

## **A Sociolinguistic Study of Proverbs among the Yorubas in South-Western Nigeria and Mbube People in South-South Nigeria**

**Alfred Adeniyi Fatuase and Matthew Abua Ebim\***

**Abstract:** This paper discusses cultural sayings, known as proverbs, as a body of special speeches in which meanings are encrypted in figurative codes and deep structures by way of analogy and elevated comparisons. Within this corpus are proverbs, anecdotes, idioms, and epigrammatic sayings which constitute the wisdom of the elders of the communities, having been distilled from over the ages. The data investigated for this paper comprise 20 aspects of the meaning of Nigerian proverbs from two major cultural blocks namely, Yoruba and Mbube. The selected proverbs and their meanings were obtained from community leaders, traditional rulers, senior citizens, clan heads and other leaders of opinions in both communities while some others were gathered from the public domain. We posit that proverbs are capsules of knowledge that have both surface and deep meaning structures. This linguistic arsenal of verbal fireworks constitutes a safeguard for elders and community leaders in the way they deploy important messages, judgments, and counsel. This present study establishes a common link between the two cultural environments by the social values upheld in both communities, as demonstrated in their proverbs under study. We attempt to demonstrate the importance of this cultural-linguistic tool by using the theoretical framework of the Hallidayan interpersonal function in addition to Eugene Nida's theory of equivalency in translating the proverbs into English. Findings from the results reveal that proverbs do serve as regulators of behaviours and moral templates upon which socio-cultural values are built both among the Yoruba and Mbube people of Nigeria. Proverbs contribute immensely to character reformation, value re-orientation and social redemption in the ideal African society. The use of a proverb or a cultural maxim portrays its user as a wise person. Simultaneously, hearkening to the messages contained in them is

---

\* Alfred Adeniyi Fatuase (✉)

Department of Languages, School of Liberal Studies, Yaba College of Technology, Yaba Lagos, Nigeria

Matthew Abua Ebim (✉)

Department of English & Literary Studies, University of Calabar, Nigeria

e-mail: ebim.abua@unical.edu.ng; meabua@yahoo.com (corresponding author)

capable of making one wise as they serve as informal processes of teaching the lore, norms and nuances of any culture.

**Keywords:** wisdom, proverbs, sociolinguistics, Yoruba, Mbube

## INTRODUCTION

The people of Nigeria, especially the Yoruba and the Mbube have extremely rich linguistic repertoire from which they draw in the conduct of daily businesses in their various vocations, child rearing and communal living. The use of the spoken word is held in very high esteem among the Yoruba and the Mbube, hence the saying, “eyin lohun, boba bale, fifo ni i fo” i.e., words are eggs, once they fall, they just break. This saying, common to the two cultures, is both an admonition as well as a warning. It reiterates the fact that one’s utterances should be cautiously guarded unless one speaks amiss or in an offending manner to anyone. The human voice (i.e., speech) is considered to be very “fragile”. Once it breaks, it cannot be gathered together again. This means that once one mis-speaks to a wrong person, it may be difficult or impossible to rectify the situation.

As a result of being constantly careful when speaking, both in domestic and public fora, the Yoruba as well as the Mbube people avoid bland speeches as much as possible. They take their time before making comments on issues and even when they do, they test the waters, as it were, before plunging into extensive discussions. These people employ a wide arsenal of linguistic and non-linguistic conversational devices such as metaphorical expressions, body or facial movements, silences, turn-taking, etc. For the purpose of this paper, we shall limit ourselves to the use of metaphors, their relevance in speech making and their overall effect in character reformation for social redemption.

Among the youngsters of today, it common to hear slang expressions such as “old school”, “old fashioned”, etc. when they want to refer to the corrections that the elderly people give them concerning their conduct sometimes which negate the cultural expectations of the people. Young boys are found to wear ear-rings, perm or plait their hair in the female fashion or wear their trousers only half way up. When they are criticized, they retort: “you are uncivilized”, “you are not modern” (awa ja si, eyin ko jasi) and such derogatory remarks against the elderly. The decadence has gone so deep among them that it now affects their academic performance in the school. They buy examination materials, expose themselves indecently, seduce or

attempt to seduce their Lecturers, they attempt to bribe their teachers, they indulge in using electronic gadgets to commit examination fraud in order to score very high marks in the entrance examinations into the university and such other malpractices. Our argument in this paper is that constant and relentless correction is needed. Such corrections must be based on the time-honored values of decency and moderation. We believe that this approach can salvage the deterioration among the youths.

### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In analyzing metaphor, several approaches could be adopted such as Lakoff and Johnson 1980; Ortony 1981. In the use of metaphors, or the value they have in the creation of verse or poetic texts, rhetorics or speech valorization, metaphors can as well, and should also be appreciated in ordinary conversations and common speeches. Metaphors are relevant to our daily conversations and ought to be accorded the rightful recognition as they serve to imprint and impress the message of the discussion on the hearer.

Ortony devotes time and attention to the separation of the literary from the literal; the grandiose from the mundane and the special expression from the simple. However, for the purpose of this paper, we shall adopt the Functional Stylistics (FS) approach which is founded on the ideology of the British School of Functional Linguistics as established by M.A.K. Halliday. The Hallidayan Systemic Functional Theory (Halliday and Hasan 1976; Halliday 1976; Halliday 1994, and Daramola 2008) sufficiently caters for the study of metaphors which abound in the proverbs of both the Yoruba and Mbube people of Nigeria. This theory recognizes language as a system of meanings and grammar as the essential resource for making meanings both in social as well as in other contexts.

Language functionality is perceived in terms of what people do with language on the one hand, and the function of language on the other hand. Halliday identifies three essential language functions of ideational, interpersonal and textual realities. For the purpose of this study, emphasis shall be on the interpersonal function of language. Here, the text of speech is created for an interactional purpose from which a point of view being established (by the elder speaker) is expected to be recognized and appreciated (by the (young) listener) for the purpose of an observable change in attitude, position of view, after due unbundling or interpretation of the special speech.

## PROVERB AS METAPHOR

A metaphor is a kind of comparison. It is an analogy. It is the way in which the attributes of one object are used to describe another unrelated object. This speech device is highly figurative and very common in literary discourse, a type of discourse in which the Yoruba and the Mbube thrive tremendously. The data investigated for this paper comprise 20 aspects of the meaning of Nigerian proverbs from two major cultural blocks namely, Yoruba and Mbube. The selected proverbs and their meanings were obtained from community leaders, traditional rulers, senior citizens, clan heads and other leaders of opinions in both communities while some others were gathered from the public domain. People are quite deep. According to M.A.K. Halliday (1994, 340) we summarize his views on metaphor thus: Among the figures of speech recognized in rhetorical theory are a number of related figures having to do with verbal transference of various kinds. The general term for these is metaphor. The term 'metaphor' is also used in a more specific sense to refer to elevation of any kind, or contrast to 'metonymy' and sometimes a third term is introduced, namely 'synecdoche'. All three involve a 'non-literal' use of words."

From Halliday we understand that the direct transfer of attributes from one entity to another, and mostly in a non-literal sense, is metaphor. It is clear to us from the foregoing that any statement needing any type of comparative 'unbundling' before the embedded meaning could be accessed is categorized as metaphor.

## TYPES OF METAPHOR

There are different types of metaphor, recognized in their different functional compositions. Every lexico-grammatical configuration capable of expressing a given meaning in variation is perhaps suspect to be metaphoric. To this end, we recognize various forms of special speeches demonstrating a form of variation or the other as metaphor. Among such speeches are indigenous or cultural speeches of coded essence or message such as common sayings, idioms and proverbs. Daramola (2012, 169) says, "All of common sayings, idioms and proverbs are regarded as metaphors ...because they are said to be 'packed', meaning that the elements are structurally covert in their wordings and, of course, in their meanings. To him, common sayings are well-known statements or sentences owned or shared and used by

members of a community for the expression of collective cultural mores. Such statements are either metaphorical or non-metaphorical. In the case of idioms, "... they are special creative phases or word play whose senses are not predictable from the meanings and arrangements of their elements. They are always metaphorical.

In this paper, we limit our scope to proverbs drawn from both the Yoruba and Mbube cultures of Nigeria. According to the Longman Dictionary (3<sup>rd</sup> edition), proverbs are "... a collection of light hearted anecdotes, comments, observations of cultural and cross-cultural appeal couched in unpretentious but lyrical language in verse form". Ayoola (2007, 183) in his own opinion holds the view that "proverbs are rooted in the socio-cultural heritage of a people living in a well-defined geographical area, and that they are employed according to the circumstances that warrant them." According to the Webster Dictionary of the English Language (1<sup>st</sup> edition), "A proverb is a short saying in common use expressing a well-known truth or common sense from personal experience." Finnegan (2012, 2) agrees that a proverb is a saying in more or less fixed forms marked by shortness, sense and salt and distinguished by the popular acceptance of the truth expressed in it. This position emphasizes the fact that proverbs are indeed exciting when put in appropriate usage. As highly aesthetic formulations, proverbs address perennial subject matters such as love, endurance, hard-work, values, vices, marriage, child rearing, morality, wisdom, good neighbourliness, hygiene, death and other concerns of human beings. In the 'unbundling' of proverbs, we always see the surface (S) structure and the deeper (D) substantive structure in the way the comparison is made. There is always the universal truth in the ordinary words, just as the message is buried in the experience that underlies the grammatical structure.

## ASPECTS OF PROVERBS

As said earlier, proverbs are highly figurative and they portray the linguistic style of the speaker. Being metaphoric in composition, they are sometimes ironical, allusive, parallelistic, sarcastic or advisory. Both the Yoruba and the Mbube hold proverbs in high regard and no discussion is considered full or mature without the use of appropriate proverbs. At the opening of a conversation or before one makes contribution certain proverbs are expected. Even as the conversation grows and one is about to advance an argument, proverbs are expected. In the concluding remarks of a speaker too, he or she is expected to

drive home the points made with appropriate proverbs. Achebe in his *Things Fall Apart* says “proverbs are the palm oil with which words are eaten.” This is the height in which proverbs are regarded among the people. This culinary allusion above emphasizes the fact that proverbs make a conversation delicious. On the other hand, the Yoruba believe that, “amowe moran ni n yanju ejo” that is, *only a man versed in proverbs and deep in thought can settle disputes*. A seemingly intractable situation can be brought under control by the application of an appropriate proverb used at the nick of time.

### ORIGIN OF PROVERBS

Proverbs as a phenomenon of language are cultural products. A people’s culture is the sum total of their ways of life and general behavior. To this end, proverbs emanate from among the people as they observe the trend and established patterns of events among their fellow humans, animals, plants, vegetation, weather, etc. The people also take a cue from their religions, traditions, rituals, prophecies, failures and successes as their general experiences from which proverbs are formulated into capsules of knowledge. Anybody imbibing these principles and adapting same to life is considered to be a wise person who contextualizes his/her speech in tradition and pays respect to the ways of the community. Such a speaker thus reinforces his/her point of view and also, even though indirectly, pays tribute to himself as a fellow custodian of traditional wisdom and native intelligence. The Yoruba people too, buttress this fact by saying, “bi owe bi owe ni a n lu ilu ogigigbo, ologbon ni n jo o, omoran ni n mo o.” This means that the ogidigbo drum is beaten in cryptic proverbs; only the wise dance its steps and only the initiate discerns its message.

### USERS OF PROVERBS

From a sociological perspective, only the initiate and the wise of the community can use proverbs appropriately and confidently. This means that proverbs are closely tied to experience and achievement in the sociocultural context. It means therefore, that proverbs are the exclusive preserve of the elderly in the community. Since a capsule of proverb can signal warning, advice, direction, caution, reprimand etc. it can only be ‘issued’ by a man or woman of judgment. This often takes place at family meetings, community council, palace court sittings, festivals, ritual gathering, etc. Whoever is appointed to speak at such a forum must crave the indulgence and permission of the

elders, who are the custodians of the community lore, before or after using a proverb; but if an elder, he takes authority as due to him and says his proverbs without any apology. If such a speaker perceives that there are young persons in the audience who may not understand the coded message, the elder is at liberty to ‘unbundle’ the proverb for the youngsters. This is essentially necessary where the speech is meant to serve a corrective purpose. After all, an elder does not sit in the house while the she-goat gives birth on its tethers, according to the Mbube people.

Also, Yoruba elders believe that an elder does not look on (at the market place) while the head of an infant dangles on his mother’s back. By custom, when a young fellow says an apology before using a proverb, the elders around must grant the permission by pronouncing a blessing on him those proverbs will always do his bidding; or that he will never be in short supply of proverbs. So, it is among the Mbube and the Yoruba that the use of proverbs belongs to people of age and experience. When using proverbs, they are always linked to events occasions or situations warranting a comment, admonition or judgment. Generally speaking, proverbs serve different purposes such as respect for elders, proper conduct, dressing, hard-work, family life, women’s conduct, perseverance, self-worth, sanctity of life, justice, love and so on.

#### DATA PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION

Here we present a set of proverbs from both cultures highlighting the different aspects of morality emphasized in each of them.

S/N	YORUBA PROVERBS	INTERPRETATION	MEANING	LINGUISTIC FUNCTIONS & SIGNIFICANCE
1	AKII FI IKANJU LA OBE GBIGBONA	No one licks hot soup in haste	All things are best done when we apply caution and restraint	Advice, Counsel caution against any rash action
2	A KII LAHUN KA NI YI	No one possesses stinginess as well as honor	There is much to gain by being generous to the people	Counsel towards charity

3	ADIYE FUNFUBN KO MO ARA RE NI AGBA	The white fowl does not recognize its own superiority	It is dignifying to conduct oneself in a respectable manner	Reprimand, Caution
4	KO SENI TII SAAJU ELEEEDE PEEDE	It is unwise to pre-empt a man in his own art	It is unwise to speak in a matter before one's opinion is sought	Reprimand, Caution
5	IGI WOROKO NII DA INA RU, AARO WOROKO NII DA OBE NU	The crooked faggot troubles the good fire as the crooked hearth spills the cooking	The non-conformist causes the greatest confusion	Counsel against a troublemaker, Reprimand
6	BI ARA ILE ENI BA N JE KOKORO MOBI, TI A KO WI FUN UN, HURUHERE RE KII JE KI A SUN LORU	If one's neighbor eats worm-infested nuts and one fails to warn him, when the trouble comes in the night, nobody will be spared	It is good to warn a neighbor of the consequences of an unwise action	Warning, Counsel against an unreasonable action
7	AKI MOO DE MOO GE, KI FILA KOJA IPENPEJU	No matter how stylishly you wish to wear your cap, the brim must not exceed the eyebrow	One must be modest in all one's dealings	Counsel, Warning, Reprimand against excessive behavior
8	AGBALAGBA TO SO YANGAN MO IDI LO SO ARA RE DI ALAWADA ADI YE	An elder who wears corn around his waist makes himself a clown among fowls	One who desires respect must not act unseemly towards others	Warning, Counsel.

9	AGBAJO OWO NI A FI N SOYA AJEJE OWO KAN KO GBERU DORI	With the whole hand a man beats his chest; a single hand cannot lift the load to the head	No man can be self-sufficient in all things; the support of other people will sometimes be needed	Counsel, Encouragement
10	A SIKO IKUN NI A N JEUN SI	A man's best meal time is while the appetite lasts	A person must do the right thing at the right time	Counsel, Warning, Encouragement

And

S/N	MBUBE PROVERBS	INTERPRETATION	MEANING	LINGUISTIC FUNCTIONS & SIGNIFICANCE
1	OSHII ONEH OFE OGURU RICHE RE	The snake says it does not get fed by its coil	One must be proactive to avoid lacking basic necessities of life	Adversative, caution
2	ONWABEN ORUN URUNG ONYUNG WE OFUM IPO	The orphan only talks when the wind is blowing	One must be cautious and mindful of one's utterances at all times. The term orphan is a metaphor for "someone who has no supporters and not necessarily one who is fatherless and motherless".	This calls for caution, mindfulness and prudence
3	RIZEA YEH IFEN ONI, USHANG ICHI IKPI	Any year that does not favor one, even the blade of the cocoyam leave can cut/give the	Not all seasons are favorable, therefore any	Advocatory, caution

	FE	person a wound	time one does not feel favored, one should take caution and respect oneself	
4	OTOBOH OKANA WUO OJEN OTANG RE	The okro tree can never grow taller than the owner	No one is above advice from his/her parents (parents here is inclusive of elders)	Caution, prudence and profundity
5	IGU NDU IKABA INYAB EBI ONWAMEN	When the cow grows old, it sucks the breast of its offspring	That the elderly ones should benefit from the success of their offspring	Counsel, advice
6	ASAM AKEN AKPI WEH, AH KUN FE UBA	When your knife cuts you, you clean it up and put it back in its sheath	One should avoid acting in anger because whatever is done in anger will have great repercussions	Caution, advocacy
7	OZI OREA RE UFI RE	The thief does not because of the brightness of the moon sleep outside	Do not because of the “good things you met” become irresponsible. Or never be so attracted to things that you forget to retrace your steps	Caution, advisory
8	E KWARA IRE OSHI NE OSHI OGWE RE	One does not set fire to roast the snake according to the length of the snake	Problems should not be tackled according to how they appear; one should rather apply diplomacy in tackling issues	Prudence, proactiveness, caution

9	KE UTO IRURE, EKUNG LA OBAMA RE	One does not blame the calabash when the palm tree fails to produce wine	One should learn to take responsibility for whatever happens and stop apportioning blames	This calls for caution, reprimand and a form of advice
10	IRI ONWABEN KI IRIMO IRE	It is the orphan's yam that quenches the fire	Whatever the orphan does in the society, meanings are read into it. As stated in 2 above, the term orphan is a metaphor for "someone who has no supporters and not necessarily one who is fatherless and motherless"	This calls for caution at all times; it is also a form of advice and also reprimand

### DISCUSSION FINDINGS

In the application of proverbs, especially from the Yoruba perspective there is the need for caution, this is because proverbs are forms of advice, counsel, and caution against any rash action as found in proverb 1. This is since all things are best done when we apply caution and restraint. In proverb 2, we noticed that there is much to gain by being generous to the people while using proverbs to counsel people especially as a form of charity. In proverb 3, it is dignifying to conduct oneself in a respectable manner when using proverbs as forms of reprimand and caution. Linguistically, it is unwise to speak in a matter before one's opinion is sought and this can only be achieved through reprimand and caution. In proverb 4, there is the non-conformist approach which causes the greatest confusion; for instance, proverbs are used to counsel a troublemaker and also as forms of reprimand. In data 5 or proverb 5 we notice that it is good to warn a neighbor of the consequences of an unwise action by means of warning, counsel against an unreasonable action, while in proverb 6 there is the advice to be modest in all one's dealings such proverbs come in form of counsel, warning, reprimand against excessive behavior. In proverb 7

it is noticed that one who desires respect must not act unseemly towards others through the process of warning and wise counseling. Proverbs 9 and 10 focus on equity and justice and indispensability of individuals in the society. For instance, no man can be self-sufficient in all things; the support of other people will sometimes be needed through counseling and encouragement where a person must do the right thing at the right time by counseling and warning which are achievable through wise counsel and encouragement.

Different scholars have come up with divergent views on the role of lexical items generally and wise sayings specifically in the human society (Finnegan 1970; Halliday and Hasan 1976; Halliday 1976; Halliday 1994; Mieder 1993; Uhunmangbo and Omo-ojugo 2002; Oduaran, A. & Oduaran, 2006; Daramola 2008 & Ebim 2017, 2021a, 2021b). Most of these researchers argue that proverbs are highly culture and context dependent and thus cannot be understood outside the cultural context in which they are spoken. This is because proverbs are generally known sentence of the folk which contains wisdom, truth, morals and traditional views in a metaphorical, fixed and memorable form and which is handed down from generation to generation. The essence is to dig out the meaning that is, the essence of a given phenomenon, it advises or gives direct commands, either by prohibiting one's behavior or serving as code of conduct and communicates deep meanings in Bette and African society as a whole. They are also axioms widely accepted for their intrinsic value and self-evident truth.

From the above illustrations on Yoruba proverbs, one can say that proverbs are used to counsel people in the society since they clarify issues in an undoubtable manner. The proverbs presented here bring about morals that can resolve societal issues. This is because proverbs are rich sources of instructions, information, counseling, and enlightenment with their applicability into diverse people and cultures.

One can boldly say that proverbs are wise sayings that give advice about life because they are the gems of wisdom. Human beings sometimes do not understand a big lecture but easily understand a small proverb very easily because the truth they speak can span the globe. They can also give a greater potency to what is being conveyed. For instance, among the Mbube people in Ogoja local government in cross River State Nigeria, the use of proverbs is predominant. This is because, proverbs are culturally specific, yet their meaning has the universality; everyone can relate to them in some way and on some

level. There is a proverb for almost any situation. For example, in trying to explain the consequences of evil deeds, the proverb “as you sow, so shall you reap” teaches the lesson “You can’t escape the consequences of your actions”.

In the proverb “The snake says it does not get fed by its coil” it is observed that one must be proactive to avoid lacking basic necessities of life. This proverb is a form of advice as well as caution. When the metaphoric representation of “orphan” is mentioned in the proverb “The orphan only talks when the wind is blowing” we see that one must be always cautious and mindful of one’s utterances. The term orphan is a metaphor for “someone who has no supporters and not necessarily one who is fatherless and motherless” and it calls for caution, mindfulness and prudence. The interpreted proverb “Any year that does not favor one, even the blade of the cocoyam leave can cut/give the person a wound” stipulates the unpredictability of situations, circumstances and conditions. This means that not all seasons are favorable; therefore any time one does not feel favored, one should take caution and respect oneself. This proverb is advocatory, cautious.

The signifying elements in the interpreted proverb “The okro tree can never grow taller than the owner” depict the fact that no one is above advice from his/her parents (parents here is inclusive of elders). It is also representative of caution, prudence and profundity. Also, in the proverb interpreted as “When the cow grows old, it sucks the breast of its offspring” the metaphor of milk becomes the nourishing balm of youthfulness that provides succour for the elderly, the aged and the old age generally. This means that the elderly ones should benefit from the success of their offspring thus serving as a form of counsel and advice.

The people of Mbube are predominantly agrarian. When they therefore metaphorically say “When your knife cuts you, you clean it up and put it back in its sheath” it does not necessarily refer to the “knife” or “cutlas” but rather a form of advice that one should avoid acting in anger because whatever is done in anger will have great repercussions. It calls for caution and preventive measures.

Where “The thief does not because of the brightness of the moon sleep outside” is expressed, it rather signifies the goodness of life. It symbolizes caution against lasciviousness, avarices and covetousness. It means that one should not because of the “good things” become irresponsible or never be so attracted to things that one forgets to retrace one’s steps. It is rather a form of caution and advice.

The proverb “One does not set fire to roast the snake according to the length of the snake” signifies tactfulness. This involves a diplomatic way of resolving issues in the society through the use of prudence, proactiveness and caution. This implies that problems should not be tackled according to how they appear; one should rather apply diplomacy in tackling issues.

The calabash is an important instrument used by the agrarian Mbube in palm wine production. When an Mbube man says “One does not blame the calabash when the palm tree fails to produce wine” it does not refer literally to the process of tapping palm wine. It rather implies that “One should learn to take responsibility for whatever happens and stop apportioning blames”. This proverb is a cautionary way advising especially the youth to be responsible or face the repercussions of their actions.

It is a known fact that an orphan is a child whose parents have died, are unknown, or have permanently abandoned him/her and only a child who has lost both parents due to death is called an orphan. But when an Mbube person says “It is the orphan’s yam that quenches the fire” it is loaded with a plethora of meanings. Its signifying elements are numerous ranging from “whatever the orphan does in the society, meanings are read into it”. The term orphan is a metaphor for “someone who has no supporters and not necessarily one who is fatherless and motherless”. The proverb is therefore a form of caution at all times. It metaphorically refers to a form of advice and also reprimand.

## CONCLUSION

In this paper, we have attempted to highlight the unique value of proverbs in the society by x-raying their important position among the peoples of two major cultures in Africa, especially in Nigeria, the Yorubas of western Nigeria and the Mbube, a minority ethnic group in south-south Nigeria. The continuous use of these highly metaphoric expressions not only makes a speech very special but also makes such a speech unforgettable. It is by constantly remembering these nuggets of wisdom and community intelligence that the youngster can invariably adjust his ways and improve on his conduct; thus, making his/her elders or parents proud. As each family builds and strengthens the moral fabric of their children, the whole community, in the long run, becomes identified with sustainable norms and values. This is in line with the common saying among the Yoruba and the Igbo:

remember the son of whom you are. It is needful that the elders, school teachers, community leaders as well as parents and guardians should make it a habit to use appropriate proverbs as occasion demands. Curriculum planners should include modules of native wisdom in the school curriculum up to the upper secondary school in order that the school children might be taught by a deliberate effort. The oral beauty of the proverbs must be emphasized as well as their seminal importance. These activities will in the process of time inculcate the appropriate values in the children. Once these virtues are internalized, character reformation can be guaranteed.

### REFERENCES:

- Achebe, Chinua. 1958. *Things Fall Apart*. London: William Heinemann.
- Ayoola, O. M. 2007. "Language Use: An Exploration of Proverbs and Incantations, In Adeyemi Daramola & Olubukola Olugasa (Eds.). *Literature and Language: A Drama of Life*. Lagos: Print Publishers.
- Daramola, Adeyemi. 2008. "A Child of Necessity: An Analysis of Political Discourse in Nigeria." In Gunter Senft (Ed.). *Pragmatics*, Vol.18, No.3: 355-380.
- Daramola, Adeyemi. 2012. "A Stylistic Study of Metaphors in Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*". In J.K.S. Makokha, J. O. Ogone & R. Pavlov (Eds.). *Style in African Literature*. Amsterdam-New York: Rodopi.
- Ebim, M. A. 2017. "'Terrorists or Tags'? Contested Identities in Media Portrayal of Militants in Nigeria". *Journal of African Studies*, Vol.6, No.2: 142 -154.
- Ebim Matthew Abua. 2021. "A critical discourse analysis of Niyi Osundare's 'Blues for the new Senate King'". *Lwati: A Journal of Contemporary Research*, 18(1).
- Ebim Matthew Abua. 2021. "A Critical Discourse Analysis of Narrative Processes in Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*". *Journal, UTUENIKANG Ibom Journal of Language and Literary Review*, Vol 1 (1): 191-203.
- Finnegan, Ruth. 1970. *Oral Literature in Africa*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Finnegan, Ruth. 2012. *Oral Literature in Africa* (2<sup>nd</sup> illustrated edition). Cambridge: Open Book.
- Halliday, M.A.K. 1976. *Halliday: System and Function in Language*. Selected papers edited by Gunther Kress. Oxford University Press.
- Halliday, M.A.K. & R. Hassan. 1976. *Cohesion in English*. London: Longman.
- Halliday, M.A.K. 1994. *An Introduction to Functional Grammar*. London: Edward Arnold.
- Lakoff, G. & M. Johnson. 1980. *Metaphors We Live By*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English*. 2000, (3<sup>rd</sup> edition). Harlow: Longman.
- Mieder, Wolfgang. 1993. *Proverbs Are Never Out of Season: Popular Wisdom in the Modern Age*. Oxford University Press.
- Ortony, Andrew (ed.). 1981. *Metaphor and Thought*. Cambridge: CUP.
- Uhunmangbo, A. E. & M. Omo-Ojugo. 2002. "Sociolinguistic study of aspects of Benin proverbs". In L. Edebayo (Ed.). *Perspectives on Applied Linguistics in Language and Literature*. Ibadan: Stirling Horden Publishers (Nig) Ltd.