</b>	<b>Unu afụtakwalu</b>
<b>Ị kunigo?</b>	<b>Unu ekunigo?</b>
<b>Ị pụtala ụla?</b>	<b>Unu apụtala ụla?</b>
<b>Ị saala chi?</b>	<b>Unu asaala chi?</b>
<b>Ị gbapeele?</b>	<b>Unu agbapeele?</b>

Beyond inquiring about the status of person(s) in the morning, it is also popular to ask how the person slept.

<b>Ị lahụkwara ọfuma?</b>	Did you sleep well?
<b>Unu alahụkwara ọfuma?</b>	Did you all sleep well?

Morning greetings are of more important than afternoon or evening greetings, but times are changing. The bucolic society is giving way to increasingly urban settings, even though city folks still retire to the villages on weekends and on holidays. Therefore, though the following greetings may not be popular in rural societies, every Igbo person understands what they convey.

<b>Ụtutu ọma.</b>	Good morning.
<b>Ehihie ọma.</b>	Good afternoon.
<b>Mgbede ọma.</b>	Good evening.
<b>Abali ọma.</b>	Good night.

Between morning and night, the following greetings and responses could be used as appropriate:

<b>Kedu?</b>	Hi!
<b>Ndeewo.</b>	Greetings.
<b>Nnọọ.</b>	Welcome.
<b>Deeje.</b>	Welcome (from a journey)
<b>Daalụ.</b>	Thank you.
<b>Daalụ nke ukwuu.</b>	Immense thanks.
<b>Daalụ ọlụ.</b>	Greetings for the work you do.
<b>Deeme.</b>	Greetings for a job well done.
<b>Nọdụ mma.</b>	Stay well.
<b>Ka.</b>	Appreciated/ Thanks.
<b>Ka doo!</b>	Very much appreciated.
<b>Ije ọma</b>	Safe journey.
<b>Naa gboo.</b>	Return early.
<b>Ka o mesie.</b>	Goodbye.
<b>Ka ọ di</b>	Later [Let it be (for later)]

## **NIGHT GREETINGS**

Night greetings vary as the morning greetings., but the general idea is to convey the desire that everyone wakes up to a new dawn.

<b>Ka chi foo.</b>	May day break.
<b>Ka chi bọọ.</b>	May dawn unfold.
<b>Ka Chi chebe gi.</b>	May God protect you.
<b>Anị chebe gi.</b>	(May the) Earth protect you.
<b>Ka abalị chebe gi.</b>	May the night protect you.

## **OTHER GREETINGS**

The Igbo have greetings for all occasions. Many are dialectical.

### **1. Farewell Greetings**

<b>Ka o mesie</b>	Goodbye
<b>Ka ọ dịba</b>	Until next time
<b>Gbado anya</b>	Be alert
<b>Anyị ga-afụ</b>	We shall meet/see again
<b>Ije ọma</b>	Safe journey
<b>Jee nke ọma!</b>	Fare thee well.
<b>Jee ọfuma</b>	Go well

<b>Jisie ike</b>	Hang in there/Take care
<b>Laa gboo!</b>	Return early
<b>Uche gi dikwa ya.</b>	Put your mind to it.

## 2. Welcome

<b>Nno</b>	Welcome
<b>I jee!</b>	Welcome (from a journey)
<b>Alua!</b>	Welcome
<b>Deeje!</b>	Welcome (from a journey)
<b>I natala?</b>	Have you come back?

## 3. Appreciation

<b>Amushi</b>	Thank you
<b>Daalu</b>	Thank you
<b>Deeje</b>	Thank you
<b>Deeme</b>	Thank you
<b>Ka doo</b>	Thank you
<b>I meela</b>	You have done well
<b>Anwuchuna!</b>	Long may you live!

## 4. Expression of Sympathy

<b>Ndo</b>	Sorry/I am sorry
<b>Dibe</b>	Take heart/Bear it
<b>Nwee ndidi</b>	Have patience
<b>Taba nsi</b>	Exercise patience

## GREETINGS TO MANY

Greetings to more than one person are realized with the plural marker “*unu*” or “*nu*.” [Note the use of “*una*” for plural you in Nigeria’s broken English (Naija).] The most popular greeting to a group of people is: “*Kwenu!*” —which translates as “I salute you all!” or “Greetings to you all!” In assemblies, it is used to get attention as in “Lend me your ears.” The verb-root “*kwe*” means, “agree.” With the exception of “*kwenu*,” the plural marker is written separately; otherwise, it will convey a plea tone when addressing one person. The position of the plural marker may be before (“*unu*”) or after (“*nu*”) the word, but it is always detached, except for “*kwenu*” of course. The following examples suffice:

<b>Daalu nu</b>	Thank you (all).
<b>Dibe nu</b>	You (all) bear it.
<b>Taba nu nsi</b>	You (all) take heart.

**Kaa nụ**

**Unu emee**

**Ekenee m unu niile**

Thank you (all)

You (all) have done well.

I salute all of you