

POSTPROVERBIALS AT WORK

The Context of Radical
Proverb-Making in Nigerian
Languages

Aderemi Raji-Oyelade (ed.)

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Proverb-Making in Nigerian Languages**

Aderemi Raji-Oyelade (ed.)



**FACULTY OF HUMANITIES
AND SOCIAL SCIENCES**
JOSIP JURAJ STROSSMAYER UNIVERSITY OF OSIJEK

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Preface

Over two centuries of the study of African proverbs as cultural materials expressing worldviews and philosophy drawn from the logic and experiences of people, its scholarship takes more interesting turn with focus on the structure of change, the dynamism inherent in new creations as well as the reflection of new values in relatively new creations of the proverb form. In search of a terminology to define and describe this phenomenon of dynamism and change, the term “postproverbials” emerged in the late 1990s to engage with proverbial re-creations and transformations which themselves demanded further scrutiny and categorisations.

By definition, “postproverbials” are twisted and hybrid speech acts, re-creations of the traditional and conventional proverb medium; they are transgressive sayings both in sense and in structure when compared to traditional proverbs. A major significance for the study of *postproverbials* is that they reflect the urban imagination of Africa, appearing in fictional and non-fictional genres including literature, music, film, social media and other cultural spaces.

The term “postproverbials” first came into the lexicon of African literary scholarship in 1999 (*Research in African Literatures*), with fuller explication in the book entitled *Postproverbials as Archetypes of Modernity in Yoruba Culture* (Raji-Oyelade, 2012; 2022). After its emergence, more explications, extensions and reactions to the cultural theory have inspired the need for a network that will bring scholars to further interactions and collaborations. The postproverbial impulse has become a major means of interpreting and unpacking alternate, transgressive and transformational acts in humanistic discourses. Notable works have been published in this area of transgressive paremiology by other scholars including Taiwo Olorunfoba-Oju, Olutoyin Jegede, Noah Balogun, Adeyemi Ademowo, Helen Yitah, Oladele Balogun, Shumirai Nyota, Ahmad Kipacha, Olayinka Oyeleye, Zaynab Ango, Chinyere Ojiakor, Uche Oboko, and Charles Akinsete

among others. The special issue of *Matatu*, volume 51, number 2 (2019) – “The Postproverbial Agency: Texts, Media and Mediation in African Cultures” - contains some of the major essays on the subject to date.

In the wake of such studies of change and transformations of the African proverb, it is expected that a range of diverse perspectives, methodologies, interpretations and neoteric terminologies will be brought upon the discourse to engage the theory depending on the critical strategy and discipline of particular scholars.

The essays contained in this supplement of *Proverbium* are part of the panel presentations at the second international conference of postproverbial studies which held in November 2022 at the University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria. The objective of the conference was to encourage the interrogation of postproverbial interpretations and the understanding of how postproverbial thought has become ingrained as a significant reference of radical theorising and practice in inter- and multidisciplinary scholarships in the humanities and the social sciences. Together, the selected essays are a validation of the continual commitment by scholars across various disciplines in the humanities and the social sciences to explore the possibilities of the inherent dynamism of linguistic expressions and social interactions with language as a defining factor of human civilization and consciousness.

With the exception of Charles Akinsete’s essay which provides a few examples from other African languages (Luo, Kiswahili, Shona and Luganda), all the contributions in this book are focused on the practice of postproverbiality in five Nigerian languages including Hausa, Igbo, Maghwavul, Nigerian Pidgin, and Yoruba. However, the richness of this publication, especially for a new entrant into postproverbial studies, inheres in the diversity of the theoretical and hermeneutic engagements with the subject across the language panels. From linguistic and critical discourse analyses, from philosophical reflections, to historic narrativization, and the aesthetic interpretation of the verbal performance, as well as the postcolonial justifica-

tion of the practice, the critique of postproverbial imagination in Nigerian languages prove that more studies of the transgressive corpus is required and necessary.

As new critiques emerge, with the anxiety and possibility of new terminologies, it is to the greater value of African and global studies for us to encounter more scholars explore and interrogate the presence and activity of postproverbial studies in diverse disciplines in the humanities, the social sciences and other disciplines.

Aderemi Raji-Oyelade
Department of English
University of Ibadan
Ibadan, Nigeria.

Berlin
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TOYIN FALOLA

ÒWE ÌGBÀLÓDÉ: INTERROGATION OF POST-PROVERBIAL INTERPRETATIONS IN CONTEMPORARY SCHOLARSHIP*

Abstract: Acts of changes in the African proverbial space have been quite a habit in contemporary Africa and different writers have either used them as a means of expressing difference, modernity and invention. The earliest form of post-proverbials has been the misconstructions of African proverbs that have left changes in their grammatical constructions. Over the years, many traditional utterances, not just proverbs, have had their word constructions different from their original forms and African proverbs have been victimized. The interrogation of this phenomenon is both of both historical and aesthetic demands. Clearly African proverbs are threatened by emerging habits of post-proverbials but the new imagination of proverbs is also crucial as signs of new orientations in African societies.

Keywords: proverbs, post-proverbials, African studies, variation, modernities

1. Introduction

Let me start this reflection with some examples of what we mean by post-proverbial composition:

1. Ilé ọba tó jó, ọbá sá lọ.

The burnt palace sends the monarch on a wild escape dash.

Instead of Ilé ọba tó jó ẹwà ló bù si (It brings added beauties to the palace).

2. Bọwọ ẹni ò báí tẹ̀kù idà, á lọ wá AK-47!

Without getting a hold of the handle of the sword, one better look for AK-47.

* This essay was presented as a keynote lecture at the second international conference on postproverbial studies, University of Ibadan, Ibadan (November 2022).

Instead of *Bọwọ ẹni ò báì tẹ̀kù idà, a kẹ̀ì bẹ̀rẹ̀ ikú tó pa baba ẹ̀ni* (Without getting a hold of the handle of the sword, one better not challenge the killer of one's father).

3. *Owó ni kẹ̀kẹ̀ ìhìnre, àmọ̀ bàlúù ni ìhìnre n gùn bá'yíí o!*
 Evangelism now takes pleasure in riding on the airplane
 Instead of *Owó ni kẹ̀kẹ̀ ìhìnre* (Money is the driving force of evangelism).
 (notice the play on the metaphor of *kẹ̀kẹ̀* (the driving force), taken for the literal *kẹ̀kẹ̀* (bicycle).

4. *Ibi gbogbo nilẹ̀ ọ̀wọ̀, sùgbón ọ̀ba Ọ̀wọ̀ mọ̀ pé títàn ni wọ̀n í tan òun, ó mọ̀ pé ilẹ̀ òun ò dé Àkúrẹ̀.*
 The monarch of Ọ̀wọ̀ knows he is being deceived; after all, he is aware that his land/jurisdiction does not extend to the city of Àkúrẹ̀.¹
 Instead of *Ibi gbogbo nilẹ̀ ọ̀wọ̀*. (Everywhere is holy land/place of veneration).

5. *Ẹ̀şin kẹ̀ì dání ká má tún un gùn, bíí tí Kangiwa kọ̀.*
 When the horse bump-dumps the rider, the rider re-climbs it; not in the case of Gov. Kangiwa.²
 Instead of *Ẹ̀şin kẹ̀ì dani kí á má tún gùn ún*. (“When the horse bump-dumps the rider, the rider re-climbs it”).

The foregoing examples are entries to my understanding of the subject, set in the context of the older proverbs and newer ones, the larger meanings of what the post-proverbial represent to culture and creativity. The Yoruba proverb *Òwe l'ẹ̀şin ọ̀rọ̀* (Proverb is the horse of speech) shows the instrumentality of proverbs in the right and adequate con-

¹ This is a play on words and a poke at religion. Notice how the phrase “*ibi ọ̀wọ̀*” (place of veneration) becomes exchanged with the town of Ọ̀wọ̀, since both words share same sound but different meanings.

² This creation alludes to the story of one Alhaji Shehu Kangiwa, the then Governor of Sokoto State in Nigeria's Second Republic, who fell off his horse during a polo game and died from head injuries. Kangiwa is thus an exception to the proverb.

structions and interpretations of statements to reflect hidden meanings and codify plain meanings based on circumstances. It also shows that the expressions and proverbs are well-understood when one is used to construe the other. This implies how important African societies take conversations, especially in contexts that are befitting. As such, it is believed that Èyin lohun, bó bá balè, fifọ ní í ọ *“a statement is like an egg, once fallen and broken, it cannot be picked.”* This means African societies were more conscious of the understanding of their statements, their constructions and their consequences (Peek, 1981).

Africa is a continent of many heritages and beautiful cultural materials; proverbs are one of them. African proverbs are often the expression of societal morals, social values, lessons, wisdom and general culture of the African society (Ogbulogo, 2002 p. 109). African societies originally depended on oral interactions and as such, there was a need to institutionalize the society, partly through oral constructions which include proverbs (Scheub 1985). This has informed the wild claim by some scholars that proverb usage in a society could be largely traced to non-literate communities, although evidence suggests that many societies have proverbs (Kwesi Yankah, 1989).

African societies are largely collective in nature and an individualistic approach to issues was not predominant in the pre-colonial African societies. Emile Durkheim, in his understanding of these societies, although controversially referred to them as “primitive,” believed that there was a “mechanical solidarity” that existed in the societies (Durkheim 1984). The existence of such solidarity cannot be outrightly denied as community and family often come first before individuals, hence, words are often used to correct and set the minds of individuals straight. More so, the face-to-face oral tradition of discussion had made the use of proverbial engagements easy for individuals (Rogers 1999). It allows a deeper illustrative understanding of specific concepts and refines the manner by which one conducts himself or herself. The potency of African proverbs was quite respected as it was also a means of social control through the re-enactment of societal values (Bergsma 1970).

Despite the significance of these African cultural elements, recent paremiological studies have shown a strong change in value and the construction of African proverbs, especially in contemporary scholarship and day-to-day conversations (Aleksa Varga & Raji-Oyelade, 2021, p. 268). Many of the African proverbs have faced radical transformation as a result of many factors such as globalization (Raji-Oyelade 1999). Recent usage of proverbs has created post-proverbials that are often parodies and perversions of the original forms and the post-proverbials are now in constant usage than the proverbs (Litovkina 2014). The predominance of these post-proverbials has been very notable that it has become part of the societies' communication manners and are used by scholars in texts, speeches and research.

2. African Proverbs and African Culture

African culture is rich in proverbial wisdom and respected individuals, storytellers, elders and other notable figures are expected to speak or address people with proverbs that reassert their wisdom. As it is in most African societies, the Ibibio ethnic group of Nigeria, for example, manifest these characteristics as their societal wise men, orators and advisers were expected to interact with proverbs in order to concretize or substantiate their conversations (Udoidem 1984). The adoption of proverbs by the African traditional educational system as a tool, reinforces the fact that education and knowledge were seen for the advantage of the society, communalistic, pragmatic as well as useful for the understanding of life and its constituents (Essien 2013).

African societies are characterized by their beliefs in their customs and moral subscriptions that served as the conditioning and controlling mechanism for everyone in the society. Aside from the linguistic aesthetic of African proverbs, they are often manuals for actions and reactions of members of the society as well as a direction to societal and moral orientations (Obiechina 1975). They give an explanation of what is expected of every member of the society and ascribe respect to the elders and reference to the authorities.

An example of this is “*Olófòdófó kìí gbégbaa, ibi ọpẹ́ dídá ló mọ.*” This means the highest a gossip can get is “thank you,” no one would give him a gift of six pence (10,000 cowries) for what he has done. In essence, it is a re-enactment of the cultural stance against gossip in African society as a result of the possible consequences attributable to them that the Yoruba recognize such anomaly in the context of their indigenous rhetoric. To capture the importance of African proverbs to the African traditional belief system, C.S. Momoh (2000, p. 361) captured it rightly thus:

Proverbs are to the traditional Africans what the Bible or Qur’an is to the religious leaders; where the religious leader would reach for a passage in the Holy Book, the African would reach for a proverb. Proverbs are to one traditional African what a book is to a student; he studied and mastered proverbs just as a student studies his subject matter in books.

In addition, the proverbs ascribe social responsibilities to all classes of persons in the society. For example, a Yoruba proverb says “*Àgbà kìí wà l’òjà, k’órí ọmọ tuntun wọ,*” which literally means that the elders in the marketplace would not allow a new born baby’s head to be wrongly positioned at the mother’s back. This proverb explains the position of the elders in ensuring to guide the young and that the society follows the right decisions and morals. It is a social responsibility proverb and many African societies make use of proverbs to actualize those aims (Adeyemi & Opeyemi 2014).

Proverbs in African society are aspects of the society that serve as a reflection of the others. It summarizes in style, the worldview of the society towards issues and preponderance of practices in every African society (Dipio 2019). It gives people an average of what should be expected in every society and guides them on how to behave. It has been a reliable means of motivating individuals, and constitutions of the society’s aspirations as well as their consciousness. It is an expression of the philosophy of the collective society and the cognitive process of individuals. In other words, proverbs sustain the norms

and values of an African society. A proverbial expression does not just explain a particular phenomenon in the society but is also a link to other aspects of the society's world views (Fasiku 2006).

African society, past or present, is not devoid of conflict among individuals and communities. Every society unarguably has a conflict resolution procedure that helps them resolve issues. However, the African society's system of conflict resolutions was primarily to ensure that social ties are still left intact and put in mind the social values and relationships inherent in the society (Morrill & Thomas 1992). In these instances, there are rules in place to first ensure that conflicts do not even get to start and if it does, it gets resolved quickly and appropriately. Where the issues get out of the jurisdiction of the family structures, there are institutions that ensure that they are amicably resolved. There is a role for an arbitrator that resolves issues either informally or formally more often than not, there exists a deep use of proverbs that captures moments adequately and shows the brilliance of such an arbitrator. The Yoruba proverb "*Amòràn-mò-òwe ní í làjà ọ̀ràn,*" means it is only a person that understands a dispute, as well as proverbs, that can adequately resolve the dispute. It puts proverbs as a needed tool in the conflict resolution process of African cultures and in the present day, there are still vague practices (Adegoju 2009).

The majority of the African society depended on oral literature and traditions as they were widely not exposed to early writing cultures (Msiska & Hyland 2017). This allowed high reliance on oral conversations, folklores, and other forms of literature that either reflect the culture of the society, and as well upheld valuable information and details for the benefit of all. The reliance on oral literature has allowed an infusion of proverbs that has resulted in overwhelming rich profusions in certain cultures. Since African culture is widely codified in oral literature and proverbs are largely an aspect of oral literature, proverbs can therefore be no less than an expression and manifestation of African cultures in general (Ashipu & Amende 2013).

Proverbs as a means of telling certain truths, not only as an expression of cultures, have widely been used in African scholarship and literature and have been fitting well in the expression of the thoughts of writers (Balogun 2006). Proverbs have grown from just a mere means of communication in African society as it was, especially before colonialism and a full-blown verbal art used to communicate in the best way of African thoughts or make a scholarship identifiable to relate to African thoughts (Bascom 1965).

Post-proverbials in the African proverbial space has been quite a habit in contemporary Africa and different writers have either used them as a means of adopting it in context or making fun to the pleasure of speakers (Akinsete 2020). The earliest form of post-proverbials has been the misconstructions of African proverbs that have left changes in their grammatical constructions. Over the years, many traditional utterances, not just proverbs, have had their word constructions different from their original forms and African proverbs have been victimized. In the contemporary usage, proverbs might be quoted differently from their original forms but might probably send a befitting message in the context they are used. For example, the statement “*Kí lo rí lógbè, tóo fi wa irú sówó,*” translated as “what have you seen in the soup that made you hold locust bean or meat in your hands?” or meat have been widely used as “*Kí lo rí lógbè, to fi wa eran sówó,*” meaning “what have you seen in the soup that made you hold meat in your hands” (Fayemi 2009). In construing the two statements, it seems the rationale behind the original statement could be found in the former rather than the latter, it defeats logic to question why a person wants to use locust beans, having in mind the cultural preference for locust beans in soups.

The misconstruction of proverbs in those mild ways are not the basic problems African proverbs have faced but outright post-proverbial constructions of them have changed the face of African proverbs in contemporary scholarship. It has not just affected the structures of the proverbs but has distorted the meanings and cultural heritage attributable to the proverbs.

3. *The Predominance of Post-Proverbials and Effects on African Culture*

Further comments on the significance of African proverbs to African culture might seem overemphasized but they are so striking that every word of exaggeration might be too appropriate to be ignored (Yankah 2012). Proverbs are aesthetic arts that are fixable and flexible enough to use in almost all relevant conversations and discussions. This attribute has allowed their use in contemporary society, literature and scholarship. African proverbs are unchanging, and were often given reverence because of their instrumentality in the protection of the respective cultures. This attribute is described by Finnegan as “relative fixity” expressing the fixed nature of their constructions (Finnegan, 1976, p. 393).

The composition of the African proverbs manifests their meaningfulness without any external influence or constructions. The meaningfulness embedded in African proverbs could be related to the requirement of a high expectation in cultural knowledge and competence which reflects in the careful coinage of the words (Yankah 1989). The fixability, self-meaningfulness, and the beauty of African proverbs have however been placed under a certain threat that has not only affected the meaningfulness but also the aesthetic constructions of the words.

Post-proverbials have been one of the basic challenges to the intellectual constructions of African proverbs, and serve as the contemporary adaptation or distortion of the original African proverbs. These distortions are direct abuse of the fixability of African proverbs subjected to contemporary rhetoric that changes the native identity of the proverbs. Aderemi Raji-Oyelade referred to post-proverbials as *supplementary proverbs* arising from conventional usage in contemporary societies. Post-proverbials have given proverbs new forms, structures, meanings and the values attached to them (Raji-Oyelade 1999). They no longer carry the sanctity that makes people respect them but have been brought to the pedestrian stage of mockery and jokes which some might see as an embarrassment to African culture.

The emergence of post-proverbial expressions in contemporary scholarship and literature has signified an interplay between old African conceptualization and elements of modernity with changing linguistic and literary orientations of the society. The expressions are widely the effect of conjoining orality that was predominant in precolonial African societies, as well as the usage of modernity. Although there are contemporary writers like S.O. Bada, K. Akinlade, A. Sobande, Bello-Olowookere, and J.O. Ajibola to mention a few, but they have only been able to document the oral renditions and expressions of those proverbs and never give it a written feature (Fayemi 2009). Hence, the current literacy level and writing culture have also influenced the adoption of new understanding that in return changed the concept of proverbs in Africa.

With the advent of colonization, religions and other belief systems that have been institutionalized in educational structures have been a challenge to many African epistemology and social structures. The colonial history of the continent saw not only the radical change in systems of government, but has taken the cultural and social heritage and has therefore affected how we speak and reason. The effects of post-colonial heritage manifest radically in almost all sectors of the society, and it has also affected a majority of the conceptualization processes of the people (Olaniyan 2017). The manifestation of these effects is also seen in the change in speech of African languages from native dialects to conventional dialects. The number of Africans that take African languages as primary languages reduces every moment, those that still speak their native languages have been affected by modernized tones (Fardon & Furniss 1994). These occurrences could not have been in place without having effects on African proverbs that were supposed to be the beauty of those native languages. The effect is that there are lesser speakers of African proverbs and thus, reduce the preponderance that allows others to inject it with doses of modernity that change the structures, meanings and values in the form of post-proverbials.

As stated earlier, those proverbs often serve as the reflection of philosophical and conceptual orientation of the African traditional

societies, especially in early history and carry along with them, the elements of their respective cultures. Post-proverbs could be seen as the reflection of the contemporary cultures in a modernized community and what is left of the cultural heritage of the continent. It is an examination of the effect of colonialism on its own and an open book for what to expect in the present days and future of African cultures (Raji-Oyelade & Oyeleye 2020).

African cultures are held with sacredness and reverence in all traditions and due to the oral interactions predominant in the African societies, folktales, folklore, stories and proverbs served as the re-enactment of those customs and culture for the adherence of every individual in the society. The respect given to these cultures is given to the instruments of their re-enactments, thus the respect given to African proverbs from a cultural perspective (Penfield 1996). Post-proverbs represent the modern disrespect for those sanctities and do not have any expectation for any probable consequences. For instance, the Yoruba saying that “*Aróbaḥín lóba ñ pa,*” it is only the one that disobeys or ridicules the king that gets killed or punished by the king, carries an instruction to the society that the king must in no way be disrespected and his instructions must in every way be kept. The king in Yoruba, and widely in African culture is given a position second to the gods “*Aláṣẹ ikeji òrìṣà.*” In essence, disrespect to him or his instructions is a kick to the faces of the gods and pillars of traditional beliefs. When a person in those old periods says that “*Aróbaḥín lè jòba ló,*” which means that the one that disobeys the king might be greater than the king, looks for trouble as he would have to explain who is greater than the king. However, putting this in a contemporary context does not mean much but a play on the meanings and context of the saying.

In proper terms, there is a contextual degeneration of the prestige that comes with every proverb in African cultures. Every African culture in many instances has a root and is like a phenomenon in society. There are proverbs that relate to family relations such as, “*A kìí fọwọ òsì júwe ilé e baba ẹni,*” one does not describe or point at one’s

father or family house with the left hand. This means that it is wrong to disrespect one's family heritage and legacies or that it is important to respect one's background. In this instance, the significance of left hands is based on the social belief in the use of right hands as the appropriate hand and condemnation ascribed to using the left. Hence, an abuse of the structure of this saying might imply doing the exact same thing the proverb frowns at.

The “relative fixity” that Finnegan used to describe African proverbs has been threatened by the elasticity introduced by post-proverbials. This explains why Raji-Oyelade stated that to every proverb there is a prosthesis of it (Raji-Oyelade 2022). In essence, every proverb carries in itself the ability to be distorted and changed. Hence, there could be hundreds of post-proverbials that may be derived from a proverb. The certainty, sanctity and fixity of every proverb are therefore in question. This significant transformation has been linked to the concept of *glottophagy* by Louis-Jean Calvet which relates to the colonization of a language by the reconcentration of the linguistic attributes and elements of those languages among those that speak them (Calvet 1998). There is a continuous interference with these original and native languages with new colonial languages and cause conscious and unconscious switch between them and new words as alternatives. It results in a mixture of the original and the abridged to result in a new language species. This phenomenon is also evident in contemporary African proverbs as they witness radical and subtle transformations.

The newfound habits of African speakers, especially among the youth, of language mixture and reliance on secondary or modern languages, have put the original states of African languages and all their properties at risk (Manyike & Shava 2018). As a result of this, there is a reduced number of individuals that are knowledgeable in African proverbs leaving them vanishing by generation. This has also given post-proverbials the platform to spread among speakers either as jokes or conscious play on words. Hence, speakers create a gap in proverbs and input elements of modernity and contemporary

statements to bring them into context with the aim of creating new art or aesthetics out of the original ones.

The effect of post-proverbs might threaten the continuous existence of some of African history and cultures. Some proverbs have been useful in drawing the people's attention back to historical facts, events and figures that might be less spoken of. Many of these proverbs have been constructed to historical pasts and mythologies of the African continents and they serve as historical artefacts to set those records straight (Madu 1992). For instance, the saying that "*Eni tí Ẓàngó bá ti ojú è wọ ilẹ̀, kò ní bá wọn bú Ọba Kòso*" means that anyone that witnessed how Ẓàngó, the Yoruba god of thunder, entered the ground would not make abusive statements toward Ọba Kòso. Ẓàngó, who once lived on earth, is a god known for his valour and ability to control thunder and fire. He is called "Ọba Kòso" or "Olúkòso," to commemorate the fact that he never hung himself out of frustration but entered the ground like a legend (Bakare 2013).

The above proverb first demonstrates the importance of loyalty, religion, commitment, and influence of decisions by experience from a mythological and historical perspective. The proverb provides a little access to the historical beliefs of the people, and like others in the same category can provide an explanation for some occurrences and state of things in the present days. Post-proverbs could be seen to be an aberration of those sacred historical codifications in these expressions and the amputation of the grammatical constructions, meaning and values might quickly deprive the public of the historical significance of those proverbs.

The advent of post-proverbs and its predominant usage affects both the educational and rhetorical roles of African proverbs (Fayemi 2009). As stated above, many proverbs have educational attributes, explaining philosophical standpoints, and social values among others as their educational roles in society (Asimeng-Boahene 2009). They also serve as warnings, advice and antidotes in the exhibition of their rhetorical roles in society (Osoba 2014). The predominance

of post-proverbials hijacks the wheels of African proverbs in discharging these roles and directing them to mere fun and emphasis.

4. Contemporary Inevitability of Proverbs

As stated above, African culture has been faced with a lot of challenges that are making the continent lose their values gradually. The process of modernization has taught society how to forget their beliefs for new sets of alternatives impacted by colonial heritage and continued by neo-colonized scholars (Ikuenobe 2001). This reflects in African literature and scholars, as a result of this, the use of African languages is often disregarded or rather considered inappropriate. Scholars' ought to be preservers and developers of societal knowledge and inquire into a way to develop them. Unfortunately, the scholarships in contemporary African societies are culturally determined and there are no such methodologies that approve of continuous engagement of these expressions. Where the scholars, who are the banks of knowledge, do not give enough preference to the preservation of African culture and engagement of those proverbs enough in their works and literature, it would allow the death of African proverbs. This effect would be encouraged by the contemporary reliance on written conversations and the employment of alternative languages. With a lack of proverbial knowledge arising from the failure to preserve them by African scholars, contemporary societies stand the risk of swimming in a whirlpool of post-proverbials, strong enough to make one forget their original forms (Ademowo & Balogun 2014).

African proverbs are a significant aspect of the people's oral traditions. This is because the majority of African communities were not exposed to writings at their early stage (Asimeng-Boahene & Marinak 2010). Proverbs became expressions passed by words of mouth from generation to generation especially when these languages were under much linguistic attack from the contacts of external forces. As a result of the advent of "western civilization," two reliance effects have occurred; first, there is an alternative to oral traditions which

includes the western style of writing. This writing constitutes a break from the passage of cultural elements embedded in oral traditions as they are more rooted in another culture. The break in the continuity of orality has helped post-proverbials grow to see that there is an almost scarce incidence of mastery in African proverbs. Secondly, the existence of an alternative language has reduced the predominance of African proverbs and their understanding, hence, the high possibility of growth of post-proverbials.

African societies have gradually been towing toward the predominant usage of western languages like English and French (Prah 2006). These languages come with cultural undertones that needed the shedding away of traditional cultural constructions of the new ones. In contemporary societies, children are school-taught in these languages with a daily rate of re-enactments that bring a preponderant fondness to them. Hence, Africans in contemporary societies would rather understand and speak proverbs from those languages rather than the African languages. In fact, these languages have made many Africans not understand the intricacies of their primary languages and only understand conventional knowledge about them. These instances take Africans steps away from African proverbs and their understanding. Since this knowledge had created a lesser understanding of African proverbs, the acceptance of the influx of post-proverbials despite their blaspheming attributes should be expected.

The distance between contemporary culture from African traditional culture would always leave a void that post-proverbials can readily fill. The transformation from oral literature to reliance on western languages as basic means of communication in post-colonial African societies are guarantee that post-proverbials engagements would always continue.

5. Agencies of Post-Proverbials

Post-proverbials are often against the logical, grammatical and semantical construction of a proverb and could take the form of a

parallel variance of the original form. They could be said to emerge from the “rupture and suture” of the original proverbs or the “disassemblage and assemblage” of the original proverbs (Raji-Oyelade & Akinsete 2019). For post-proverbial to occur, it is, therefore, significant that there has to be a continuous usage of the original proverbs in order to bring it to the bare notice of users. Therefore, the usage of the proverb over time might result in a distorted version or parallel insertion of contextual expressions in it. While I have stated that the less usage of proverbs might be a contributory factor to the predominance of proverbs, post-proverbial can only arise where there is a proverb to distort, hence, the proverb must be in use (Oboko & Umezina 2020).

Hence, the often application and reference to African proverbs in politics, scholarship, economics, and other important engagements that could form quotidian conversations and references increases the probability of affecting the respective status of African proverbs and introduces the risk of transforming them into “supplementary” proverbs from the original version of it (Raji-Oyelade 1999). The enthusiastic motivations that often occur among scholars have been a factor in the propagation of post-proverbials. In addition, an orator, speaker or anyone that addresses the public might feel the urge to have some injections of eloquence and might resort to tampering with the sanctity of the African proverbs. This enthusiasm will always be an agent of post-proverbials as far as a speaker has decided to carry his audience along through relatable conversions. As a result of this relatable conversation through the common knowledge of a proverb that makes it easy for the speaker to understand what he says and in what context he did, post-proverbials are then subject to further “constructions, reconstructions and deconstructions” between the speaker, the audience and the general public (Oboko & Umezina 2020, p. 368). The example below from a collection of post-proverbials in some other African languages puts this in perspective:

Proverb: *“Nyathi otenga kicham a lot”*

Translation: *“The child of a hawk does not eat vegetables.”*

Post-proverbial; *“Nyathi otenga dhoge mit.”*

Translation: *“The child of a hawk has a sweet mouth”*³

The original proverb correctly highlights the fact that hawks are raptors or birds of prey and are carnivores who do not feed on vegetables. Hence, the child of such an animal is expected not to be otherwise. The proverb is well understood, meaning that a child is more likely to have the orientation of his or her parents. A post-proverbial saying that the mouth of the child of a hawk is sweet, underscores the social stratification of the haves and have-nots and the fact that the children of the haves would always expect luxury.

The advent of colonialism that brought about the adoption of western education has been instrumental in affecting the system of knowledge and language. The wisdom ascribed to a man that knows his ways around proverbs is now being shared with people that have achieved an academic feat. This system introduced another culture and other elements of cultural values. The African traditions and dealings became criticized and the more one was far from the rudiments of those traditions towards western education, the more civilized one was regarded to be. The advent of this contemporary educational system has not given much space for African cultures and proverbs and with the sense of ridicule often directed towards them, it opens the door for an influx of post-proverbials as the replacement of those proverbs.

In addition, the world and Africa have glorified logicity and critical thinking with a dispassionate examination of matter as presented. African societies are quite distinguished for their beliefs in traditions, customs, and religions that it affects their worldview, which reflects heavily on the construction of African proverbs. Many

³ This example is from the collection of postproverbials documentations, retrieved from <https://postproverbial.com/proverbs/luo-kenya/nyathi-otenga-kicham-alot> on 29th May, 2022.

beliefs in African societies do not fit in with the logical and scientific evaluations of western knowledge and the understandings of those cultural concepts are strange to contemporary epistemology. As a result of the uniqueness of African culture, many early scholars and anthropologists have described Africa from the vantage point of illogicality. Levy-Bruhl posited that the African primitive minds were pre-logical with more engagement with magic and mysticism, as well as succumbed to societal commitments (Levy-Bruhl 1967). Wiredu also stated that the African traditional culture was widely lacking in logic and might thereby affect the technological progression in the continent (Wiredu 1981). Horton as well was of the opinion that the African cultures had not arrived at reasons to adopt formal logic and reflect them in their daily activities (Horton 1967). While Levy-Bruhl, Wiredu and Horton might have decided based on their experience, understanding and probably some level of prejudice, many African scholars have also made a clarification on the use of logic in Africa. Momoh (1989), Makinde (1989), Omoregbe (1985), and Oruka (1984), among others, believe that all humans have the ability to be logical and that this extends to Africans. While they believe that logic in Africa can be systemised like other formal occasions, they also believe that there is no such thing as African logic but logic in general.

To put this discussion straight, I would not attempt to take positions in these debates but would draw out a distinction. It is clear that there is a disparity between what is believed as logical in western education and traditional education. With the style of the early system of education in the continent, it is clear that the subscription to mysticism and magic would automatically be against the basic understanding of western logical scales. Hence, to the contemporary educational evaluation, many African proverbs are not given logic. This education is the most predominant in African society and the students and products of these systems are impacted by the logical evaluation system of Western knowledge.

In essence, the educational and orientation systems available in contemporary African societies have another view of logic and this

has been consciously or unconsciously subscribed to by an average African. This means that there is an increasing chance that there will be a critical and logical evaluation of every statement made to these kinds of minds. Where African proverbs could not self-imply their logicity, the mind can easily switch to more logical distortions in the form of post-proverbials. Hence, the want of logic in many African proverbs has encouraged a substitutive post-proverbial where one loose end is joined with the other. For instance, in “*A kílí fi ọwọ̀ òsì júwe ilé e baba ẹ̀ni*” one does not describe, one’s father’s house in the literal sense and resemblance to the African cultural explanation of left hands might not appeal or be logical to some, thus it might be substituted with a supplementary alternative. The questionable logicity at least in the sense of western education has been one agency that would not allow African proverbs of cultural significance to be regarded, as a result logical insertions might take place.

However, the conviction of the lack of logic of Yoruba proverbs, I must say, is quite incorrect as many of the proverbs are logical in all senses of their meanings. For instance, the statement “*Bẹ̀lẹ́jọ́ bá mejọ́ rẹ̀ lẹ́bi kò ní pẹ̀ lórí ikúnlẹ̀,*” that is, when an accused person concedes that he or she is at fault or guilty, he would not be delayed to get a reprieve. The above proverb satisfies the Modus Ponens rule of “If then, therefore.”

Premise: “*Tí ẹ̀lẹ́jọ́ bá mọ ẹ́jọ ẹ̀ lẹ́jọ ẹ̀bi*” (“if” an offender recognizes his fault)

Conclusion: “*Kò ní pẹ̀ lórí ikúnlẹ̀*” (“Therefore” he should not be on his knees for long) (Fayemi 2010).

The meaning of the above proverb shows that African proverbs cannot be said to not agree with formal logic but the social bias in the recent educational system might not give the people much education to prove these points, thus lack of logic, especially from those proverbs that have external explanation, do not sit well with them. This has been a muse for the spread and predominance of post-proverbials that often have a strong logical line. Below explains how logic could be questioned.

The proverb: “A bu omi lámù a rí eégún; kí ni ẹnì tó lọ sódò lọ ọ̀nmi wá fẹ́ rí?”

We take water from the pot and we found a masquerade, what worse would a person that goes to the river see?

Premise: One draws water from the pot

Conclusion: One could see worse when one draws from the river.

Can one see a masquerade in a pot? This might seem quite far-fetched. Assuming that is true, and that anyone can see anything at the river, does seeing a masquerade in a pot mean that one could see worse at the river? These questionable metaphors and figurative expressions have been able to put contemporary societies in doubt of their logicity, which results in distorting them to fit in with the present statements.

Language serves as evidence of culture and its codifications suggest the properties of the culture (Mcquown 1956). However, languages and cultures can only be preserved if they are widely promoted and practised. Languages or cultures that are getting out of practice are at risk of extinction or struggle for survival. Africa has about 2000 languages spoken by different indigenous groups in different communities and they all stand the chance of being challenged as a result of one reason or the other (Statista, 2022). Many of these languages and cultures are deteriorating in contemporary society. Their beliefs, customs, philosophies, ideologies and norms are continuously replaced. In Nigerian societies, a large number of people tend to speak and transact in English rather than their indigenous languages leaving them to wash with time (Akinkurolere & Akinfenwa, 2018). Seeing that African languages are rooted in custom and that their proverbs are built from those cultural orientations, the lack of practice or usage of those cultures and languages would affect the understanding of many of the proverbs.

To understand the essence and message of some of the African proverbs, there might be a need to understand the language, their registers, culture and elements. For example:

Proverb: “*Ọmọ ọba Ọ̀nà-Ìsokùn ní fí eyín pín ejò, ọmọ ọba kan ní òhun ò kífẹ́ ẹ́; ilú wo lọmọ ọba náà tí wá?*” (Owomoyela, 2005)

Translation: The prince of Ọ̀nà-Ìsokùn shares snake meat by using his teeth, and one other prince refuses to eat it; where does such a prince come from?

Ọ̀nà-Ìsokùn is a ward in Ilésà, Nigeria and if one does not understand the significance of this place and why such a proverb arises, it might be difficult for one to understand the proverb itself. However, compare this with:

Post-proverbial: “*Ọmọ ọba tó bá fẹyín gẹ̀jò, ó gẹ́ e fún ara rẹ̀ ní*”

Translation: A prince that shares snake meat with his teeth, shares it for himself and is not anyone’s business.

The above post-proverbial might be easy to understand and relatable to everyone, as there is no need to question why Ona-Isokun was used.

Another example include:

Proverb: “*Èni Şàngó bá tojú ẹ wọlẹ̀, kọ̀jẹ́ bá wọ̀n bú Ọba Kòso*”

Translation: Whosoever that witnesses, when Sango entered the ground, would never insult Ọba Koso (him).

In its postproverbial form, it becomes “If Şàngó enters the ground in your presence, you have witnessed an earthquake!”

An average Yoruba individual in contemporary society might not understand why Sango would be called Ọba Kòso and why an insult could be generated from it. (Waliyullahi, 2016). The word Ọba Koso means the king did not hang himself because it was believed he immortalized himself by entering the ground. A person that witnesses such an occasion would know that it was an insult to claim that Sango, who was an Alaafin of the old Ọyọ Empire hung himself. The knowledge of Şàngó and the circumstances around his death need cultural knowledge which is quite lacking in the current use of language and practice of African cultures. Hence, the substitution of a part of the proverb might be welcoming to contemporary Africans

and even more understandable when parts of them are distorted to reflect contemporary understanding.

In addition, the indigenous alternatives for many western languages in Africa are often not known and not understood by many individuals in contemporary societies. This knowledge might allow some proverbs to look exoteric and gibberish. For example:

Proverb: “*A kii kánjú tu Olú Qrán, tórí igba rẹ̀ ò kún ikòkò.*”

Translation: “One should not pick Olu Qrán mushrooms in haste because 200 pieces of it can never fill the pot”

Olú Qrán is a Yoruba substitute for a specie of mushrooms and many contemporary youths might not know what it means without being told. This is because it does not belong to their usual and daily vocabulary. Two proverb with deep allusions will be useful examples here:

Proverb: “*Salapore ò mọ̀ egbé ẹ̀ nínú omi*”

Translation: “Salapore (Tiny fish) does not know its peers in the water” (Owomoyela, *Yoruba Proverbs*, p. 87).

Proverb: “*Àbá Aláḡẹmọ̀ lòrìṣà ń gbà*”

Translation: It is the advice of a chameleon that the gods often heed.

In these instances, Salapore, a tiny fish, and Aláḡẹmọ̀, a chameleon, might look confusing to many contemporary African youth and individuals because they might not understand at first instance, what the words mean. Hence, they might easily find the following alternate expressions more welcoming and understandable:

Post-proverbial; *Eja kékeré ò mọ̀ egbé ẹ̀ nínú omi*”

Translation: Small fishes do not know their peers.

Post-proverbial: “*Àbá Aláàdúrà lòrìṣà ń gbà*”

Translation: It is the bidding of a prayerful person that the gods would heed.

The reduction in the rate at which African indigenous languages are spoken and taught would reduce the knowledge of their registers.

This gives room for the creation of “supplements” that would transform the original proverb into post-proverbials. More so, the dwindling level of cultural knowledge, promotion and engagement would also reduce the understanding of many of the African proverbs, giving room for the creation of post-proverbials.

One feature that characterizes the contemporary African youths is their desire to explore, enjoy and desire for jokes and comedy. This explains the rise of comedians with large-scale patronage around the continent. In addition, the seriousness and reverences attributed to African cultures are more often replaced with the play on words, inciting rhetoric and jokes in order to bring them to an explorable context (Iwilade, 2013). This has allowed the distortion of several African proverbs by speakers, comedians and writers so as to hold the attention and interests of the targeted audience.

Another agent of post-proverbials in recent contemporary society that also affects contemporary scholarship is the paradigm shift from old media to new media (Nwoye & Okafor 2014). Industrialization, globalization and modernization have been responsible for technological advancements that are so radical that they introduce new cultures in place of the old ones. The old media which involves communication platforms before the advent of the internet have been changing gradually with continuous technological advancement (Croteau & Hoynes 2011). The new media signifies an array of communication channels that have a greater audience and reach across the continent and extends to the world. In this instance, the new media makes it easy to diffuse cultures and make information available to billions of people in the world. This development has made people become more critical, and also the creation of post-proverbial expressions that catches people’s attention to be more engaged over the new media than the old media because of its access to more literate and civilized populations.

Another interesting agent of post-proverbials is the change in ideology and societal orientation. More than before, African societies are transforming gradually to be receptive to gender equality

are there is notable evidence of societal changes. Scholars who are gender-equality conscious and dedicated to the promotion of female rights have been able to engage African cultures, especially those that are largely hostile towards the female gender. (Olatunji, 2013 p. 9). African societies are largely patriarchal, subsequently there are heavy tasks on contemporary writers to reduce the ideology of female inferiority and put everyone on platforms of social equality. These scholarly enterprises have been launched on African proverbs as post-proverbials are used to correct some of the biases of the old African societies towards women. Raji-Oyelade and Oyeleye gave some striking examples as thus:

Proverb: *Ìtākùn ní ñṣe ikú pa òkéré; obìnrin ní ñṣe ikú pa òkùnrin* (Introduction: The Postproverbial Agency, 2020, p. 234).

Translation; As a vine could cause the death of a squirrel; so, as a woman could cause the death of a man (Owomoyela 2005, p. 306).

The assumption of a woman as the possible source of death for a man is inferred from believed frustration, rage, jealousy and envy exhibited by women. This posits that women were the only ones expected to be frustrative which is contradictory to feminist orientation of equality. Truly, anyone could be frustrating and anyone could be the death of anything and not necessarily where the person is a woman. In a bid to put them in right perspective, the below post-proverbial was expressed by Oyeleye below:

Post-proverbial: *Ìtākùn ní ñ ṣe ikú pa òkéré; oun tó wuní jẹ ní ñ pani.*

Meaning: As a vine could be the death of a squirrel so could the desire of anyone cause his or her death.

Another example as stated by Raji-Oyelade and Oyeleye states thus:

Proverb: *Fìlà lobìnrin, wọn kì í bá ọdẹ wọ ìtí.*

Translation: Women are like caps; they do not follow the hunter into the jungle.

This is because hunters were not expected to wear caps to catch a game, as they are expected to be easily removed when climbing trees. This reduced women to the level of cosmetics and portray them to only be loyal enough at periods of comfort.

To embrace the feminist approach, the proverb could be reconstructed as *Filà lobìnrin, wón bu iyì kún orí ni* – “Women are like caps; they beautify the head or the wearer” (Raji-Oyelade and Oyel-eye 2020: 229-240).

These societal transformations towards realities and reformed orientations would have to effect a change to many cultural materials including proverbs and therefore give leeway to the continuous development of post-proverbials. For instance, the idea of homosexuality or the LGBTQ+ are largely strange to the African traditional culture but the world is not softening the hostility of the communities towards accepting homosexuals, as a result, there might be a heavy change in African cultures and radical transformation of proverbs to post-proverbs when the concepts become more prominent in the continent.

6. Preserving African Proverbs

The development and continuity of post-proverbials are inevitable, especially in African societies due to the continuous adoption of other cultures, languages and orientations. This means that where these transformations are constant, how then can the African original proverbs be preserved? To preserve culture, it needs to be promoted and practised and to preserve African proverbs, they need to be promoted and practised. However, since African proverbs are aspects of African culture, it is only cultural promotion and continuous practice that can effectively preserve proverbs. Hence, there is a need for deliberate re-enactment of African cultures and practices. This will allow individuals to be able to draw logic to the construction of African proverbs by understanding the stories and practices behind them. African cultures can be preserved through the maintenance

of and embarking in cultural research in Africa. This would allow inquiries into cultures and customs and make important information about them known.

In addition, there is a need for society and the government, in particular, to invest more in the engagement of students and pupils through cultural materials and heritage. Languages should be taught not just to fulfil the curriculum cosmetically but should be taught to impact knowledge and allow students to see their relevance in them. A societal structure should also be built in the sense that would reinforce African cultures.

7. Òwe Ìgbàlódé: Conclusion

Proverbs are expressions of African wisdom and they explain the history of African culture and their practices in one expression with debt. They are the manifestations of the prestige that African societies and cultures are characterised by. Proverbs also serve as a set of instructions for individuals and collective morals that set order in society and also a manual book for right behaviours. They also serve as windows to the ocean of African philosophies, their uniqueness and understanding.

All these roles of African proverbs are threatened by emerging habits of post-proverbials that distort the grammatical, semantical and constructive attributes of African proverbs. It is therefore important that where the motivation for these disruptions is not contributory to positive orientations like the feminist reconstructions above, scholars and writers should take adherence to original forms of the proverbs seriously. Yet another option is to move with the time, allow creativity to flourish so that as many as new post-proverbials can be created. In this orientation, we preserve the past - the orthodoxy of the inherited proverbs. We use the older proverbs but also archive them as treasures and collective heritage. We encourage the creation of post-proverbials as they are used as part of the plasticity of cultures, adapting to new generations. We preserve them as well,

since they can keep changing. In preserving the past, encouraging recent creativity, we manifest a cultural collective in motion—always moving, endless, products of adaptations without boundaries.

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ADESHINA AFOLAYAN

PROVERBS, POSTPROVERBIALS AND THE AFRICAN MYTHOLOGICAL IMAGINARY

Abstract: This essay is an exercise in interdisciplinary cultural studies. I consider it as an African philosopher's attempt to make sense of philosophy making sense of (post)proverbiality as another means by which people make sense of themselves and their cultural being-in-the-world. Its modest premise is the question of what philosophy can gain from, and bring to, the (post)proverbial discourse. The essay interrogates proverbiality as a means of cultural inscription, and postproverbiality as a transgressive process of re-inscription of cultural knowledge and worldview. In this essay, I therefore bring a critical lens to bear on postproverbiality as a fundamental postmodern intervention in proverbial wisdom. I take seriously its claim as a poststructuralist rupturing, and attempt to read a Derridean moment into its essence as *différance*. And I ultimately ask how postproverbiality could be rescued from its playful essence in the service of social change, and the reconstruction of a mythological imaginary for transforming Africa's ideological stature.

Keywords: African philosophy, Proverbs, Postproverbials, Social change, Mythology, *Différance*, Postcoloniality.

Aru gba afo oburu omenala

[When an abomination lasts for a year, it becomes a norm]

- *Igbo proverb*

1. Introduction: On Philosophy and Dislocation

What does philosophy bring to the table of (post)proverbial discourse? More precisely, what does philosophy gain by looking outside of its own frameworks for answers to philosophical issues and problems? Proverbs and postproverbials are aspects of thoughts, and so affect the way we *think*. In other words, they are not merely the

channels for conveying thoughts; they are also *generative* and *constitutive* in their capacity to further thought itself. This automatically makes them what philosophy, and philosophers, are interested in. Philosophy, by its own very nature, is not only a mode of thinking but also a framework for thinking (Paul 1990: 554). Thus, stating the question of what philosophy brings to, or gains from, the (post)proverbial discourse brings to focus lots of simmering issues relating to philosophy's relationship with its Other and with life.

Philosophy's Other are those discourses and disciplines that professional philosophers regard as "first order": they are guided by specific subject matters, empirical methodologies, and specific practices geared towards certain ends. Philosophy's second-order inquiry therefore poaches on the specific subject matters and methodologies deployed by these other-disciplines in generating knowledge and knowledge claims. In Wittgensteinian sense, philosophy is concerned with making sense of these other disciplines as *language games*. Hence, Wilfred Sellars' broad understanding of philosophy: "The aim of philosophy, abstractly formulated, is to understand how things in the broadest possible sense of the term hang together in the broadest possible sense of the term" (2001: 473). This renders philosophy in the broadest possible terms, armed with second-order inquiry. Thus,

Philosophy is broad because the questions it traditionally asks are about the general features of reality: rather than being concerned with (say) chemical change, it asks about change as such. Rather than being concerned with (say) my specific obligations to look after my parents in their old age, it asks about obligations as such (Crane 2012: 20).

This way of seeing philosophy falls into an essentialism that seems to render it as "something quite peculiar" (Williams, 2000: 477). It stands as a discursive and intellectual—strictly speaking academic—enterprise that, by its very conception as a second-order inquiry, stands somewhat aloof from mundane reality. This is how Jane Heal puts it:

What gets philosophical discussion going may be problems, puzzlements, uneasinesses, and half-grasped insights arising in the context of non-philosophical activity. But as such discussion develops it may lose touch with its original motivations in life outside itself and fail to develop replacement roots. And when that happens, assessment of the potential merits or demerits of any new moves that may be offered as the enterprise advances will come to be assessed under a hodgepodge of criteria, which answer neither to the problems, puzzlements, and so on, that were at the origins of the thing nor to problems, puzzlements, and so on, in contemporary life outside the practice, but are instead internally generated and hence at the mercy of fashion, personalities, institutional power struggles, and the like (2012: 38-39).

This dislocation between philosophical thought and human existence is aptly captured by the story of the Thracian maid, recounted in Plato's *Theaetetus*, who laughed Thales to scorn because the latter fell into a well while gazing at and contemplating the heavens. This story points at a fundamental picture of philosophy as a speculative and reflective activity. The bending backward of philosophical reflection—from *reflectere*, to bend back—demands a focus on questions that require some sort of withdrawal from the immediate concerns with the world.

At this its extreme height of professional sophistication, philosophy slides into a scholastic framework—"an elaborate game played by clever people, answering more and more to criteria internal to the enterprise and less and less to criteria implicit in the concerns that started the whole line of reflection or are latent in the rest of human life going on around it" (Heal 2012: 39). This not only undermines the significance of philosophy located in criticism and dissent, but also *dislocates* philosophy from significant dimensions of human life.

Recovering philosophy from its self-contained scholastic status therefore requires bringing it back into connection not only with its own internal critical dynamics but also with its Others. Thus, if do-

ing *good* philosophy implies reinforcing the point that philosophy, as a mode of and framework for thinking, has a fundamental role to play in instigating people to think about the ideas and beliefs circumscribing what they are doing, then philosophy need to reconnect with “other ways of understanding ourselves” (Williams 2000: 496). This is where we reconnect with the earlier question: how can we refocus philosophy through an engagement with postproverbial discourse as a way of understanding ourselves?

2. Do Proverbs Need Postproverbials?

I will not make any attempt at defining what a proverb is. This is because it seems too late in the journey, as Aderemi Raji-Oyelade argues, for paremiographers to “begin to make belated speculation on the meaning and function of a proverb. There is virtually no substantial controversy about the value of proverbs in culture” (1999: 74). It suffices to say that it is a pithy and short sentence encapsulating the practical and moral precepts derived from observational and material experiences. As “culture markers,” proverbs in their various forms are “about the history and psychology of the peoples and communities from which they emanate” (1999: 74). The more significant consideration, however, is to explore the roles that proverbs play in cultural figurations and configurations.

It is the function of proverbs as culture markers that paremiologists, paremiographers and even philosophers cannot afford to take for granted. It makes it all the more interesting to see how proverbs not only mark cultures, but also encapsulate cultural wisdom. But then, *wisdom* is a fine but troubling philosophical concept that no one can afford to also take for granted. And this is all the more so, for (African) philosophers, since their own endeavors profess the love of such wisdom. Like the individual character trait, wisdom as a cultural framework is concerned with knowledge, action and judgment that conduce to good cultural action and direction. But then, we have to also determine how individual wisdom relates to the collective wisdom. Or, more precisely, how does the collective wisdom

of a community, embodied in proverbs for instance, conditions the behavioral disposition of an individual? If wisdom is “a deep and valuable understanding of the most important things in life,” then a species of this will be practical wisdom (or *phronesis*)—“understanding of how things *ought* to be (how we ought to live, and what is good and why)” (Swartwood and Tiberius 2019: 12-13). It is *phronesis* that a culture deploys to circumscribe its understanding of the good human life that cultural members ought to live. And nuggets of that are contained in proverbs.

Wisdom in this sense becomes “specific practices and ideals—a set of behavioral patterns and individual attitudes through which people commonly define virtuous individuals and actions, as well as strive to employ such actions in their lives” (Grossman and Kung 2019: 343). However, when a culture envisaged its *phronesis* in hermetic or dogmatic forms that sidelines, for instance, some of its members like women, then the idea of wisdom requires a critical re-think. There are several ways by which proverbial wisdom enjoins a quietist attitude on its members in the name of tradition. According to Adam Fox, the repeated and ingrained use of proverbs “thus serve to reaffirm the ethical standards of a community, latently underscoring its mental solidarity and spiritual identity” (2000: 139). Thus, proverbial wisdom renders the understanding of wisdom problematic. In this sense, proverbial wisdom serves as a framework for ordering cultural conduct, dictating action and reproducing practices and prejudices that are often oppressive.

We can then immediately recognize the urgent need for a *subversive* paremiology that the postproverbial represents. For Raji-Oyelade, the emergence of these new supplementary proverbs herald “new forms, new meanings, and, *perhaps*, new values” that signals a “normative rupture” (1999: 75. *Emphasis added*). The “perhaps”, tagged into the correlation between the newness of the postproverbials and its capacity to birth new values, differentiates the concerns between what the postproverbial meant for a paremiologist like Raji-Oyelade, and an African philosopher. He clarifies the direction of the subversiveness of the postproverbials:

The “relative fixity,” or rigidity, of the typical traditional proverb is apparently dictated by conventional usage, more so by the need to transmit the verbal properties of the proverb, if not its conventional cultural meaning, with absolute consistency and fidelity to its originary structure. In other words, there is an assumed quality of stasis in the traditional proverb as conventional verbal genre; situated in the dynamic space of informal speech and modern African culture, that relative fixity of proverbia dissolves and ultimately they are deconstructed as *postproverbials* (ibid.).

The set of questions that enabled the research into postproverbiality are also informative with regard to the absence of a valuational, rather than verbal, significance: “What are postproverbials, or why is a postproverbial? Where do postproverbials come from? How does a postproverbial text become? How are they formed, or what is the pattern of the utterance? In what modes, or media do postproverbials appear as tangible texts? Who speaks postproverbially, and what then is the signification (value and limitation) of the postproverbial order?” (Raji-Oyelade, 2012: 22)

The concern of the African philosopher goes beyond rhetorical and aesthetic verbal play that deforms the traditional proverb. It reaches into conceptual and ethical issues that connect the proverbs and the postproverbials to cultural forms, figurations and configurations—the worldview that gave life to proverbiality in the first place. It therefore becomes even more apposite that Raji-Oyelade announces the emergence of the postproverbials within the context of the Yoruba culture. And so, the playful and blasphemous nature of the rhetorical transformation inflicted on the Yoruba proverbs by modern youth needs a critical reassessment given the sociocultural consequences of proverbs for the project of meaningful existence.

The postproverbial encodes a *playful* restructuration of the fixity of the traditional proverbs. This is what essentially makes postproverbials “parallel, modernist recreations that are derived from and exist side-by-side in rather equal phonocentric status with traditional

proverbs” (ibid: 76). There is a playful textual dislocation of the original meaning and intent behind the traditional proverbs in a sense that paves the way for the liberation of meaning. Thus, Raji-Oyelade sees the form of the traditional proverb as being “totally sacrosanct and culturally given. It is a *primary arrangement*; its locus is derived from the enduring episteme of the folktales, legends, and myths of traditional societies.” However, on the contrary, the postproverbial is “culturally dynamic and not expressly rigid. As a *secondary arrangement*, it reacts to the originary ‘wealth of wisdom’ of the traditional proverb by excising its more logical, conclusive part, replacing it with another logic of populist imagination” (1999: 77-78).

Raji-Oyelade argues for the significance of postproverbiality beyond its rhetorical force, and as an instrument for sociocultural transformation. According to him, postproverbiality is not blind to the traditional proverbs and their prejudices, and especially the extent to which the proverbs facilitate rigid hierarchical structuration. So, for him,

It is in the negation of such received, sacrosanct, and rigidified knowledge of Yoruba customary difference of roles that the postproverbial utterance operates; in other words, it is precisely on account of such fixity of social roles, whereby the ‘child’ attempts to over-reach, literally and figuratively, the conventional acts traditionally assigned for him/her, that new verbally imaginative modes are possible (Raji-Oyelade, 2012: 40).

However, this is where the tension at the heart of postproverbiality begins to surface. It seems clear that a valuational account of traditional proverbs is only *tangential* to the reading of postproverbials. A critical reading of *Playful Blasphemies* reveals that there is hardly any reference to a fundamental and nuanced critique of the worldview that traditional proverbs codify. A preponderance of the explanation of postproverbials focuses on its sociolinguistic dynamics as a transgressive speech act. For Raji-Oyelade, “Postproverbials are radicalized proverbial utterances which subvert the *logic and the patterns* of

conventional proverbs, which *supplement* an essentially traditionalist imagination with an iconographic and modernist consciousness in order to exact *a transformative and transgressive structure of the typical utterance*" (2012: 49. Emphasis added). This definition is revealing in lots of ways. At one level, we can ask: if traditional proverbs reproduce the complexities of cultural worldview, like the Yoruba's, how transgressive can the postproverbials be if they are structurally blind to the nuanced textual peculiarities of the Yoruba proverbs and its relation to the Yoruba cultural world?

Here, I am concerned about the fundamental difference between the English proverb and the Yoruba *òwe*. The definitional character of the English proverb is complicated by the many cognates that challenge its lexical autonomy and difference—adage, apothegm, Wellerism, proverbial phrases, wisecracks, or even the false proverbs. And what is more, the Yoruba *òwe* is many things that the English proverb is not, despite many convergences. Does the postproverbial fall into the temptation of expecting the *òwe* to account for all the subgenres of the English proverb? To relate the postproverbial as the prosthesis of the *òwe* would seem underdetermining. Rowland Abiodun provides a broad articulation of the ontological trajectory of the *òwe*:

Èla [the split Logos] utters through *Owe*, literally "proverbs," but which in broad usage can metaphorically apply to the communicative properties of sculpture, *aroko*, dance, drama, song, chant, poetry, incantations like *ofò*, *ogede*, *ayajò epe*, *odu*, *ẹsa* and many others which make heavy and esoteric use of metaphors in ritual contexts.... *Owe* operates between *orò* on the spiritual plane and the earth-level where *Orò* can be understood, assimilated, and used by humans. Similarly, communication with the *Oriša*, ancestors, and invisible bodies in heaven is made possible through the channel of *owe*.... With the aid of *Èla*, *Orò* is made manifest, and it is beautifully "clothed" in poetry, maxims, and wise sayings, all of which are *owe*. (1987: 255-256)

Oyekan Owomoyela insists that there is no conceptual coincidence between the *òwe* and the English proverb: “Yoruba language and speech practices do feature forms that are practically, if not exactly, identical with the English proverb, but not all of them will qualify as *òwe* for the Yoruba speaker. On the other hand, some verbal forms that come under the general rubric of *òwe* in Yoruba do not have equivalents in the English proverb corpus” (2005: 2-3). How then does the postproverbial account for the distinct peculiarities of some of the subgenres of the English proverbs, accounted for in the Yoruba *òwe*, through its use of the broad *postproverbiality*? In other words, what does the postproverbial really subvert, and how? In lumping the textual and cultural flexibility of the *òwe* together under the “proverbial,” *postproverbiality* fails to structurally plumb the pragmatic richness of the *òwe*. And fails even further to explore the underbelly of the Yoruba worldview with some of its regressive values which the robust *òwe* re-produces.

Owomoyela takes a broader view of the *òwe* which Raji-Oyelade glosses over. Within this broader and more pragmatic framework, Owomoyela asserts, “one needs no more than a casual knowledge of a culture’s proverbs to discover that they are not always consistent with one another, that for every one that asserts a ‘truth’ there will be others that contradict it” (2005: 18). The implication of this is that without even the postmodern subversiveness of *postproverbiality*, the traditional *òwe* has the structural capacity for internal contestations of its own contestable assertions. Owomoyela then contends:

Whereas we might decide to dispose of a stopped clock because of the tiny percentage of the time during which it speaks true, we cannot so dispense with proverbs that are similarly true in a comparable percentage of circumstances. The reason is that the truth they affirm when they are *true* is fundamental, and... based on ‘intimate observation of human experience and of the surrounding nature.’ Many make philosophical, epistemological, and moral assertions that are consistent with the dominant ethos of the community.... In other cases, of course,

proverbs are true because they present known contrasting, even oppositional, strains to the dominant ethos (2005: 19).

The larger claim is even that there are instances when it is unclear when “when a proverb is cynical and inconsistent with approved morality (and the user’s true belief and intention) and when it is a reliable expression of a society’s mores (and the user’s true inclination)” (2005: 21). And so, this demands the need for a framework, which the postproverbial fails to provide, for understanding “proverbs and *how* they mean” (2005: 21). This “how” is a function of paying close attention to the Yoruba worldview and cultural variableness; or what Owomoyela regards as the “relativity of ‘truth’ and ethics” (2005: 21).

The conceptual ambiguity of the postproverbial therefore points to the possibility of its not being transgressive or transformational enough as the vehicle for social change. Raji-Oyelade comes close to raising the postproverbials to the level of cultural markers of change with his analysis of proverbs and postproverbials as speech acts; essentially as illocutionary and perlocutionary. He argues: “as illocutionary acts, the force of the typical proverb (and postproverbial) inheres in the fact of their [sic] pragmatic usefulness, not only in saying a thing, but in doing things, in effecting an action, or series of actions” (2012: 67). The question is how significantly illocutionary and perlocutionary are the postproverbials whose essence are distinctly marked by a postmodern *playfulness*, and a rhetorical and formalistic structuration? How does the postproverbial mediate the tension between its inherent playfulness and its aspiration as a transformative cultural marker? Postproverbiality does not differentiate between the capacity of the traditional proverbs to *reinforce* the dominant ethos of the community and to equally *oppose* them. It lumps traditional proverbs all together as “native wisdom” that bears the brunt of “modernist savagery” of the postproverbials (2012: 69). And in the process, it renders the traditional Yoruba societies simplistic, with uncomplicated concepts and worldviews. The postproverbials do not discriminate between the ways that Yoruba proverbs *re-present* the pragmatic dynamics of Yoruba worldview. Everything

is savaged! Postproverbiality fails to note the broad spectrum that link what proverbs are to what proverbs do.

In the next section, I will interrogate the postmodern framework of postproverbiality, and the boundaries of its possibilities beyond its perceived cultural and rhetorical capacity to transgress.

3. *What is the “post” in the postproverbials?*

Postproverbiality is specifically heralded as a postmodernist phenomenon. It constitutes the third leg in the “three broad highways in the expressive continuum, which coincide diachronically with the histories of pre-colony, coloniality and post-colony in Yorubaland” (Raji-Oyelade 2012: 39). Postproverbials therefore stand apart from the traditional proverbs which are pre-colonial, and the modernist saying that came to light during the colonial period. And they are transgressive by the fact of their popularity among the younger generation of Yoruba speakers. So, asked Raji-Oyelade, “what then is the nature of the ‘post’ in postproverbial?”

In no way does the idea suggest the end of proverbs, but the re-creation of other proverbs of differing values and vision; the ‘post’ is best understood as indicative of the recent posterior of traditional proverbs, somewhat the ‘afterthought’ distention of formalized, standardized (almost fossilized) wise saying (2012: 41).

Thus, there is a need for conceptual carefulness with regard to spelling it either as “*postproverbial*” (which Raji-Oyelade prefers) or “post-proverbial”. As “post-proverbial”, the hyphen merely serves as a reminder to the historical locatedness of postproverbiality, something that should not be allowed to detract from its utility as a “synchronous imagination”. It is surely the postmodernist orientation of postproverbiality that suggests its playfulness and deconstructive bent. A typical postproverbial utterance, in its subversiveness, is marked by “the discursive strategy of mimicry, in which received wisdoms are queried, tested and subjected to textual rupture. In oth-

er words, the idea of the playful blasphemy is one which thrives on the capacity of the speaker's exuberant disdain for the traditional proverb. Postproverbials are structurally deconstructive..." (2012: 69).

As students of postmodernism and postcolonialism are aware, the "post" can be dauntingly ambivalent and confusing. It is most revealing to the extent that it also occludes. It could be read as a periodization, a mood or a hiatus. I suspect however that Raji-Oyelade would agree with Anthony Appiah on the nature of the *postness* of postproverbiality: "For the *post* in postcolonial, like the *post* in postmodern is the *post* of the space-clearing gesture" (Appiah 1992: 149). Appiah calls for a critical reaction against the "modernist characterization of modernity. To understand our world is to reject Weber's claim for the rationality of what he called rationalization and his projection of its inevitability; it is, then, to have a radically post-Weberian conception of modernity" (1992: 144-145). And postmodernism is the subversive framework for challenging this Weberian understanding of modernity; it is "a new way of understanding the multiplication of distinctions that flows from the need to clear oneself a space; the need that drives the underlying dynamic of cultural modernity" (1992: 145). Postproverbiality itself calls for a rethinking of the cultural and textual structure of the traditional proverbs; and seeks to clear a space for a new and alternate/alternative understanding of African modernity.

Within this postmodern context, I hypothesize that the deconstructivist understanding of postproverbials can be deepened through a Derridean reading. However, the result, I suspect, is not what Raji-Oyelade will be pleased with. This is because such a reading further undermines the possibility of what postproverbials can be made to do. My premise is that postproverbials exemplify the idea of *différance* that is critical to Jacques Derrida's understanding of deconstruction. *Différance* is a play on word (specifically on the French *différer*) that holds *differing* and *deferral* together by the phonetic force of the "a". *Différance* is simultaneously to *differ* and to *defer*. Mean-

ing, for Derrida, is destabilized by *différance*. Western philosophy, for Derrida, is marked by the “metaphysics of presence”—the assumption that eternal truth, as *logos*, manifest as presence in the form of speech, its verbal representation. This logocentric worldview specifies speech as the most authentic means of representing the logos; and hence linguistic meaning are always present directly to humans without mediation. Logocentrism creates a binary and hierarchical relations between, for example, speech and writing, where the former dominates the latter. And Derrida’s deconstruction is meant to undermine that binary relation from within. And the first act of deconstruction is to reverse the binary by undermining the hierarchy.

This is Derrida’s basic argument: human experience is conditioned by time and space. This implies that every experience takes place in the present—in the now. It is the happening of the experience in the now that makes it an event different from any other. But it is also not different from any other event because in the present, I have a memory of what had happened in the past and also anticipate what is about to happen in the future. This is the idea of *repeatability* crucial for understanding Derrida’s thought. Every experience is an event and is repeatable. With the idea of repeatability, we are confronted not only with presence but also non-presence: “Repeatability contains what has passed away and is no longer present *and* what is about to come and is not yet present. The present therefore is always complicated by non-presence” (Lawlor 2022). To further complicate matters, there is a difference between the memory of an event and the anticipation of another, and this difference is undecidable. For Lawlor,

When we notice the difference, we are indeed experiencing the present, but the present is recognized as “contaminated” by the past and future. Insofar as the difference is undecidable (perception – what we see right now – contaminated with memory or the present contaminated with the past: the experienced difference is an experience of what Derrida would call the “trace”), the difference destabilizes the original decision that instituted the hierarchy (2022).

This difference is what Derrida renders as *différance*. With *différance*, we arrive at the idea of writing—or signification—as a sign that is always in referral; signs that always refer to other signs and never to itself. For Derrida,

The system of writing in general is not exterior to the system of language in general, unless it is granted that the division between exterior and interior passes through the interior of the interior or the exterior of the exterior, to the point where the immanence of language is essentially exposed to the intervention of forces that are apparently alien to its system. For the same reason, writing in general is not “image” or “figuration” of language in general, except if the nature, the logic, and the functioning of the image within the system from which one wishes to exclude it be reconsidered. *Writing is not a sign of a sign, except if one says it of all signs, which would be more profoundly true.* If every sign refers to a sign, and if “sign of a sign” signifies writing, certain conclusions...will become inevitable (1997: 43. Emphasis added).

Within this understanding of (arche-)writing, signification is caught in an infinite process of referral where meaning is delayed and postponed indefinitely. With the witticism that plays on the distinction between *différence* and *différance*, Derrida attempts to subvert the Saussurean distinction between speech and writing; that writing is a supplemental attachment to speech. On the contrary, the difference between *différence* and *différance* is inaudible and requires writing to know.

Thus, speech requires writing to function, and writing is caught in an infinite deferral. It is in this sense that *différance* undermines binary opposites—it inserts itself between differing and deferring. Or, as Alan Bass notes in his annotation of Derrida, “it defers differing, and differs from deferring, in and of itself” (1982: 8). With *différance*, argues Derrida,

The sign represents the present in its absence. It takes the place of the present. When we cannot grasp or show the thing,

state the present, the being-present, when the present cannot be presented, we signify, we go through the detour of the sign. We take or give signs. We signal. The sign, in this sense, is deferred presence.... [T]he circulation of signs defers the moment in which we can encounter the thing itself (1982: 9).

I am taking a conceptual leap by reading postproverbiality as a deconstructive exercise that assumes the logic of *différance*. Raji-Oyelade uses the concept of deconstruction without in any way elaborating on whether it has a Derridean intent. *Playful Blasphemies* is filled with Derridean allusions. Raji-Oyelade is deliberate in his deployment of poststructuralist reading of postproverbials to produce “a ‘grammarology of speaking’ deconstructive proverbs” (2012: 49). I will assume it does since postproverbiality is meant to undermine the idea of *presence* attached to traditional proverbs. With postproverbiality, we arrive at a differing-deferring phenomenon that hold textual meaning in tantalizing abeyance. A postproverbial stands between the past and the future, and defers the present. It differs from the traditional proverb; and it also defer or postpones the meaning inherent in the latter. As an act of *différance*, to quote Derrida, postproverbiality “produces what it forbids, makes possible the very thing that it makes impossible” (1997: 143). This is the Derridean import of the traditional Igbo proverb I chose as the epigraph for this essay.

If I am not overreaching, postproverbials *differ* from traditional proverbs. But do they *defer* meaning within a signifying system where meaning is constantly under erasure? I should think so. At this point in its development, postproverbials lacks a mechanism for determining the extent of meaning that could be ascribed to its supplementation of the traditional proverbs. I mean to say it is still without a limit to its formal and formalistic elasticity, and the consequences thereof. Its formal structure makes it generative of multiple, and even contradictory, meanings, *ad infinitum*. Indeed, Raji-Oyelade speaks about “accounting for the practice of the *mutative possibilities* inherent” in postproverbials as a verbal act (2012: 49. Emphasis added). This generative capacity pushes dangerously the bounds of

banality and the nonsensical. Raji-Oyelade insists that postproverbiality is “the condition of verbal cannibalism and banalization,...the potential for sententiousness, verbal diarrhea to be precise” (2004: 306). And again, he argues that “As the ‘literate’ and parallel response to the conventional code of standard Yoruba proverb, postproverbials thus tend generally to make ‘nonsense’ of the form” (2012: 126). And the basic structure of the postproverbials allows for this: The basic pattern of transformation is such that structural twist generally occurs at the second clause of a typical traditional proverb. The invention, when it occurs, may be ironic, banal, or radical in meaning and in relation to the understanding and usage of the typical traditional proverb” (2012: 52).

An example suffices. Let us stay with the most popular category of postproverbials where transformation takes place at “db”:

(P1) *Àìtètè m’ólè, olè ní m’olóko*

(In the hesitation to catch the thief, the thief accuses the owner of the farm).

Its postproverbial opposite is rendered as:

(P2) *Àìtètè m’ólè, olè ní sálọ*

(In the hesitation to catch the thief, the thief flees).

Or: (P3) *Àìtètè m’ólè, olè gbọ́n ní*

(In the hesitation to catch the thief, the thief proves wiser).

Or even: (P4) *Àìtètè m’ólè, olè pariwo*

(In the hesitation to catch the thief, the thief screams).

Raji-Oyelade notes that “there could be more than one postproverbial text to a conventional proverb” (2012: 54). However, what could stop that infinite iteration from spiraling into meaninglessness at the expense of playfulness?

The basic underlying sociocultural lesson behind the conventional proverb—*Àìtètè m’ólè, olè ní m’olóko*—is simple: “tardiness is rewarded with other problems or complications” (2012: 54). However, from

P3 to P4, we see some gradual semantic diminution that is a far cry from the originality and depth of the conventional proverb. And this becomes worse with further iterations. How then does postproverbials achieve social and moral transformation if it quickly degenerates into banality and the nonsensical? Indeed, there is nothing in the basic structure for generating the postproverbials that limits its degeneration into such extremes, whereas the traditional proverbs are circumscribed by their fixed meaningfulness. Unfortunately, not having the capacity for iterative multiple meaning regresses postproverbials into proverbiality and its fixedness. It would seem to me, therefore, that postproverbial's deconstructive capacity is both a burden and a boon.

4. Postproverbials and the Search for the African Imaginary

Despite its inherent tensions, postproverbiality challenges the post-colonial imagination to overreach its limitations. The philosophy of postproverbiality furthers Africa's search for a social imaginary, a mythological framework around which the African continent can rethink its travails and possibilities in the world. Specifically, with reference to Nigeria, there is a need for what has been called the "myths of the nation" (Brennan 1990: 44) - a mythological narration that serves to hold together the national frame around which a people narrate their national belonging. Myths are the

...imaginative patterns, networks of powerful symbols that suggest particular ways of interpreting the world. They shape its meaning.... They are the matrix of thought, the background that shapes our mental habits. They decide what we think important and what we ignore. They provide the tools with which we organise the mass of incoming data. When they are bad they can do a great deal of harm by distorting our selection and slanting our thinking. That is why we need to watch them so carefully (Midgley 2003: 1, 4).

This symbolic significance of myths is further grounded by Bronislaw Malinowski who argues, from a deep ethnographic perspective, that “myth serves principally to establish a sociological charter, or a retrospective moral pattern of behavior, or the primeval supreme miracle of magic... The function of myth, briefly, is to strengthen tradition and endow it with a greater value and prestige by tracing it back to a higher, better, more supernatural reality of initial events” (1948: 120, 122).

As a symbolic framework, therefore, myths and mythologies serve as critical organizing and discursive frames for understanding the human societies. And it is within this context that philosophy and postproverbials, as modes of thinking, are drawn with urgent necessity. Postproverbiality, despite its emergent flaws, encodes images of thoughts that have the capacity to genuinely transgress the sociocultural prejudices and presuppositions inherent in traditional proverbs, in the service of modern sociocultural re-imagining. To the extent that traditional proverbs often inscribe an imaginative vision of human societies at a specific spatiotemporal point, to that extent postproverbials also facilitate the capacity for re-inscribing a fresh imagination that goes beyond formalistic playfulness. Postproverbials represent a self-fashioning reconstructive template that gestures at the need for a mythological and social imaginary—a prism by which humans might keep revisiting their imaging, imagining, and imaginaries of themselves.

Here, philosophy becomes a conceptual accomplice with postproverbiality in the critical and interdisciplinary task of reconstructing a mythological basis for restructuring the Nigerian society. Elsewhere (Afolayan 2018), I raised such a possibility of harnessing the philosophical possibilities inherent in the Yoruba sociocultural heritage towards the objective of reconstructing the mythological framework for establishing “a sociological charter, or a retrospective moral pattern of behavior.” If, as I have argued, Yoruba philosophy is “philosophical discourse—traditional and contemporary—regarding assumptions, principles, worldviews, and attitudes that have been

developed, interrogated, and refined over millennia” (Afolayan 2016: 265), then this definition

constitutes a critical trajectory between past and present in a way that enables a significant and critical connection between these ethnic philosophies and contemporary concerns. Ethnic philosophies open a unique opportunity for a temporal dialogue between past and present. However, this dialogue is not unilinear, only allowing the past to speak to the present. On the contrary, the present also lends a critical voice to how the past could be understood and its insights deployed for contemporary exigencies. Thus, through the perspectives we have on the past, we are better able to orient our contemporary knowledge and action through a more rigorous interrogation of our social practices and social formations (Afolayan 2018: 6).

It is this same sociocultural heritage of the Yoruba that gave birth to Yoruba *postproverbials*. And it is this that equally gives them the significance to key into the temporal dialogue between the past and the future of the Nigerian society in search of sustainable remedies.

5. Conclusion

Postproverbials have emerged into scholarship in ways that transgress the bounds of the scholarship on conventional proverbs. In this essay, I have tried not only to extend our understanding of postproverbiality, but also delivered a critique that I trust would instigate further reflection on the emerging trajectories of its credentials as a critical phenomenon in African cultural studies. I have also brought in (African) philosophy as a conceptual co-traveler in the onerous task of calibrating a mythological framework that constitutes what I think is the first condition for scholarship on the continent. As a cultural phenomenon grounded in “deviant re-production” and “alternate imagination” of the Nigerian/African condition, postproverbiality finds a critical companion in philosophical engagement that extends its self-reflexive capacity.

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ADAOBI MUO

RECASTING TRADITIONAL ADAGES IN THE LIGHT OF CHRISTIANITY: AN EXAMINATION OF SELECTED IGBO POSTPROVERBIAL EXPRESSIONS

Abstract: Conversations, private and public, within the cultural context of the traditional Igbo society is an art that is copiously accessorised with figurative devices like anecdotes, idioms, proverbs and other wise sayings. Idioms and proverbs therefore have a prominent position in the discourses of that society. The proverbs are mainly employed to counsel, educate, console, inspire, entertain, and transmit moral values, and are fabricated using realities, experiences and conditions of their respective environments. Very few developments have altered the cultural environments, sensibilities and frameworks, which include proverbs, of the Igbo society as profoundly as Christianity has done, since its entrenchment in that geographical space. Therefore, on the basis of selected axioms, and using Homi Bhabha's concept of hybridity, this research examines a selected set of contemporary Igbo postproverbial as a crossbreed cultural production sired by a conscious and creative engrafting of Christian registers, ideology, reality and sensibilities into traditional Igbo proverbs. It further argues that such reconstructions, significantly, extend the provenance and modify not only the content, but also the context, functions and implications of the affected maxims and further shrink the influence of traditional linguistic system on contemporary conversations. The essay submits that Christianity exploits its popularity and dominance in achieving prominence in discourses of 21st century Nigerians. It then concludes that such developments express the irreversible plurality of post-colonial societies of the world, like Nigeria.

Keywords: Postproverbial/Proverbial, Igbo, Cultural, Christianity, Post-colonial, Discourses.

1. *Introduction*

Among the Ibo, the art of conversation is regarded very highly, and proverbs are the oil with which words are eaten. (Achebe 1958: 5)

Igbo is one of the three major ethnic groups in Nigeria, within Africa in the global south. The Igbo are mainly located in the five states of Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu, and Imo, in the Southeast geo-political zone. The term also refers to the language spoken by the people. The Igbo like the typical Africans, are “highly religious people” and religion remains a “major determinant” of their life (Okeke 2002: 3; Adetugbo 2001: 11; Ejizu 2002). The pre-colonial Igbo society practiced Indigenous Igbo Religion (IIR), exclusively. The introduction of Christianity in Igboland, with the settling of “the first missionary... in Onitsha in 1857,” (Emenyonu 1988: 35; Asaju 1995: 351), provided the people with an alternative means of spiritual connection and expanded the religious horizon of the society. At present, the Igbo in Nigeria are 98% Christians and 2% IIR devotees and with the Southern Ijaw, constitute 98% of the 49.3% Nigerian Christians (US Report). The enormous impact of Christianity on the Igbo society is manifest in the political, social, economic and scholarly domains. The Igbo are a “compendium of paradoxes, but their greater asset is a copious supply of versatile commonsense and the unique capacity for improvisation” (Nmah and Nwadiolor 2012: 15). The observation is lucidly demonstrated in the adroit manipulation of properties of Christianity in proverbial modifications mostly manifest in verbal conversations.

For the typical Igbo, within and outside his/her original home, discourses are not merely acts, they are arts. As such conversations are consciously embellished with striking proverbs and postproverbials, to facilitate comprehension and elicit desired feedback. Post-proverbials are usually characterized by inventiveness, dynamism, functionality, transgressiveness, humour and plurality, as they are

constructed using available and adaptable resources within their society. Christianity provides abundant materials and motivation for paremiographers (proverb-coiners) in post-colonial environments, like the modern Igbo society, to engage in such reformulations. Igbo Postproverbials express contemporary realities, experiences and sensibilities of their society, address personal and communal needs, provide entertainment and, to a large extent, expand the corpus of Igbo idiomatic expressions and, by extension, episteme. The influence of Christianity on the corpus of Igbo proverbs reflects the historical experience, legacies of Europe, rejection of cultural essentialism and acceptance of accommodation, in Africa.

The phenomenon of postproverbials (or anti-proverbs) is a universal cultural issue, which entails a review of existing forms in the light of newer developments. For instance, the English popular postproverbial thesis, “the sky is not your limit but stepping stone” is an outgrowth of the proverbial “the sky is your limit.” Again, the seminal Igbo postproverbial text “Égbé bèlù ùgò bèlù, òkè sí íbè yā ébèlà yá gòsì yā ébé ọ̀ gà- ébè” [let the kite perch and let the eagle perch, if one says that the other should not perch, let it show where it should perch], is birthed by the proverbial “Égbé bèlù ùgò bèlù, òkè sí íbè yā ébèlà òkù kwáà yā,” [let the kite perch and let the eagle perch, if one says that the other should not perch, let its wing break]. Therefore, motivated by the noted unpacking and repacking of Igbo proverbials and regulated by Bhabha’s concept of hybridity, this study examines a selected set of ten Igbo postproverbials. The proverbials are analysed as distinct, amalgamated and literary category birthed by creative implantations of “additional proverbemes or clauses,” (Raji-Oyelede *Playful Blasphemies*, 2022: 36, 45 and “COVID-19” 2022: 229), derived from Christian catalogues, philosophies and orientations, into previously existing proverbs.

2. Literature Review

The literature available to this research validates scholarly interest in proverbs and in postproverbials, as radicalized patterns deriving

from proverbs, and which co-constitute the philosophical corpus of a given culture, from different perspectives. Asiegbu's (2016: 4) "trendy conception of philosophy" categorises proverbs as a sub-segment of "popular philosophy," which also includes witticisms, insights about reality and myths of a distinct people. Narrowing Asiegbu's broad perspective, Ndiribe (2020: 727) terms proverbs "oral compositions" which several "stylistic constituents" are harvested from its society's value systems and which exhibit the society's norms and cultures. Explaining the society angle, Anyabuike and Ebiringa (2020: 15) hold that the truth expressed by proverbs is "relative" to its society. Putting the African Igbo society in view, Finnegan (1990: 55), describes, proverbs as a highly dominant and valued "form of speech in Igbo society and other African societies." Situating their scholarship within the same Igbo society, Nwankwo posits that Igbo proverbs provide "insight" into the "cultural setting, social structure and belief" of the Igbo. Summarising, Igwebuike and Nweze (2020: 69) observe that the "wide uses" of proverbs has "attracted a lot of scholarship." This is validated by the profound attention contemporary scholarship accords postproverbials and anti-proverb.

"Antiproverb" (*Antispruchwort*) is a term developed in 1982 by Mieder, a globally acclaimed paremiologist, to define deliberately "parodied, twisted, or fractured proverbs that reveal humorous or satirical speech play with traditional proverbial wisdom" ("Proverbs" 28). The name has become "widely accepted (and a) ... general label" for innovative transformations of conventional proverbs (Litovkina 2015: 327). However, in 1999, Raji-Oyelade coined the term "postproverbial" in a seminal article "Postproverbial in Yoruba Culture: A Playful Blasphemy," to delineate similar development in his African Yoruba culture. That explains why Ademowo and Balogun (2015) describe postproverbial as a late 1990's and early 21st century development in the context of African paremiology. As a term, "postproverbial," according to Hrisztova-Gotthardt (2013: 452), is considered by Mieder as encapsulating "the specific African changes of existing proverbs more precisely" and he notes the "great importance" of Raji Oyelade's study.

Speaking from a Yoruba viewpoint, Raji-Oyelade (“Postproverbial” 1999: 75) traces the emergence of the phenomenon in the contemporary society to “the effect of the interplay of orality and literacy-modernity, the critical correspondence between an older, puritanistic generation and a younger, disruptive, and somewhat banalistic generation.” Consequently, postproverbial is otherwise termed “proverb-sloughing” and “Post-Contact Proverbs” as respectively noted by Nwachukwu-Agbada (2012: 267) and Unaegbu (2020: 311). Raji-Oyelade, in a 2022 essay, further classifies the postproverbial text as a “cultural-linguistic ‘outbreak’, an outgrowth of the conventional text:”

Derived from the phenomenon of twisting and extending the forms of the conventional proverbs ... by cutting off and replacing parts of the original proverb, the proverb is invariably revised and postponed. The term “postproverbial” is, therefore, a reference to both the theory and practice of proverbial transformations. (“COVID-19” 227, 229)

The reviewed articles provide the essential definitions, vocabularies and motivations for the study of postproverbials. By Raji-Oyelade’s interest in Yoruba forms, he tacitly invites non-Yoruba scholars into the postproverbial research field.

Focusing on another socio-cultural environment, Nwachukwu-Agbada (2012: 267, 266) observes an emergence of a class of “new proverbial constructions ... utterances ... in the Igbo gnomic category” whose forms and contents are respectively derived from “Igbo corpus,” and “Western cultural items, beliefs and institutions” and which are appropriated, “without a sense of inferiority,” in the presentation of African perspectives. He classifies such as proverbs of the future. Nwachukwu-Agbada’s scholarship emphasises the Western/Igbo dimensions, and, thus, justifies the choice of hybridity as the main analytical framework of this research. However, the study pays tangential attention to the Christian perspective prioritised by this research. Deepening the observed pluralistic dynamics, Unaeg-

bu (2020: 311) submits that postproverbs are “created or imported” by a given society as a result of cultural interface between different cultures.” Lastly, Ademowo and Balogun (2015: 12) locate the locus of construction in urban spaces, but add that “in both invention and reception,” postproverbials are equally comfortably and favourably exercised in the open cultural spaces within “urban, peri-urban or rural.”

As insightful as the studies are, they tend to exhibit insufficient interest in the significant impact of Christianity within the Igbo post-proverbial universe. Thus, this research becomes obligatory for a number of reasons. First is the research viability of religion, identified by *Ruano* (2010: 296) as “a variable” which supports “researchers in determining and interpreting” definite types of social behaviour. Second is the prominence of Christianity as the “most overt legacy” of European relationship with Africa (Grundy 2002: 56). Third is the cultural and political position of Igbo as a principal ethnic group and indigenous language, used by about 42 million speakers (*Ethnologue* 2023), within and outside Igboland. Last is the observation that the emergence of new proverbs to reverse older ones “demands research into the change of circumstance” which precipitated the novel stance (Unaegbu 2020: 315-6). Based on these observations, Postproverbial Scholarship cannot afford to assign supplementary position to the Igbo and Christianity perspectives in its attempt at identifying, interpreting, classifying, describing, and examining the category, as an emerging, functional, interesting and entertaining literary form, employed in contemporary verbal discourses. This study, therefore, makes its intervention from the Igbo and Christian perspectives.

3. Methodology

This study, for the sake of manageability, cautiously selects ten Christianised postproverbial expressions used by speakers of Igbo language. The ten, with their respective proverb others, are all initially presented, in Igbo and English, in a table. The research engages in identification, collection, translation, classification and examina-

tion of the postproverbials, from everyday oral discourses and the internet, rather than coining. Selection is regulated by the palpable co-occurrence of elements of traditional Igbo and Western Christian cultures in each of the aphorisms. The provided literal and semantic translations, from source (Igbo) text to target (English) text, is guided by Ndiribe's (2020: 726) observation that to aid comprehension, the interpretation and analysis of proverbs must take into consideration its exceeding figurativeness and attendant "linguistic sophistication." It uses the descriptive approach of data analysis and highlights their multicultural background and constitution, identity and anti-essentialist outlook, distinctiveness and functionality.

The research, chiefly, employs postproverbial rhetorics which depict suspension and replacement of parts (lexical, phrasal, clausal and entire content) rather than those that are left complete but complemented by "a postproverbial retort" (Raji-Oyelade "COVID-19" 2022: 229). It is interested in those Igbo radicalised sayings which express "modernist" tempers, from a Christian perspective, and are burdened with additional function of humour (Nwachukwu-Agada 2012: 268). Analysis is complemented by relevant secondary materials, mostly scholarly articles, in print and online and is mainly steered by Bhabadian concept of hybridity and third space.

4. Homi Bhabha's Concept of Hybridity

The seminal Post-colonial concept of Hybridity (Syncretism) is propounded by Homi Bhabha in the 1994 in the text *The Location of Culture*. Hybridity, as a sociological assumption, seeks to account for interface between two different cultural systems in one environment as well as the attendant production of a novel variety, Bhabha describes as "new, neither the one nor the other," (25) and which derives from a fusion of the existing cultures. Bhabha further supposes that the construction of cultural statements and arrangements take place in the "third space of enunciation" (37) and the third space is created out of the encounter of a culture and its other self; "the self and its doubling, the hybrid" (46).

Throwing more light on Bhabha's concept of Hybridity, Jeannine Fletcher (2008: 14) and Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin (1989: 245), respectively, define it as "the mixing that brings forth new forms from previously identified categories" and superimposition of European "importations on indigenous traditions." Tyson (1994: 369) further explains that Hybridity does not amount to deadlock between two contrasting cultures but is, rather "a productive, exciting positive force" in a progressively shrinking and hybridized world. Stretching it a bit further, Kraidy (2005: 148) and Pieterse (2021: 210) individually, interpret hybridity as "the 'cultural logic' of globalization" which observe "traces of other cultures exist" in all cultures and is interested in "general expressions which are new and recent, a recombination of existing combinations."

Thus, Hybridity explains the irreversible integration of Western and non-Western cultures of the world. It disrupts the logic of sameness and homogeneity, and as an anti-essentialism discourse, interrogates cultural fundamentalism as it confirms colonial influence but dislodges its superior status. Hybridity expresses fluidity, proposes accommodation and mutually inclusive relationship between two alternative cultures, like the African Igbo literary culture and European Christian culture. Thus, Hybridity endorses a new identity of mixed materials, exemplified by the postproverbials, under examination.

This study considers Bhabha's concept of Hybridity, and third space, capable of bearing its analytical burden for a number of reasons. First, its consciousness of the reality of coloniality and attendant cultural interface can explain the historical and pluri-cultural background of the selected Christianised Igbo postproverbials. Second, Bhabha's concept of the third space can account for the Igbo postproverbials as products of the intercourse between the two identified cultural corpuses and the novel and hybrid identity of the postproverbials. Thus, the notion of hybridity, with third space, can facilitate an examination of Igbo postproverbials as modified imaginative forms with extended provenance, implications and functions.

It can also justify the submission and conclusion of the research that the selected postproverbials convey the diminished influence of traditional literary system and progressive impact of Christianity on everyday conversations of the post-colonial Igbo, as well as the irremediable multiculturalism of 21st century societies of the world.

5. *Igbo Postproverbials: A Reconstructed Category*

A significant number of Igbo maxims have been refabricated, from a theological perspective, resulting into the emergence of a body of Christianity-determined Igbo postproverbials, with both instructive and entertaining functions. The body is represented by the ten presented hereafter.

Table 1: Ten postproverbials, developed from an interface between Western Christianity and traditional Igbo thoughts.

S.N.	Post Proverbial Other	Original Saying	Meaning
1.	Ó dì mímā kà ikùkù kúò kà á hụ íkè òkúkò. [It is good for the wind to blow so the rump of the fowl will be exposed].	Ó dì mímā kà ikùkù kúò kà á mára nà Fádá yì trouser. [It is good for the wind to blow so people will know that the priest wears trousers].	Challenging circumstances reveal the real, but hitherto hidden, character of a person or something.
2.	Ónyé nà-èrì chétá nwáínè yà/Ónyé ághàlà nwáínè yà. [When one is eating, he/she should not forget his/her siblings].	Fádá ná-èrì yá chétà bụròdà. [When a Reverend Father is eating, he should remember the Reverend Brother].	Be your brother's keeper.
3.	Yá bụ Látinì á pùgò nà ménsá. [That Latin has gone beyond mensa].	Yá bụ íhé á pùgò n'ègwú. [That thing has gone beyond play].	The situation has gotten out of hand.

4.	Ónyé ríjúó áfō ò tíbé Àlélúyà. [It is only when one is well-fed that such can shout Alleluia!]	Ónyé ríjúó áfō ò yòbá nwá égwū. [It is only when one is well-fed that such can dance around with a child].	One needs to be empowered to perform given demanding tasks.
5.	Mụọ Ọ́sō dákwasā ónyé ọ̀bụ̀l̀à, kèdú ńdí gà nà ètìzì “Àlélúyà?” [If the Holy Spirit falls on everybody who then will shout “Alleluia”].	Ọ́mádụ̀ nílè bụ́rụ̀ ọ̀gàr̀anyà, kèdú ńdí gà-àb̀òzì éwū? [If everybody is rich who will dissect the goat?]	All fingers are not equal because they serve different but necessary purposes.
6.	Ónyé ìsì ànaghī àgú Psalm 121. [The blind does not read Psalm 121].	Ónyé ótù ụ̀kwū ànaghī àzà á kwàà à kwùrù. [A one-legged person does not answer unshakable]. Meaning: One cannot execute a task without the prerequisite skill.	One cannot execute a task without the prerequisite skill.
7.	É jíghí ányá ómá èjé ụ̀kà ékpéle/ Ónyé nyá nà chí yā dí nà ńmā ànaghī èjé ụ̀kà ákùlù ákà. (No one goes to Pentecostal/praying churches if all is well).	Ónyé nyá nà chí yā dí nà ńmā ànaghī èjé n’áfá. [One who is at peace with his personal god does not go for divination].	Desperate situation demands desperate action.
8.	Árá ńdí ụ̀kà ná-èbídó n’ùkwé. [The madness of a Christian starts from choruses].	Árá ná-èbídó nà ńtámù. [Madness starts from murmuring].	Nasty and extreme conditions usually begin slightly and gradually.
9.	Í gà ánọ n’èkèlè ń Maria, ńdí ọ̀zọ̀ èjúpùtásá nà gràsíá. [You will be at Hail Mary while others are already full of grace].	Í gà ánọ ná-áwàkwā ọ̀gòdò-ńgbá, ńdí ná-ágbá ńgbá àgbáchá láá” [You will be tying and retying your wrestling wrapper, while other wrestlers are already done with the wrestling and left the wrestling ground.]	You spent too much time on preparations and the main action is missed.

10.	<p>Ónyé jíjí íkè ò rúó àlà- ézè, ónyé jékátá chìgháá àzụ, ònkè ó jèrè èjé àláá yá n'íyì. [When one is determined s/he gets to heaven but if one backslides, the miles s/he already covered will be a waste].</p>	<p>Ónyé jéwé ó jèrùghí ó nà-èjérírí gányè nà ó rùò. [A traveler does not stop until he/she reaches his/her destination].</p>	<p>Accomplishing a given task demands focus and resilience.</p>
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Each of the postproverbials exhibit a double act of postponement and substitution, but of different degrees. The revised texts can be classified into two typologies, based on structural reconfigurations. In the first, parts (lexical, phrasal and clausal) of the informing proverbs are adjourned and replaced with Christian personnel, prayers, catalogues, settings, ideologies and worldviews. In the second, the entire surface structure undergoes transformation but the deep structure remains largely untransformed. Consequently, each proverb and its revised version are thematically similar but structurally different. The reconstructed versions are analysed hereafter.

The postproverbial [1a], “*Ó dì ímā kà ìkùkù kùò kà á mārā nà Fádá yì trouser,*” (It is good for the wind to blow so people will know that the priest wears trousers), is recast from [1b], *o di mma ka ikuku kuo ka ahu ike okuko,*” (it is good for the wind to blow so the rump of the fowl will be exposed). Both speculate on the gap between appearance and reality or pretense and authenticity, but employ different terms of reference. To communicate the capacity of challenging developments in unmasking the authentic character of someone/something, the postproverbial utterance, without completely shifting away from its original Igbo proverbial source, looks to the Western Christianity for materials, and this alters its physicality, markedly. In the reformulation process, both the Igbo literary and language systems and the Western Religious Christian tradition, play “major role (s) in the choice of words” (Cooky and Ijioma 2022: 11) and this makes the new coinage an archetypal hybrid imaginative system.

The postproverbial other depicts an instrumentalization of the Catholic priest's long cassock and its concealing function. By shifting its philosophical logic from the non-human and private sphere, (fowl and its rump) to the human and public place (priest and his habit), the reformulated version acquires a crossbreed identity and an extended significance, in relation to the original proverb, even though both proclaim the need for authenticity. The transference of the functions is evident. The postproverbial is recreated by a suspension and replacement of key pillars of the original proverb, with vocabulary, person and dressing mined from Catholicism, the oldest and main Christian institution. The new maxim, unlike its forebear, by pulling from two different cultures, procures a crossbreed identity that lessens the potency of the Igbo literary and linguistic cultures. The appearance of such hybrid patterns in 21st century conversations dramatises the substantial input of major drivers of cultural changes, like Christianity, in a society like Nigeria which is compelled to adapt to the conversational needs of her pluri-cultural postcolonial population.

“Fada na-eli ya cheta brother, (the Reverend Father should remember the Reverend Brother as he eats) [2a], is the second postproverbial and it is an outgrowth of the proverb “Ónyé nà-èrì chètá nwáínè yà/Ónyé ághàlà nwáínè yà,” (One should remember his/her siblings as he/she eats) [2b]. To continue the task of the original text in encouraging brotherly love, charity, generosity, philanthropy, compassion and empathy among the Igbo, the amended axiomatic expression rejects the solitary world of its parents as it makes its appeal through the prism of both Igbo literary system and English Christian religion. Thus, the remaking process entails a cultural fusion that yields another form with a “truly amphibian identity” (Raji-Oyelade, “Postproverbial” 1999: 75). The code-mixing, manifest in the radicalised literary form, displays the linguistic character of the contemporary Igbo, and African as well as the progressive influence of the Christian religion and its English language vehicle, on the Igbo language, arts and culture.

Unlike in the previous structure where alteration occurs only at the concluding clause, the postproverbial under examination manifests the dual act of suspension and substitution at both its opening and completing clauses. Thus, it exhibits an “essential rupture in the head position” which necessitates additional modification at the concluding clause and both alterations engender “an entirely ‘new’ proverb ...” (Raji-Oyelade, *Playful Blasphemies* 2022: 41). The implication is that the necessary interruption can happen in doubles or multiples, and at the opening, medial and or closing clauses or phrases of the expression in question. That radicalising process of elimination and incorporation results into an integration that deeply alters the language, shape, content and cultural identity of the postproverbial other of the proverb, even when the significance and function remain largely same. Thus, by a conscious manipulation of an existing Igbo proverbial form, in the light of Western Christianity, an entertaining, novel and third-place figurative expression, with an identity different from the two informing cultures, is created and employed to facilitate effective conversations.

By replacing the concept of ‘sibling,’ occurring, as an object, at the concluding clause of the original saying, with church personnel, the anonymous proverb coiners shift the locus from home to church, the most visible physical marker of Christianity. The same interruption also moves the emphasis on relationship away from blood and kinship ties to membership of same faith and demonstrates the reconceptualisation of brotherhood and family by Christianity. ‘Father’ and ‘Brother,’ are both ministers in the Catholic Church, but the Reverend Father enjoys a more privileged position. Notably, the mutual reciprocity of Igbo and European universes is solidified in the espoused communality creed of ‘be your brother’s keeper’ enshrined in both cultures. The correspondence closes the cultural distance between the two and provides an enabling environment for both to experience a collaborative relationship that refuses to grant hegemony to either within the same verbal system.

Both the postproverbial, “Yá bù Látinì á pùgō nà ménsá” (That Latin has gone beyond mensa) [3a] and its traditional order, “yá bù íhé á pùgō n’ègwú” (That thing has gone beyond play) [3b], figuratively but respectively, express an out-of-hand condition. However, the thematic similarity is hardly extended to its physical structure, which, by being revised under the light of Christianity, departs from mono-cultural Igbo universe of its forebear and displays the entrenchment of alien components into the original African cultural matrix. The creative process of the novel form exhibits a tinkering practice involving the adjournment and replacement of the terms ‘thing’ and ‘play,’ of the conventional saying with the Catholic lexical items ‘Latin’ and ‘mensa.’

It is important to note that Ecclesiastical Latin, also called Church or Liturgical Latin, is the official language of the Catholicism and developed from classical Latin but differs significantly from it. Again, ‘mensa’ is a Latin noun for table, altar, meal; and means ‘altar sacrificial table.’ In Church Latin, the terminology is employed for ‘upper slab of the church altar,’ according to *On-Line Etymological Dictionary* (2019). Both terminologies, enlisted by the anonymous paremiographers are thus chartered from a Western religious institution. By the superimposition of the foreign European importations on the indigenous Igbo literary body, a new syncretized form of mixed provenance is constructed. The postproverbial is therefore a product of the fraternization between two different cultural categories in the post-colonial Igbo setting.

Moreover, the imaginative interference alters the content, shape and scope of the postproverbial, in relation to its traditional provenance, and leads to an erasure of linguistic, cultural, imaginative and functional gaps between the familiar proverbial and the novel postproverbial. The negotiation activity expands the functional value of the recreated system by injecting humour into it, making it not only instructive but also entertaining, and provides a historical and social accounts of the Igbo society. Thus, it performs not only linguistic, literary and cultural functions but also historical, social and connective functions.

Notably, the hybridization efforts, through pruning and attachment of lexical items, unbundles and weakens the proverbial, to reproduce its postproverbial order. The practice, therefore, eloquently speaks of the waning force of traditional linguistic and literary voices as well as the corresponding rising of its Western alternative within contemporary Igbo discourse domain. The postproverbial thus, effectively gauges the social pulse of its society. Moreover, by the direct invocation of Latin, an European language that shares the same linguistic background with English and functions as the formal language of Catholicism, the postproverbial, under examination, points at the two factors of language and religion that have together contributed, perhaps more than others, in the cultural refurbishment of most post-colonial African societies, best represented by Nigeria.

Another Christian-conscious Igbo postproverbial is “ónyè ríjùó áfō ò tìbè Àlélúyà (It is only when one is well-fed that s/he can shout Alleluia) [4a] and it is adopted from an original Igbo maxim “ónyè ríjùó áfō ò yòbá nwá égwū” (It is only when one is well-fed that s/he can dance around with a child) [4b]. Paremiographers tend to shift attention from particularity of denomination to the generality of religion in selecting materials from the global Christianity, rather than Catholicism, as observed in the three previously analysed subversive texts. Nevertheless, both emblematic expressions, by observing a prerequisite for a given action, speak of the essence of empowerment, in relation to specific challenging tasks. Functionally, both display an affiliation to the popular English maxim; ‘you cannot give what you do not have.’

The disruption of the conventional proverb is realized by an ex-purgation and replacement of the concluding clause with a lexical item borrowed from Western Christianity. ‘Alleluia’ is an exclusive property of Christianity. The implantation significantly ‘de-Igbonises’ the original proverb, interrogates and reverses its essentialist form and reproduces a hybrid variety with both Igbo and Christian identities. The novel form also implies the progressive encroachment of Christian terms like ‘Jesus is Lord’ and ‘it is well,’ on conversations

of the postcolonial Igbo, most of who are Christians. The term represents several verbal communications carried out in Igbo tongue and steeped in European Western linguistic and religious resources. The observed identitarian shift, from homogeneity to heterogeneity, exhibits the irreversible cultural interface in post-colonial African societies, here epitomized by the Igbo society, facilitated by Westernisation and globalization. Consequently, the everyday life of Africans “in the context of globality, is shaped by structures, processes, and products that originate elsewhere” (Heise 2008: 54).

Furthermore, the postproverbial [5a] “Mụ́ọ́ Nsṓ dákwasā́ ónyé ọ̀bụ̀là, kèdú́ ndí gá nà étìzì “Àlélúyà?” (If everybody is possessed by the Holy Spirit, who will then shout alleluia?), is indebted to its forebear “Mmádù nífè búrú ọ̀gàrànyà, kèdú́ ndí gá-ábòzì éwū?” (If everybody becomes wealthy who then will dissect the goat?) [5b]. The substitution at the initial and final clauses displays an overt recontextualisation necessitated by the Christianisation of Igbo land. The unidentified community bound by the symbol of the goat in the original maxim is, in its revised version, situated within a church community bound by Alleluia. The subversive category still maintains the question format of its source proverbial but manifests a differentness arising from the supplanting Christian terms and references, - ‘muo nso’ and ‘Alleluia’. However, both verbalize the truism that all fingers are not equal but each is crafted to perform certain functions, in a manner that is reminiscent of the popular idea of Division of Labour. Looking at the postproverbial, one may conclude that proverb coiners of Igbo provenance are irresistibly attracted to the term ‘Alleluia,’ in their self-imposed task of remaking traditional maxims to reflect the contemporary reality of their pluri-cultural society, towards facilitating effective communication.

The postproverbial expression is unique in that the process of alteration displays a more extensive shift away from the previously examined forms where parts of the original proverbials are slashed off and replaced with European Christian alternatives. By including ‘Mụ́ọ́ Nsṓ’ which is the Igbo translation of the English Christian Holy Spir-

it, the literary form effectively appropriates conventional Igbo, Christian (alleluia) and Christian/Igbo (Mụ́ọ́ ́Nsō) elements. It, therefore, acquires an in-betweenness that makes it impossible to belong exclusively to Igbo or Christian cultures, as a distinct from, drawing from Igbo literary, linguistic and Christian religious cultures. Notably, apart from one term ‘alleluia, the figurative corpus is, rendered in the Igbo tongue. However, it still demonstrates the overwhelming influence of Christianity in the oral communication of the contemporary Igbo and the diminishing status of Igbo constituents within the same context. The postproverbial expression therefore, manifests a more intensified and more flexible creative practice of twisting and extending. Thus, more than the previously examined postproverbials, this fifth one eloquently accounts for the highly hybridized 21st century universe.

“Ónyé isì ánághī àgụ́ Psalm 121” (The blind does not recite Psalm 121) [6a], is another idiomatic expression recast in the light of Christianity, from “ónyé ótù ụ́kwū ánághī àzà á kwàà à kwùrụ” (A one-legged person does not answer unshakable) Meaning: One cannot execute a task without the prerequisite skill. [6b]. Each of the two forms expresses the criticality of prerequisite ability in the execution of given tasks. In the postproverbial, the subject and its referent are deferred and replaced. Like the previous postproverbial, it also admits intrusion at its opening and concluding segments, but does not harvest its replacing opening phrase from Christianity as the previous one does. Thus, while the subject remains faithful to its original Igbo logic, the referent transfers its fidelity to the English Christian worldview, by making its selection from the capitals of its sacred text, the Bible. Thus, the postproverbial other is brought to existence and function by the intermediation of Christian culture on an existing Igbo literary structure, and the stimulating recasting manifests productivity and dynamism as it reshapes the physical structure, content, implication and emphasis of the original proverbial, and enables 21st century-conscious communication.

Notably, the postproverbial logic exhibits a relationship of ambiguity with the original proverbial expression, as it also illustrates

observable boundary stretching, and in more ways than one. It validates the authority of the conventional expression by staying on the human body but interrogates the same authority by shifting the site of the argument from one body part (leg) to another (eyes). In addition, the postproverbial offspring exhibits a stretching of boundaries, and emphasis by absolutising the inadequacy employed by its proverbial ancestor; from semi-lameness to total blindness. The boundary stretching undergoes further intensification in the use of the Bible as a primary reference point in the postproverbial form, as against the self-referentiality of the traditional form. The Bible symbolizes western ideology and impact of Christianity on the contemporary Igbo society, and Igbo conversations.

Unlike the previous six postproverbials, where properties and processes of Christianity function as co-organising elements, the following class of three postproverbials, exhibits an unbundling and re-bundling that affects the entire content of the original text, but not the meaning, as the retooling is contingent on Christian concepts delivered in Igbo tongue. Thus, at the total revision at the surface level of the postproverbial riposte hardly affects the signification integrity of the informing traditional text. While the content remains Igbo, the orientation is indubitably Christian.

“É jíghí anyá ọ́má èjè ụ̀kà ékpéle” (one does not go to a Pentecostal church if all is well) [7a], is a Christianised form of the traditional proverb “Ọ́nyé nyá nà chí yā dī nà mmā ànàghī èjè ụ̀kà ákụ̀lụ̀ ákà” (one who is in good terms with his personal god does not go for divination) [7b]. The sayings figuratively communicates the idea that desperate situation demands desperate action. Notably, while the traditional form derives its content from the Indigenous Igbo Religion (IIR), its reconstructed other turns to western Christianity, in a manner that provokes hilarity, but the Igbo language and significance of the original form is maintained. Thus, the new postproverbial derives its essence from both Igbo and Western literary, linguistic and religious cultures.

That both are, respectively, operationalized by religion intensifies their relationship and the religious ambience of this work. The radicalization of the conventional form is achieved by an extensive content replacement procedure. The reformulated form exhibits an erasure and substitution of the personal god and divination, occurring at the opening and concluding clauses of the traditional version, with Pentecostal Church. While personal god and divination are major aspects of IIR, Pentecostalism is an unorthodox denomination of Christianity with multiple variants. It is initially referred to as 'clapping churches' based on their mode of worship which accommodates abundant animated songs and hand clapping, visions and prophesies, hardly found in orthodox churches some decades ago. In addition, the postproverbial reliance on Christianity is deepened in its engagement of the term 'ụ̀kà' - 'church,' -, a Christian legacy absent in the Igbo traditional consciousness of the original proverbial statement. Both forms authenticate the observation that maxims express "culture, belief" of its world (Cookey and Ijioma 2022: 11).

The replacements, at various points, suggest that the contemporary Igbo society no longer needs the services of the gods and their diviners whose roles have been taken over by the Christian church and her ministers. The transfer of roles and setting validates the enthronement and prominentization of Christianity, in its several appearances, in Igbo society. The shift from IIR to Christianity illustrates the fate of the indigenous religion from its pre-colonial hegemonic status, as the sole means of spiritual connection, to its post-colonial position as a marginalized religious institution in its original home. However, the cultural shift is hardly total as the post-proverbial exhibits abiding attachment to the old form, in meaning and by linguistic preferences. Consequently, what manifests is an expressive and imaginative mode whose ingrained ambivalence, which is a function of colonial experience, is observable in its hybrid constitution. The attendant different identity of the postproverbial articulates its hunger for both African legitimacy and Western civilization, as it announces the plural identity of its enabling Igbo society.

“Árá ndí ụkà ná-èbídó n’ùkwé” (The madness of Christians starts from choruses) [8a]. “Árá ná-èbídó nà òtámù” (Madness starts from murmuring) [8b]. The former displays an ingenious recombining of elements from Igbo literary and Western religious origins, to illuminate the idea that grave conditions usually begin with slight and seemingly harmless symptoms, as also communicated by the latter. The seamless fusion establishes an entirely different third category with a new hybrid identity which also works to facilitate effective communication among the contemporary Igbo.

Remarkably, unlike in the last, where the conventional form draws its essential force from Indigenous Igbo Religion, this one steps out of the precincts of religion and speaks in general terms. However, its postproverbial other, by employing Christianity, drags its philosophical inter-textual discourse back to the table of religion and that expresses the significant influence of the foreign religion on Igbo conversations. Exploiting the gap created by the proverb’s general perspective, the anonymous paremiographer breaks into the literary system and suspends the lexical component ‘murmuring’ and replaces it with the Christian term ‘choruses,’ which is a recurrent decimal in Christian worship. Nevertheless, by retaining the ‘madness’ arm, and its attendant constituents, as well as the organizing Igbo language, the reconstruction act displays partial loyalty to the conventional form. By domiciling Christianity within an Igbo corpus, the postproverbial minimises the influence of the indigenous literary and linguistic cultures that initially sired it as it extends the boundaries of the foreign Western culture within the conversational context of its post-colonial Igbo universe. The refabricated form, consequently, adopts the anti-essentialist character of its society.

One of the most popular and humorous Christian-oriented Igbo postproverbials is “Ì gà ánọ n’ékèlè m̄ Maria, ndí ọzọ èjúpùtásíá nà gràsjà” (You will be at Hail Mary while others are already full of grace) [9a]. The maxim parallels a traditional Igbo proverb, “I ga ano na awakwa ogo-ogodo-mgba, ndi n’agba mgba a gbaachaa laa” (You will be tying and re-tying your wrestling-wrapper, till the wrestling ends

and the wrestlers leave) [9b]. Like its proverbial equivalent, the figurative statement functions to discourage stagnancy and slothfulness and promote cleverness, preparedness and effective time management. Though rooted in Igbo oral literary institution, the newer adage draws its elements from a primary Catholic prayer “Hail Mary” and, in its inbetweenness and ambivalence, acquires a crossbreed identity that is both African and Western and so deregisters it from the exclusive list of either cultures.

In addition, the hybrid maxim goes beyond suspending some constituting elements of its predecessor and also includes substitution of such with Igbonised European/Christian terms. Thus, the borrowed Western terms ‘Mary’ and ‘grace’ are creatively bent, to ‘Maria’ and ‘gràsà’, to make them more suitable to the language and discourse character of their new home. The lexical amendment demonstrates Raji-Oyelade’s (*Playful Blasphemies* 2022: 41) observation that in the process of transmutation, “the phrase or keyword is either troped upon, replaced or amended.” The superimposition of the Christian importations and subsequent renovations of the adopted terms not only give rise to a more culturally robust system but also appear like an attempt at refusing either of the two cultures a hegemonic status within the figurative universe. Thus, the “hybrid zone is a subversive space where both the colonialist authority and traditional knowledge are challenged and disfigured” (Iheka 2018: 50). The postproverbial confirms colonial influence but dislocates its superior status as the noted spirit of camaraderie between the literary systems from two cultural rhizomes implies a rejection of stalemate.

Remarkably, the postproverbial has undergone significant revision thus: “Ànyị nọọrọ íékèñē m̄ Maria kà ànyị júpùtákwúó nà gràsà kà Òsébùlùwà wèé nọnyéré ànyị,” (while at Hail Mary, let us be full of grace so that God will be with us). This implies that certain conditions need to be fulfilled before the manifestation of expected results. The later recasting is achieved by borrowing an additional clause from the same Catholic prayer and employing such in a manner that alters the meaning of the first postproverbial, automatically.

This validates the description of postproverbial utterances, as naturally variable, dynamic, flexible and revisable oral system, easily acquiescent to relatively newer societal developments, like Christianity.

“Ónyé jí sí íkè ò rúó àlà- ézè, ónyé jékátá chìgháá àzú, òkè ó jèrè èjé àláá yá n’íyì.” (When one is determined s/he gets to heaven but if one draws back, the miles already covered will be a waste) [10a], is another Christianity-dependent postproverbial birthed by the proverbial “ónyé jéwé ó jèrùghí ó nà-èjérírí gányè nà ó rùò,” (a traveler does not stop until he/she reaches his/her destination) [10b]. Both play motivational role in their respective attempts at conveying the need for purposefulness, focus, consistency and resoluteness in relation to an intended goal until the desired result is achieved. Each addresses the regular frustration and intimidation that trail human life, in all its vicissitudes. However, contemporary Igbo proverb coiners adopted and spiritualised the logic, focus and implication of the traditional maxim, through a complex and deliberate interfering act. It instrumentalises the Christian concept of Eschatology while retaining the trope of a traveler but narrows it down from general to religious. Its revisionist agenda is intensified in the articulated critical consequence of backsliding, silenced in the mother proverbial, through an introduction of additional clauses. Through both original and reconstructed argumentations, the informing African Igbo and European Christian cultures are irredeemably locked in an intimate communion where they function together to communicate values admired, respectively, by the two who interfaced as a result of the 19th and 20th century Christian evangelization in non-European societies of the world, like Nigeria.

Interestingly, the refabricated postproverbial, like the previous one, has undergone further process of reconstruction thus: “Ónyé jí sí íkè ò rúó àlàézè, ónyé jékátá chìgháá àzú, nwánnè yā ènyéré yā áká” (When one perseveres s/he gets to heaven but if s/he backslides his/her brother/sister will help him/her). This shows a taking down of the second leg of the aphorism and a hanging up of a new and

more positive clause. Again, the conceptualisation of sibling follows the same pattern as that found in No. 2 postproverbial. Remarkably, first reformulation represents the individual as an independent entity, lacking support in the race of life while the second depicts him/her as a member of a community where support is readily available and accessible. Therefore, the clausal replacement seem driven by the rising consciousness of the value of interdependence and collaboration in the contemporary world. Notably, the revised version offers a more authentic image of the community consciousness of both Igbo society and Christianity, and in a manner that draws attention to the correspondence between the two different cultures.

6. *Conclusion*

A significant number of conventional Igbo proverbs have been recast using insights from Western Christianity and this has enriched the corpus of African and Igbo postproverbials, as demonstrated by the ten postproverbials examined by this essay. Thus, the research presents a compendium of knowledge on Paremiology. The plurality of origin makes each a cross-breed, created by the activities of Western imperialism in black societies of the world, epitomized by Nigeria. Thus, the postproverbials, as synthetic systems of signification, become “transcultural wedges for forging affective links between” indigenous African and foreign western cultures (Kraidy 2005: 148), thriving alongside each other in Nigeria, and “with this end, to teach and delight” (Sydney 2000: 106). Using the ten, the research also highlights the cultural and historical connections between the two cultures, from different origins, without ignoring the creative and theological implications. It, therefore, facilitates a better comprehension of the maxims and the enormous impact of Christianity on contemporary cultural productions and conversations of the Igbo, especially as the Igbo language and culture struggle for survival against the onslaught of Western civilization. Finally, the hybrid forms speak of the continued relevance of Igbo maxims, based on their functional value, including motivating, counselling, admonishing roles. How-

ever, each also demonstrates the limitations of the traditional monophonic tongue within the context of contemporary discourses in an “Africa (that) is neither fully Western nor truly African in their traditional, purist senses” (Eze 2021: 65).

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CHIAMAKA NGOZI OYEKA - CHIGOZIE BRIGHT NNABUIHE

POSTPROVERBIALS IN IGBO: AN ANTHROPO-LINGUISTIC OVERVIEW

Abstract: The Igbo view proverbs as sacred texts, filled with the wisdom of the old, and which should be handed down from one generation to another. Observation shows that there are new variants of existing proverbs. This study sets out to examine selected Igbo proverbs and their new variants with a view to finding out the differences between the two versions, reason(s) behind the new variants, the societal attitude towards the new version and its effect(s) on Igbo language and culture. Data were sourced through oral interviews. Twelve old male and female respondents, as well as twelve male and female young adults from different Igbo communities were purposively sampled and interviewed. The researchers relied also on their innate knowledge of Igbo language for the study. Findings reveal that the older generation maintains the original versions of Igbo proverbs while the younger generation uses more of the new version of proverbs. The new version is influenced by westernization and socialization with people from other ethnic backgrounds and projects the dynamic nature of language and culture. The study concludes that a compilation of both versions of Igbo proverbs will help the younger ones to understand the original ideas behind the postproverbials.

Keywords: traditional proverbs, postproverbials, Igbo society, globalization, language, culture.

1. Introduction

Proverb is a form of speech which is pregnant with meaning. More often than not, it confounds the unintelligent and even the intelligent who is not used to the form (Nwadike, 2009, p.2). The definition here implies that proverb is a form of discourse. Proverb started as an oral discourse before the written forms emerged. Proverb is also full of meanings. It takes people who are used to proverbs to understand its meanings.

Proverbs, according to Ukaegbu (2020), are among the few cultural phenomena that have withstood the test of time, as all tribes and ethnic groups of the world have their own proverbs which are drawn from their cultural environment. This explanation attests to the importance of proverb to the society. It is based on its usefulness that it has continued to be relevant in every society. The fact that proverbs are pulled out from societal cultural environment give it some uniqueness.

The Igbo, just like other societies, use proverbs in their daily conversations. On the use of proverbs by the Igbo, Basden (1921) attests that:

Proverbs, fables and stories enter very largely into the ordinary conversation of the people, and some acquaintance with them is absolutely necessary in order to take an intelligent interest in any subject of discussion. Some hundreds of proverbs are in constant use, and answer to questions are frequently given in this form. The meaning of some proverbs and fables is clearly obvious, but others are quite enigmatical. (p. 273)

The above attestation on proverbs among the Igbo highlights the way Igbo value proverbs. Proverbs are not only used in ordinary conversations but a good mastery of it is very necessary to make useful contribution in discussions. The reference to the frequency in the use of proverbs shows that discussions in Igbo language are often punctuated with proverbs.

Nwadike (2009) lends credence to Basden's claims on the Igbo use of proverbs by noting that:

Any speech or literary composition that is not punctuated with apt proverbs and idioms is regarded as naked; that is, as lacking in that expressive force which makes a listener nod his head in approval and admiration. Such unadorned expressions are seen as roughly equivalent to a pot of watery soup lacking in the necessary ingredients. (p.2)

The above excerpt buttresses further, the importance of proverbs to the Igbo. Discourse that is devoid of proverbs is compared to ‘a pot of watery soup’; that is, a tasteless soup. This is to say that proverbs give ‘taste’ to speech. It gives flavour to speech and makes conversations worth paying serious attention to. The Igbo make reference to proverbs as ‘palm-oil with which words are eaten’. This is to say that proverbs are lubricants that smoothens words, making it easier to digest.

The usefulness of proverbs is immense, hence, its attraction to scholars in time past and in contemporary era. the Igbo cannot be overemphasised. Okolo (1985) submits that:

Apart from using proverbs to advise, teach, encourage, praise, admonish, lament, and make allusions, they are frequently used in reiterating the beliefs of the people, or even to provide a secular precedent for present action... (p.35)

The above submission shows that proverbs are versed and cover every aspect of the Igbo life. It equally makes it easier to understand the reasons behind the frequency of its usage; it is used to recapitulate the Igbo belief and set standards in life. The Igbo have a proverb for every situation. Ukaegbu (2020) remarks that proverbs “are mostly used by elders to teach the younger generation the wisdom and culture of the people” (p. 7). Male elders are generally seen as custodians of proverbs. The elders use proverbs to teach and admonish the younger ones. Through such process, the younger ones are enculturated into the system especially in the use of proverbs. It is in such manner that proverbs are handed down from one generation to another.

Observation shows that there are new proverbs which are variants of the old/pre-existing ones. This study sets out to examine the new proverbs (hereafter, post proverbials) and the pre-existing ones.

2. Literature Review

Here, some works that have been done on Igbo postproverbials will be reviewed. The work of Lemoha, Ohwovoriole and Agugua (2019)

is on the changing phases of Igbo proverbs. They examined twenty-one pairs of Igbo proverbs comprising Igbo traditional proverbs and their postproverbial variants. They argue that Igbo postproverbials lack the ancient fervour. For them, Igbo postproverbials are responses to acculturation.

Egbara's (2019) study is on postproverbial (re) constructions of selected Igbo proverbs and the 'altering alternatives'. He examined eighteen traditional Igbo proverbs and their postproverbial constructions. Egbara argues that the regenerated proverbs from the original ones are products of alterations of the original constructions. His findings reveal that the noticed changes in the postproverbials are largely either due to lack of an in-depth knowledge in the usage of the traditional proverbs, disconnection with the custodians/ sources of the Igbo proverbs, urbanisation influence on the Igbo speakers or all. He therefore urges Igbo language speakers and would-be-users to draw closer by retracing their steps in the choice and usage of Igbo proverbs.

Oboko and Umezina's (2019) research work is on a pragmatic analysis of Igbo postproverbials. Their work delves into the extent to which some of the traditional Igbo proverbs are reformed and doctored, and how they still maintain qualities of the Igbo culture while accommodating the identity of the 21st century ideology of the Igbo people. They analysed twelve Igbo proverbs and their reconstructions and came to the conclusion that postproverbials provide capacity for reformation, deconstruction and reconstruction to negotiate the identity and significance of Igbo proverbs for cotemporary users.

Also, Abana and Eke (2019) investigate Igbo postproverbial from a pragmatic perspective. They examined ten Igbo traditional proverbs and their postproverbial counterparts. Their findings show that postproverbiality is situated in the dynamic space of informal speech of a younger and adventurous generation. Some of the postproverbials lack flavour and the semantic structure found in traditional Igbo proverbs.

The present study differs from the reviewed ones in some ways. First, this study engages more proverbs than the reviewed ones; greater number of proverbs gives room for wider perspective on the subject matter. While earlier studies focus on meaning and reconstruction of traditional proverbs, the present study delves into the postproverbial variants of traditional Igbo proverbs, differences between the two, reasons behind the postproverbials, attitude of the Igbo society towards it, its effect(s) on Igbo society and the way forward.

3. Methodology

Data for this study were gathered through different methods. The researchers are Igbo and have good mastery of Igbo language and culture. The researchers collected some of the proverbs for this study through participant observation method. The postproverbials they gathered in informal settings like market places and conversations with kinsmen and contemporaries were written in Igbo. The researchers sort the traditional Igbo versions of the new proverbs.

The researchers equally used structured interview to elicit data for this work. Twelve old male and female respondents and same number of male and female young adults were purposively selected and interviewed for this study. The researchers tried to find out from them, new Igbo proverbs and their old/older variants, differences between the new and old proverbs, reasons behind the new proverbs, societal attitude towards it, its effects on Igbo language and culture and the way forward. A total of sixty new proverbs were gathered. Only twenty-nine of them have traditional variants; these were the data used for this study.

4. Data Presentation and Analysis

In this section, the gathered data will be presented. For each datum, 'TP' will be used to represent the traditional proverbs while 'PP' will be used to represent the postproverbials. The data is divided into

three segments. The division is based on the content of the postproverbs which are based on Christian religion, modernisation and basic circumstances of life.

4.1. Proverbs based on Christian Religion

On the Igbo and religious practice, Ilogu (1985, p.7) submits that “They are very religious people who have not been very easily won over by Islam. Christianity, therefore, is the only ‘higher religion’ competing with the traditional religion for their allegiance.” Most Igbo in the present dispensation practice the Christian religion as against the traditional religion which their forebears practiced. The influence of the new religion rubs off on Igbo proverbs. Consider the following:

1. TP: Onye nwanne ya nọ n’akukụ ọkụ ji ya adighị ere ọkụ.
‘A person whose kin is beside the cooking fire his yam does not get burnt (while roasting).’
PP: Onye nna ya nọ n’eluigwe adighị eje ọkummuo.
‘A person whose father is in heaven does to go to hell’.
2. TP: Akwa ọmuma ekweghị sị mara nwaanyi ọkpa tiliti.
‘Tying of wrapper has made it difficult to identify a woman with very tiny legs’
PP: (a) Ndị kwaya ekweghị sị mara ndị bụ grajuet.
‘The choristers (choir regalia) makes it difficult to differentiate between them and graduates.’
(b) Ndị mekaniik ekweghị sị mara ndị bụ ndị ara.
‘Mechanics (dirty overall) makes it hard to differentiate between them and the mad’.
3. TP: Egbe bere, ugo bere, nke sị ibe ya ebela, nku kwaa ya.
‘Let the kite perch, let the eagle perch, whichever says the other shall not perch, let its wing break’.
PP: Egbe bere, ugo bere, nke si ibe ya ebela, ya gosị ya ebe ọ ga-ebe.
‘Let the kite perch, let the eagle perch, whichever says

the other should not perch, should show it where to perch’.

4. TP: *Ikuku kuo, a hụ ike okuko* .

‘When the wind blows, the fowl’s anus is seen’.

PP: *Ikuku kuo, a mata na Fada na-eyi Traụza.*

‘When the wind blows, it becomes known that Rev. Father wears trousers’.

The key words in the first TP are *Nwanne* ‘kin’, *okụ* ‘fire’ and *ji* ‘yam’. These keywords represent two aspects of Igbo culture. They are kin relationship and farming. The Igbo practice a strong kin relationship. For the Igbo, *nwanne ka* ‘kin is superior’. This is to say that the Igbo place kin relationship above every other relationship. They establish the relationship through selfless love. Protecting one another’s interest is part of kin relationship. It is based on Igbo kin relationship that TP (1) is established. Yam is the king of crops among the Igbo. It is highly valued. Although yam is prepared in different ways before eating, it has a special taste when it is roasted. Yam roasting requires tact and good attention in order to get the best out of it. The Proverb by implication maintains that one whose kin is in a position to help cannot lose something very precious to him or her. For the PP, the key words are *nna* ‘father’, *eluigwe* ‘heaven’ and *okummuo* ‘hellfire’. The keywords are highly connected with the Christian religion. In Christian religion, the father figure is stressed. God is a father. The patriarch, Abraham is also referred to as ‘Father Abraham’. Both God the father and father Abraham are seen in the Holy Bible as rich and kind. The earthly fathers are asked to emulate them. The Holy Bible ascribes beauty and peace to heaven while hell stands for a place of suffering. The proverb states that someone whose father is in heaven does not go to hell. In other words, someone whose father is in a position of affluence cannot be impoverished. The two proverbs are saying the same thing but in different ways. Both are on the benefits of having one’s kin in a position to help. While the TP draws its imagery from the traditional setting, PP draws its own from the new found faith, Christian religion.

In proverb 2, although the tying of a long wrapper may be associated with Igbo contact with Europeans, the proverb is still referred to as TP based on the fact that it has been overtaken by two PPs and people hardly recall the TP. Secondly, the society has changed so much that only a handful of older women tie wrapper at present. The key words or images in the proverb are *akwa omuma* ‘wrapper’ and *nwaanyi okpa tilitili* ‘woman with very tiny legs’. A woman’s tiny leg is not a beauty to behold among the Igbo. The use of a wrapper by almost all women (down to the 1980s when some started putting on trousers) made it extremely hard to identify women with tiny legs. The wrapper covers their legs and it is assumed that they all have robust legs. Tiny legs here refer to someone who is sick or impoverished. The proverb in a way talks of a cover-up which disallows people from discerning the real image. The PP version of proverb 2 is in two different forms. The ‘a’ part of it talks of the *kwaya* ‘choristers’ and *grajueti* ‘graduates’ while the key words for the ‘b’ part are *mekaniik* ‘mechanics’ and *ndi ara* ‘mad people’. The PPs draw heavily from the Christian religion and Education. With Christianity, came choristers who minister in church services and Education which when well accomplished is crowned with graduation ceremony. The graduating students put on academic gowns. Choir robes in Orthodox churches look more like academic gowns. The similarity between the two gowns – choir robes and academic gowns, makes it hard to differentiate the choristers from the graduating students. In PP 2(b), the key words are mechanics and mad people. Most village mechanics look very dirty by the nature of the way they go about their jobs. Some of them do not care to stitch their clothes when torn. Their mode of dressing makes it hard to differentiate them from mentally deranged people who go about on torn and dirty clothes.

TP 3 centres on Igbo traditional justice. Whoever does not wish another good, good should be denied him/her as well. Christian religion preaches forgiveness and love. The TP is modified. Instead of tit for tat in traditional justice, the PP, influenced by Christian religion teaches leniency and brotherly correction. Both proverbs talk of human relationships but look at judgment from different perspectives.

TP 4 engages the imagery of wind *ikuku* and fowl *okuko* to drive home its point. Buttocks, both in man and animals are not usually exposed to public sight. A fowl's buttocks is hardly seen or noticed by the reason of the feathers that cover its body; but when the wind blows, it ruffles the fowl's feather and most often blows open the buttocks that was earlier covered. The proverb reveals that some ruffings uncover some ugly but hidden parts of certain issues in life. PP aligns with the message in TP by engaging the imagery of the wind and a priest. Priests wear cassocks. Cassocks are usually long and covers most part of the body that one hardly thinks of, not to mention, that priests put on additional wears under the cassock. Sometimes, strong wind makes the unusual to happen by blowing up the priest's cassock. When such happens, the trousers under the cassock is seen to the amazement of some congregants. Through such, the congregants see for themselves what they would not have ordinarily seen. Both TP and PP pass the same message by noting that circumstances sometimes reveal hidden things.

4.2. Proverbs based on Modernisation

There is no gainsaying that the society is not static. It evolves daily. There is a daily application of new things to human affairs. Daily developments in the society come with greater opportunities. The societal changes reflect in proverbs. Consider the following:

5. TP Ihe okenye nọ n'ala hụ, ụmụaka rigoro eluosisi, ha agaghị ahụ ya.
 'What the elderly sees when sitting down, if children climb tree top, they will not see it'.
- PP Ihe ụmụaka nọ n'ala hụ, okenye rigoro eluosisi, ọ gaghị ahụ ya.
 'What children see when sitting down, if the elderly climbs tree top, he will not see it'.

6. TP O mebere ma chi ekweghi ndi uto atala ya.
‘If one is trying but god consents not, blamers should not blame him’.
- PP Onye mebe ma chi ya ekweghi, ya mesie ya ike na chi ya ga-ekweriri.
‘If one tries but his god consents not, let him try more/harder for his god must consent’.
7. TP Onye anuna anyamkpo so na o kwuru ugwo o ji ala
‘A person should not rejoice having no pierced eye until he pays the debt he owes the land’.
- PP Onye anuna nga so na Oyibo alara.
‘A person should not rejoice not going to jail until the European departs’.
8. TP Osso ka e ji agbanahu oyibo.
‘It is by running that one escapes from the Europeans’.
- PP Vum ka mma karja statementi.
‘Running (away) is better than (making) statement’.
9. TP Mba ji na-akarị nhurị/ihụ n’okụ.
‘Yam tuber is more than what could be roasted in fire’.
- PP Mba ji anaghị akarị nhurị; o karja, a waa ya awaa.
‘Yam tuber is not more than what could be roasted; if it is, it will be cut to pieces’.
10. TP Ikpe anaghị ama onye nna ya no n’ogbo okwu.
‘He is never guilty whose father sits in judgment’.
- PP Ikpe anaghị ama onye nnanna ya no n’ogbo okwu.
‘He is never guilty whose grandfather sits in judgment’.
11. TP O ji ihe nwata welie ya elu, aka lobe ya, o wetuo ya.
‘Whoever holds a child’s possession high up, as hand aches him, he lowers it’.
- PP O ji ihe nwata welie ya elu, nwata wulie elu nata ya ihe ya.
‘Whoever holds a child’s possession high up, let the child jump up and repossess his possession’.

TP of 5 is hinged on experience. Elders, traditionally, are wiser than their younger ones based on the experience they had gathered over years. The PP version is an aggressive confrontation towards the TP. With modernisation came globalisation. The advent of telephone and internet systems has brought so much exposure; the younger ones sit in a place and gather information on what happens the world over. To the younger generation, it is an edge over the traditional society. They see the information and experiences they gather the world over as surpassing what the elders who are not used to the internet experience will ever have, hence the PP. To an extent, the PP in this instance affirms an ancient Igbo proverb which say that *nwa-ta gapuru njem ka okenye isiawo ihe mara* 'a vast travelled child gains more experience than his elders'.

Data 6 TP is strongly based on Igbo traditional belief that except one's *chi* 'personal god' blesses his work; he will not prosper. Kinsmen are advised not to blame anyone who has put in his best without good result for it is only one's *chi* that has the final say in his productivity. PP shows that there is a shift in the traditional belief. To the present generation, there are multiple opportunities. All one needs is to try several things out. If one thing does not work, the other must work out. The younger generation disagrees with the original proverb by encouraging more work till one finds his footing. The belief of the younger generation is rooted in Christian belief that all things are possible with God. The belief in possibilities also aligns with the Igbo maxim that *onye kwe, chi ya ekwe* 'if one says yes, his *chi* consents'. The present generation totally disagrees with one ascribing his failure in life to the decision of his *chi* or *akaraaka ya* 'his destiny'.

TP 7 warns on premature celebration of victory. One cannot conclude a case till s/he gets to the very end. The proverb uses the imagery of *anya mkpo* 'blind eyes' and *onwu* 'death' metaphorically referred to as *ikwu ugwo o ji ala* 'pay the debt s/he owes the land' to drive home its point. This is to say that one cannot boast of complete sound health till one dies. Ill-health can show up at any time. PP renders same proverb in a different version but the meaning remains

intact. Both warn against premature celebration of victory. The Igbo contact with the British brought in some changes in Igbo society and worldviews. The British came in with their judicial system where the guilty is sometimes remanded in custody. British culture has come to stay and people are sometimes mistakenly remanded in custody. The PP thereby warns against untimely celebration. One will not rejoice or claim that he will never go to prison till death. The metaphorical use of *oyibo alara* 'British departure' here simply refers to death of British impact. Everyone knows that British tradition and developments have come to stay with the Igbo.

Both proverbs in Data 8 talk of wisdom and safety. The TP may in a way be considered as PP based on its use of the *Oyibo* 'British'. It is here considered as TP based on the fact that it has a new alternative. TP advises that it is wiser to run away from the British when one is not very sure of his stand. This is not to say that the Igbo delight in breaking the British law. The crux of the matter is that the British way of life was alien to Igbo traditional way of life. Some of the things the British counted as offences were not offences in Igbo tradition. They, the British, hardly listen to excuses when one goes against the law. The Igbo found a way to survive, and it is by avoiding danger in the first place through running away from anything that appears dangerous. PP renders same proverb in a different way which is more explanatory. The onomatopoeia '*vum*' and 'statement' are used in the PP. '*Vum*' here stands for running in full speed that can be likened to one disappearing in a dash. This type of run is advised so as to avoid long stories signified by, making of statement. '*Vum*' explains the type of running that is needed at present to avoid trouble.

TP 9 is centred on the limits one can afford to go in a situation. In traditional Igbo society, it is not every yam that is roasted. The smaller tubers are usually selected for roasting while the bigger ones are reserved. In every society, there are reservations. Contrary to the traditional belief expressed in TP, PP argues that when a yam is too big for roasting, one can cut it into pieces. Cutting a big yam into pieces before roasting makes it to roast faster and very well too. While TP

talks about value and respect, PP rendition is based on the surface meaning of TP; thereby running into the conclusion that there will always be a way out of every challenge.

TP 10 talks of one not being convicted as a result of his father being part of the jury. PP captures the present situation of things in the society. It is simply not enough for one to have his father as a representative. More powers/ strength are needed at present to get things done very well, hence the use of *nnanna* 'grandfather' as an advocate.

TP 11 is on oppression and timing. There is always a set limit one can go for anything. On the contrary, PP captures the contemporary society by stating clearly that there is no need to wait for time especially when one is justified in his action. One needs to collect what belongs to him or her immediately and move on with life instead of waiting for the oppressor to be tired before releasing it as TP states. The present generation count time more precious to them, that they do not see the need to waste it.

4.3. Proverbs on Basic Circumstances of Life

The last categories of proverbs are on basic circumstances of life. There are timeless truths in every society. One basic thing about the data under this category is that the proverbs are based on observations of daily human living. This common factor of observation of daily human living makes it hard to further subcategorise them, but attempt will be made to put together under one sub-category, proverbs that are more closely related in content. The sub-categories are: Proverbs based on overzealousness, making progress out of obstacles, and proverbs based on human experience.

4.4. Proverbs Based on Overzealousness

Some people are overzealous by nature. Their overzealousness is exhibited in all they do, be it wrong or right thing. Such nature is captured in proverbs. There are three proverbs under this category. They are:

12. TP Ofeke mụta ita atụ, osisi agwụ n'ohia.
 'As a loafer learns to chew chewy stick, trees get exhausted in the forest'.
 PP E mee onyeara kōndukto, o fegbuo onwe ya n'aka.
 'As a mad-fellow is made a bus conductor, he kills himself waving and flagging'.
13. TP(a) Ọ na-abụ onye erijughị afọ, ọ chọba nke o ji aba ọgaranya?
 'Does it fly that when one is yet to eat enough, he begins to seek for the much to become wealthy?'
 TP(b) Ọ na-abụ onye ejeghị ije ọ gbaba ọsọ?
 'Does it fly that when one is yet to walk, he begins to run?'
 PP Ọ na-abụ onye aṅubeghị tii ọ chọba ovatii?
 'Does it fly that when one is yet to drink ordinary tea, he begins to seek for ovaltine?'
14. TP E kwe okokporo nkwa nwaanyi ọ sị ya buru nke taa nke echi.
 'As a bachelor is promised a wife, he requests for it to be today or tomorrow'.
 PP E kwe ofeke nkwa poliisi, ọ gaa jidebe ndi mmadu.
 'As a loafer is promised police recruitment, he begins to arrest people'.

TP 12 talks about a loafer who pays no attention to certain issues of life but once his attention is drawn to it, he overdoes it. The imagery of *atụ* 'chewy stick' and *ohia* 'forest' are used to highlight the argument. In the traditional Igbo society, chewy sticks are used to brush the teeth. There are particular trees or plants one can get the chewy sticks from based on the fact that some plants and trees are not convertible to chewy sticks while others have poisonous substance. The proverb literally states that a loafer, who hardly brushes his teeth with the local brush – chewy stick- clears the bush by using every available stick to brush his teeth once he learns the need to brush. PP expands the TP by nothing that when a mad fellow who was already

used to talking to himself and gesticulating is made a conductor, he will definitely overdo it. Conductors are known to use hands to indicate to their passengers and intended passengers the direction they are headed and to flag down other vehicles to possibly manoeuvre or even attract attentions. While TP talks of someone who was not used to something learning and overdoing the thing, PP notes that someone might be used to something and still overdo it when given the opportunity to serve.

Both TP and PP 13 are in form of rhetorical questions. They both talk of taking one step before another. TP 10 (a) and (b) draw their imagery from *erijughị afo* 'one not having enough to eat/feed well' and *aba ogaranya* 'having surplus' that is, one having more than enough to flaunt as the rich do; *ejeghi ije* 'unable to walk', *gbaba oso* 'start running'. One must feed himself well before sparing the one he will show off. Likewise, one needs to take steps (walk) become stable on it before he starts running. TP talks about one mastering one step before taking another one. For PP, the images of *tii* 'tea' and *ovatii* 'ovaltine' are drawn to highlight the point. Different kinds of beverages are generally called tea in Nigerian context. Ovaltine used to be the costliest beverage under the umbrella of tea. One has to take the cheapest form of tea before thinking of the costliest one – Ovaltine. PP therefore has the same message as TP. Both proverbs used different imagery to drive home the same point.

TP and PP 14 both talk of overzealousness. TP draws its imagery from a bachelor *okokporo* while PP draws its from a loafer *ofeke*. A bachelor is a full grown man who is still single. In the traditional Igbo society, kinsmen support a bachelor who cannot get a wife for himself to do so. When such promise comes from kinsmen, a bachelor may demand that they hasten action. When such happens, one wonders who the bachelor was living with that he wants the move of getting a wife for him to be hastened. PP talks of a loafer who was promised a job to become a 'police officer'. A loafer had been jobless all his life but with the promise of a job of police recruitment, he starts arresting people without waiting to be recruited and duly

trained. Both proverbs used different imagery to say the same thing which is overdoing things as a result of zeal.

4.5. Proverbs Based on Making Progress out of Obstacles

Proverbs under this category are on how progress evolves out of supposed difficult situations. They are:

15. TP(a) Ukwu ọkpụkpọ, bụ mmapụ ije.
‘Dashing/Hitting one’s toe against a stump, is the commencement of movement/journey’.
- TP(b) Ukwu ọkpụkpọ nyeere Izaga aka n’ije.
‘Dashing/Hitting its toe against a stump, helped *Izaga* (masked dancer) in its movement/journey’.
- PP Ọkpa a gbara awọ bụ ikuku ka e nyere ya.
‘Kicking out a toad, is giving it air’.
16. TP O nweghị ihe mgbawa mere ike (naanị mma aka ọ chọrọ ya).
‘There is nothing breaking apart did to the buttock (it only beautified it)’.
- PP O nweghị ihe Okelekwu ga-eme iteona (ọ nọchaa, ọ pụtà).
‘There is nothing which a rat can do to a metal pot (it leaves after staying)’.
17. TP O nweghị ihe ikuku ga-eme ọdụigu (o bugharịchaa ya ọ hapụ ya).
‘There is nothing which air will do to the tail end of a palm frond (after flying it, it leaves it)’.
- PP O nweghị ihe okelekwu ga-eme akpa rice (ọ takata, ọ taa otu iko).
‘There is nothing which a rat will do to a bag of rice (where it eats so much, it will be one cup)’.
18. TP A gba nsị nkịtị ọ na-esi.
‘When faeces is ignored, it keeps stinking’.

- PP A gba ego nkịtị, ọ na-akparị onwe ya.
 ‘When money is ignored, it keeps insulting itself’.
19. TP(a) Awayi tọba ụtọ, a bachawanyekwuo ji.
 ‘When sauce begins to get piquant, more yam would be added to it’.
- TP(b) Ụra tọba ụtọ, e kwobe ya ekwo.
 ‘When sleep begins to get deep, one begins to snore’.
- PP(a) Ara tọba ụtọ, ọ gụba ndị isi dị mma iyipụ akwa.
 ‘When madness begins to get interesting, the sane would crave to strip naked’.
- PP(b) Akwunakwuna nyebe ego, ụmụ agboghọ amụta ịgba ọtọ.
 ‘When harlotry gets lucrative, damsels would learn to go nude’.

TP 15 is on one unknowingly hitting his toes on an obstacle. When such a thing happens, one can fall, or get injured, or both. No matter how it happens, it normally pushes the person forward. The choice remains either for the person to appreciate the forward movement or to lament on the fall, injured toe or both. The proverb in essence is saying that even an obstacle in one’s life can be of great advantage (it all depends on the way one takes it). Obstacles, when processed very well, make one gain wisdom which makes him/her to readjust and continue in his/her journey. TP 15(b) use the imagery of *Ịzaga* ‘a very tall masquerade’ and *ije* ‘journey’ to repeat the same proverb in another form. *Ịzaga* masquerade is not just tall and lean but it lacks balance from outward look that one might think that its fall will mark its end but observation has shown that hitting a stump on its way helps it to stabilize its movement. The proverbs show that obstacles help one readjust and continue in his/her life’s journey. PP 15 used the imagery of toad *awọ* and *Okpa a gbara* ‘a kick given to it’ to buttress its point. People do not deliberately kick a toad because it is not harmful in any way. Whoever kicks a toad does so to punish it. When such is done, it pushes the toad forward. PP 15 expands the TP by noting that even if one receives a kick from an enemy, it pushes the person

forward and faster than the person would have gone ordinarily. The proverb is considered as a PP based on the fact that in time past, no one has the time to kick such animals.

TP 16 looks at what was to be an obstacle from a positive lens. Natal clefts are sometimes seen as disadvantageous. The natal cleft would have been taken as a disadvantage but since it does not disturb the bodily function, it is rather taken as a work of art by the creator to beautify the buttocks. This is to say that sometimes, what is seen physically as a disadvantage can be considered from another perspective so as to see the positive side of it. The imagery of *mgbawa ike* 'split in the buttocks' is used to represent the supposed disadvantage while *mma* 'beauty' is used to represent the good and beautiful side of it. Rodents, *okelekwu*, are not in any way considered pets. They destroy foodstuff and other valuables. One can also contract diseases through them. PP draws its imagery from rodents *okelekwu* and *iteona* 'cast iron pot'. Although rodents can eat up foodstuff in the kitchen, there is absolutely nothing it can do to cast iron pot due to its make. The iron pot continues to be used for its purpose of cooking and preservation, no matter the number of rats that run around it. The proverb in essence is saying that what appears a great challenge at the surface level is not always so. Some supposed challenges are not really what they appear to be.

TP 17 is very similar to TP 16. Both talk about turbulence or challenges of life. TP 17 notes that even though a great wind shakes the tip of a palm frond violently, the palm frond will remain, standing very strong. Most often, challenges do not last forever. Challenges do their worst and the person continues to face his/her life stronger. PP aligns with TP by expanding the TP. PP uses the imagery of rodent and a bag of rice to buttress its point. PP notes that a rodent is limited to what it can do to a bag of rice. The proverb shows that even when one loses something in the face of a challenge, the person will still have some great things to his/her advantage. The presence of a challenge is not the end of life itself.

TP 18 draws its imagery from *nsi* 'faeces' and *isi* 'offensive odour'. In the traditional Igbo society, before contact with the British, peo-

ple pass faeces in bushes. Sand is used to cover such so as to minimise the odour. Sometimes, mischievous people leave their faeces uncovered thereby exposing others to offensive odour from it. All one needs to do in such situation is to heap sand on the faeces and the odour will go down. Applying the proverb to human life, every problem has a solution. Just like the open faeces that one can leave and complain about the offensive odour, or heap sand on it so that the odour goes, so is life. One can go about complaining of his problems or move an extra mile to get solution to it. The argument in PP falls in line with TP. Both talk of doing something about a problem. PP draws its imagery from *ego* 'money', *nkiti* 'silence' and *mkpari* 'insult'. When one is silent, that is, not making serious efforts towards getting money, he/she will not get it. The poor is often insulted. The present generation believes that there are more opportunities or avenues open for people to get wealth. Therefore, one needs not keep 'silence' about getting money. One needs to push very hard so as to get it and thereby insult money instead of money insulting him or her.

The imagery in TP 19(a) is drawn from the Igbo chief crop – yam. Yam can be cooked in different ways but it takes a good cook to prepare yam porridge for it may come out sweet (with the right ingredients at the right time) or not too sweet. Whenever it turns out sweet, in the process, more yam can be added so that it goes round. For TP 19(b), *ura* 'sleep' is the imagery used. One's sleep may be cool and sweet as a result of peace of mind and it may not as a result of worry. It is only when the sleep is sweet that one can snore. The point in the proverbs is that when a process is smooth, it naturally attracts addition. PPs follow the same pattern by drawing imagery from sane and insane, harlots and gentle/ cultured ladies. Some mad people go naked in streets, hence, the saying that when madness gets sweet, the sane feels like removing their clothes. Here, the proverb is used metaphorically to refer to how the responses of people when the going is good and smooth can be. Harlots are also known for dressing almost naked so as to expose their bodies and attract patronage. It follows that when harlotry gives money, it attracts other ladies to go

into the business. Both TP and PP say the same thing in different forms. A good progress attracts additional ones.

4.6. Proverbs Based on Daily Human Experience

Although proverbs are created from daily observations, some talk more specifically on daily human experiences. Some of such proverbs will be considered under this category.

20. TP Ọ bughị e lee anya n'agwu, mmiri ezobe.
 'It is not the moment motive deity is gazed at, it begins to rain'.
PP Ọ bughị e pushuo, a nuba ozigbo.
 'It is not the moment one is pushed, a fight ensues'.
21. TP(a) A ma ka okochi adila, otu ga na-asariri utu ahụ.
 'No matter how severe the dry season may get, the vagina must bathe the penis'.
TP(b) A ma ka ochichiri agbala, utu ga-ahuriri etu o siri ba n'otu.
 'No matter how dark the night may get, penis must find its way into the vagina'.
PP A ma ka moto ejuna, efe ga-adiriri n'оче draiva.
 'No matter how filled a vehicle may get, there must be a space at the driver's seat'.
22. TP. Ogwu di ire, ogwu adighi ire, nwadibia ga-ala.
 'Whether the medicine is potent or not potent, the medicine man will go'.
PP Ncha gbogo ncha agboghi, nwa Miisi ga-asariri ahụ.
 'Whether the soap foams or not foam, a Miss must take her bath'.
23. TP Agwa na-aka mma, ma eke tuo ya.
 'Stripes/colour are better, when a python bears it'.
PP Abada nwere onye o na-ekwesị.
 'Wrapper has whom it befits'.

24. TP Agwọ emeghị ihe o jiri bụrụ agwọ, ụmụaka ewere ya kee nkụ.
 ‘If a snake fails to do what makes it a snake, children will use it to tie a bundle of wood’.
- PP Nwoke emeghị ihe o jiri bụrụ nwoke, ụmụ nwaanyi ememinaa ya.
 ‘If a man fails to do what makes him a man, women will finish him’.
25. TP Onye ańụ gbara, ọ hụ okporokoiiji ya na ọsọ ana-eme.
 ‘A person stung by bee, when he sees a housefly he takes to his heels’.
- PP Onye onyeara gburu nna ya, ọ hụ mekaniiki ya na ọsọ ana-eme.
 ‘A person whose father was killed by a madfellow, when he sights a mechanic takes to his heels’.
26. TP A gbachaa egu, ọ laa n’ukwu.
 ‘After dancing, it returns to the waist’.
- PP A gbachaa ọsọ, a guọ mailụ.
 ‘After a race, the miles are counted’.
27. TP(a) Nwaanyi sie ajọ nri, ọ sị na ya siri ihe dị ya mma.
 ‘If a woman cooks a bad meal, she says that she cooked what she likes’.
- TP(b) Ogori sijoọ, ọ na-eri ka ọ tọka.
 ‘If a woman cooks badly, she eats as though it is very delicious’.
- PP Kapinta mebie ọrụ ọ sị na ọ bụ staaịlụ.
 ‘If a carpenter works badly, he says that it is a style’.
28. TP Ọ na-abụ a na-agwọ nsi oddanya a na-aghanye ogbeku/ose?
 ‘Is it as medicine for eye is being prepared, one pours pepper into it?’
- PP Ọ na-abụ onye a na-agwọ ara, ọ na-ese ígbō?

‘Is it as a madfellow is being cured, he engages in hemp smoking?’

29. TP Ihe ọ sọrọ gị mee onye ụkwụaru, ọ ghaghị ite egwu.
 ‘Whatever you wish do it to a lame person, he must not fail to dance’.
- PP Ihe ọ sọrọ gị mee onye ada baişikụlụ ọ ga-abọriri ike.
 ‘Whatever you wish do it to a person who falls from a bicycle, he must project his anus’.

TP and PP 20 both talk of the need to wait patiently for something to work out naturally. TP draws its imagery from a deity/spirit force that is in charge of rain *agwu* (*mmiri*). The proverb notes that rain does not start falling immediately one looks at *agwu*. There are due processes to follow to charm the rain before it falls. PP sounds more like a warning, by noting that one does not engage in a fight immediately one is pushed. There is need to wait and find out the reason behind the ‘push’ before one concludes on what to do. Both proverbs are on patience and on following due process in getting things done.

TP and PP 21 state a basic truth from daily human experience. TP ‘a’ and ‘b’ state the same thing in different forms. Both draw their imagery from the vagina and penis. No matter how severe the dry season is, nature has made it that the vagina must lubricate the penis during coitus. No matter how thick the darkness, it is natural for the penis to find its way into the vagina once there is a mutual agreement. The proverbs are saying that some problems naturally carry in themselves, their solutions. PP uses the imagery of a driver and a car to state the same thing in TP. No matter how fully packed a car is, the driver’s seat must remain vacant for him; if not, the vehicle will not move. Nature always creates a space or solution.

Both TP and PP 22 state a constant truth. Once one does what is within his or her ability, he or she moves forward in life. TP draws imagery from the sick and the traditional/native doctor. The native doctor does his part in administering medication to his patient. Once he has done his best, he goes home. The failure of the medication

will not in any way stop the native doctor. PP tows same line by using the imagery of a lady teacher *nwa miisi* and *ncha* 'soap'. All the teacher does is to do her best in teaching the pupils who are taught to acquire knowledge. That the dullards fail in the examination will not stop the teacher from receiving her salary. Here, soap, which naturally should foam at laundry is used to represent the pupils. Despite the fact that soaps foam during laundry, one can admit that some do not foam. That soap does not foam will not stop the laundry nor the one using it to bath from making progress in what he/she is doing. Progress must be made. This is to say that once one does his/her best, he leaves the result to nature.

TP and PP 23 state the obvious; certain positions are naturally designed for some people or things. The spots on a python is used as the imagery for natural endowment in TP. It is always better for one to stick to his/her nature. Any attempt to copy does not always look real. PP used a wrapper as an image to draw attention to same point. Everybody/human ties a wrapper but there are people it naturally fits very well. This is also an indirect way of saying that some people are naturally bestowed with certain gifts. Copying them will never yield same result.

TP and PP 24 use different imagery for the same point. TP notes that one must maintain his position of power so that he will not be reduced through insult. The imagery of a snake and children are used here. Nobody ordinarily touches or plays with a snake. Snakes are not pets in Igbo society. They strike once they are touched knowingly or unknowingly. They even strike when they are not touched and most of them have poisonous venoms that might send one to an early grave. Their strength lies in their ability to defend themselves through striking a supposed enemy. When a snake is dormant, it is overpowered and used in a degrading manner especially by those who would not have drawn near it in its natural state. Snake stands for wisdom, power and tact while children stand for immaturity and inexperience. Looking at the PP from a surface perspective, one may raise questions on why it is graded as PP. The proverb here is taken as

PP based on the fact that in the traditional Igbo society, a neat line is drawn on the expectations from men and women. With the advent of feminism, some women overstepped their bounds by disregarding men, hence, the proverb. If a man neglects or downplays his authority as the head, women will take him for granted. The PP shows to a large extent that some Igbo men have not shifted grounds on their belief in a patriarchal society.

Both TP and PP 25 used some imagery to drive home same point. The imagery for TP are honey bees and big houseflies. For PP, they are a mad person and a mechanic. Honey bees and big houseflies are both flying insects. They have same nature when you see them from a distance. One can mistakenly take one of them to be the other. The proverb is saying that once one is hurt by a particular object, anything that appears like the source of the hurt received earlier keeps the person on the run. PP says exactly the same thing using mechanics who dress like mad people to drive home same point.

TP 26 notes that there is always a result for every action. Imagery of dance and waist are used in the proverb. In the traditional Igbo setting, the women bend and shake their waists very well as they dance. At the end of the day, most of them end up having waist pains. The proverb notes that every action has its reactions. PP uses 'race' and 'mile' to buttress same point in TP. When one must have engaged himself with some actions, he will later settle down to take an inventory of his act. Such inventory will act as a check for some other time.

TP 27 (a) and (b) used the imagery of woman and food to highlight its point. Here, instead of one to admit his or her mistake, s/he decided to cover up through pretence. In the traditional Igbo society, women do the cooking for the families. Sometimes, the cooking might not turn out very good as planned. When such happens, the woman might cover up by stating that she cooked the style or type she loves. She might also act it out by eating the food and pretending that it is the best while in actual sense, she knows that it is not. PP says the same thing in another form using the imagery of a carpenter. At times, a carpenter might miss the exact structure of the work

he wants to do and turn out to claim that it is a unique style. Both proverbs are on pretence as a cover up.

In TP and PP 28, one making more complex, an already existing problem is buttressed. TP uses the imagery of eye medicine and pepper to draw attention to contradictions and one complicating an already existing problem. Ordinarily, one does not take pepper near the eyes, not to think of a situation where a solution is being sought for an eye problem. Adding pepper to the eye in a bid to soothe it is just a way of multiplying the problem. PP says same thing using the imagery of madness medication and a specie of harmful drug known as *ìgbó* 'hemp' or 'marijuana'. An intake of *ìgbó* is enough to get someone mad. The two- *ìgbó* and madness medication- cannot go together. Whoever is being cured of madness and the person goes on to take *ìgbó* 'hemp' shows that the person never plans to get well. PP therefore talks of one who is being rendered some help but instead of cooperating with the helpers, the person goes on to make his or her problem more complex. Both proverbs say the same thing with different imagery.

TP 29 brings to fore that some people by nature can never reciprocate any good done to them. The imagery of *ùkwù arù* 'disfigured feet' and *ite egwu* 'dancing' are used to illustrate the point. By nature, disfigured feet always shake. It is the shaking that is referred to as *ite egwu* 'dancing'. No matter what you do for such a person, his/her nature must show up. The PP equivalent passes the message by the use of such modern imagery as *baisikulu* 'bicycle' and *ìbòrìrì ike* 'compulsory projecting of anus'. By nature, when a cyclist falls, he bends well to mount his bicycle. The way a cyclist bends before mounting his bicycle can be equated to the position one takes to moon. That someone helped him or her to lift his bicycle in a fall will not stop him from mounting the bicycle the natural way it is done, thereby projecting his buttocks in an insulting manner to the helper by nature and not by choice. Both TP and PP use different imagery to talk of people who are ingrates by nature.

One thing common with original proverbs is that it uses traditional imagery to drive home its point. The imagery include agricultural

product like yam TP 1 and 9, and cash crops, which are brought under the umbrella of trees TP 5, 12, 17, 18. Igbo traditional religion is not left out in the Proverbs TP 3, 6 and 20. Proverbs 22,23,24,28 reflect the Igbo belief.

Postproverbials draw their imagery from contemporary society. The imagery includes loan words like *kwaya* 'choristers', *gradueti*, 'graduates' *stetimenti* 'statements', *kondokuto* 'conductor', *tii* 'tea' *ovatii* 'ovaltine' *poliisi* 'police', *raisi* 'rice' *puushu* 'push', *moto* 'motor' *draj-va* 'driver' *miisi* 'miss' *mekaniiki* 'mechanic', *mailu* 'mile', and *kapinta* 'carpenter'. All these images bring to fore, the Igbo contact with Europeans and after effect of the contact. Whenever two languages have contact, the effect of the contact is reflected in language. The youths use the postproverbials as a result of the changes in the society. The changes are empowered by westernisation and globalisation. The modern imagery used in PP establish them as postproverbials.

A very close look at both TP and PP shows that 72% of the proverbs say the same thing but in different ways by using different imagery. The proverbs are:1, 2,4, 7, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, and 29. PP 3, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 17 which constitute 24% of the data modified the original proverbs by expanding the meaning. The remaining 3% which is PP 5 modified the original proverb by reversing it.

One thing common with Igbo proverbs is that they have alternatives. Examples of TP with alternatives are TP 13, 15, 19, 21 and 27. Data show that PP tow the same line as PP 2 and 19 have alternatives.

A general look at the data shows that PPs tow the pattern of the TPs by not only making use of imagery but by creating alternative proverbs. PPs also modified the original ones either by expanding them or by reversing them if need be to showcase the present situation. The ability to modify shows great creativity. Mandziuk (2017) notes that:

... modified proverbs express cultural changes, they breathe new life into the traditional adages. One thing seems certain: all of us, as active language speakers, are capable of creating and shaping the paremiological future by bringing old proverbs up to date. (p. 14)

The Igbo postproverbials fall in line with the above excerpt. The new imagery in PPs show cultural changes and inject new life into the TPs. PPs equally show creativity. The society is always evolving. Daniel (2016, p. 74) admits that “no society can be static; static societies are dead.” The use of new imagery makes it easier for the younger generation to gain wisdom and understanding. PPs recreate some ideas and images that are obsolete in the present generation thereby making them useful. Raji-Oyelade and Oyeleye (2019) summarise that the postproverbial agency serves as a bridge linking the old to the new without necessarily ditching the old. It mediates the new and the old serving as a link, a means that makes two ends meet (p. 233).

The above assertion is very true of Igbo postproverbials. The typical PP gives room for the younger ones to create and use proverbs based on their own experiences, but without neglecting the pattern of the original proverbs. The youths among the interviewees attest to the foregoing discussion by noting that *egwu gbara n'anya azi ka azi na-ete* ‘every generation dances to the music of their time’. The present generation relates with the changes they met. It is based on what is obtainable in their time that the youths use PP in their conversations especially in informal settings. They hold in high esteem, anyone who applies the proverbs in his conversation. They consider such a person as a good spokesman and as a true son of Igbo. Even though the youths attest to the fact that the sole use of PP may make their generation forget the traditional proverbs, they insist that PP is easier to use, makes for a better understanding and it is more euphemistic. An example was cited with TP 21, where the verbal taboos *utu* ‘penis’ and *otu* ‘vagina’ were replaced with driver and motor. The proverb sounds better in the ears of the youths and the meaning of

the proverb remains intact despite the replacement of the traditional images in it with modern ones.

Some older interviewees have some reservations on the use of PPs. To them, if the younger ones continue at this rate, everything about the Igbo proverbs may be lost. TP retains the Igbo culture. Most of them opine that though the youths use PP among themselves, they should learn the TP so that there will be continuity.

5. Conclusion

This study focused on original Igbo proverbs and their new variants known as postproverbials. The Igbo spice their speech with proverbs. The right application of proverbs is a mark of good oratory. A look at the postproverbials shows that they follow the pattern of original proverbs. They both make use of imagery to drive home their points. They are both filled with wisdom. Each of the proverbs draw experiences from its environment. They are both concise which makes them easy to memorise.

Data show that 72% of the postproverbials are equivalents of the traditional ones. This shows that the younger generation follow closely the footprints of their forebears. The only difference is their use of imagery of their time to illustrate their points. The creation of the equivalents makes it easier for the younger generation to understand the folk wisdom. The researchers advocate that both original proverbs and their post proverbial variants should be documented. Having variants of a proverb is not new to Igbo language. Such documentations will help the Igbo to retain the old as well as accommodate the new. Through such documentation, the Igbo will not miss the rich cultural heritage that is expressed in proverbs. It will also go a long way in using the PPs to teach the TPs; that is, using the new to teach the old.

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DAMOLA ADEYEFA

TOWARDS A METHODOLOGY FOR TRANSLATING AFRICAN POSTPROVERBIALS

Abstract: The global emergence of deconstructing conventional proverbs in African native languages is a growing discourse among researchers, most especially in the African sociolinguistic space. Most deconstructed and reconstructed proverbs known as postproverbials in African native languages are not carefully translated into European languages in a way to help the target audience note and mark the point of postproverbiality. Thus, the translation of African postproverbial expressions into European languages calls for a translatorial methodology that will bring to the fore the point of semantic and structural distinctions between the source proverb and postmodernist postproverbial. To point out the distinctions, it is significant that postproverbial expressions in translation should reflect the purpose of the source postproverbial in the target context, the function of the translated postproverbial in the target situation, and loyalty (of the translation) to the intention of the source postproverbial in the target context. Adopting translation function and loyalty and typologies of postproverbial as its theoretical thrust, the study draws purposively selected proverbial and postproverbial data (in a Nigerian native language, Yoruba) from *Playful Blasphemies: Postproverbials as Archetypes of Modernity in Yoruba Culture* (Raji-Oyelade, 2012) and two inaugural lectures presented at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria, to propose a methodology for translating African postproverbials into European languages such as French and English.

Keywords: Postproverbial, African Postproverbial, Methodology for Translating Proverb, Translating African Postproverbial

Résumé: Cette communication porte sur une méthodologie de traduction des proverbes postmodernistes, connus sous le nom de *postproverbial*, des langues autochtones africaines en langues européennes. Le postproverbial s'adonne à la déconstruction et reconstruction des proverbes conventionnels et la problématique de cette manipulation des proverbes tra-

ditionnels aussi que leurs traductions, deviennent un discours croissant parmi les chercheurs, particulièrement dans l'espace sociolinguistique africain. La plupart des proverbes qui sont déconstruits et reconstruits dans les langues autochtones africaines ne sont pas soigneusement traduits dans les langues européennes de manière à aider le public cible à noter et à marquer le point de postproverbalité. Ainsi, la traduction d'expressions postproverbiales africaines dans les langues européennes nécessite une méthodologie traductionnelle qui mettra en évidence les distinctions sémantiques et structurelles entre le proverbe source et le postproverbial (le proverbe postmoderniste). Pour souligner les distinctions, il est important que les expressions postproverbiales en traduction reflètent l'objectif du postproverbial source dans le contexte cible, la fonction du postproverbial traduit dans le milieu cible, et la fidélité (de la traduction) à l'intention du postproverbial source dans le contexte cible. En adoptant *Function+Loyalty* et les typologies du postproverbial, cette étude tire quelques proverbes et postproverbiaux de la langue yoruba (une langue autochtone nigériane) de *Playful Blasphemies: Postproverbials as Archetypes of Modernity in Yoruba Culture* (Raji-Oyelade, 2012) et deux conférences inaugurales présentées à l'Université d'Ibadan, Nigeria, pour proposer une méthodologie de traduction des postproverbiaux africains en langues européennes telles que le français et l'anglais.

Mots-clés: Postproverbe, postproverbial africain, méthodologie de traduction des proverbes, traduction du postproverbial

1. Introduction: Morphological Interpretation of Owe (Proverb) and its Significance in Translation

The English word “proverb” and “proverbe” in French is *Òwe* in Yoruba. A morphological breakdown of *Òwe* brings to the fore other conceptual interpretations. According to Owomoyela (2005), *Òwe* is derived from the contracted form of “ò-wé e” which means something that wraps another thing. The root then, “wé”, refers to the verb, “pack”. The “ò” preceding “wé” remains a Yoruba prefix often responsible for converting a verb to a name in Yoruba lexicology. The final word in the string, “e”, placed immediately after a conjugated verb ending with “e”, is a direct object pronoun. The “wé e” becomes con-

tracted into “we”: the “e” is added to the contraction, since Yoruba is known as a tonal language. The “Ò-wé e” then becomes “òwe” through daily contraction and condensation. The above morphological interpretation conceives proverb as a linguistic phenomenon that wraps, conceals or condenses societal sayings. Fashina (2008:314) brings this conception into line when he imagines proverb as “a condensed text which embeds a whole gamut of historical, cultural and moral narrative with intent for didactic values as a school of philosophical thought...It is also a reflection of the collapse of “forms” which have been immanent in Africa orate cultural and moral traditions since antiquity”. Another morphological interpretation emerging from its verbal form *fiwé* suggests comparing one thing with another. This is broken down into *fi* (i.e., using one thing to...) and *wé* (compare with something else). Though not all proverbs are metaphorical in content, “òwe”, from a metaphorical point of view, is virtually a form of discourse that makes comparisons between things or situations, accentuating similarities and differences shared by such two entities.

African proverbs are marked with terse and laconic expressions rich in figuration (Hulme 1968; Meider 1985; Owomoyela 2005). African cultures are deeply rooted in the frequent use of proverbs and those who are good at using proverbs in Africa are rated as resourceful and intelligent in their society (Ajunwa 2014). Hence, African people tend to embellish their speech with proverbial aesthetics. Most postmodern alternative proverbs known as postproverbials in African native languages are not carefully translated into European languages in a way to help the target audience note and mark the point of postproverbiality. Thus, the translation of African postproverbial expressions into European languages calls for a translatorial methodology that will bring to the fore the point of semantic and structural distinctions between the universal proverb and postmodernist proverb. To point out the distinctions, this study hypothesises that postproverbial expressions in translation should reflect the purpose of the source postproverbial in the target language, the function of the translated postproverbial in the target situation, and loyalty (of

the translation) to the purpose of the source postproverbial in the target context.

2. *Redefining African Postproverbial*

Modern proverbs, purposively conceived as proverbs that “originated no earlier than 1900” (Doyce and Mieder 2022) are remarkably gaining ascendancy in African paremiology assuming different name such as Owe *Lawuwo* (Lawuwo’s proverbs) (Alaba 1986), Postproverbials (Raji-Oyelade 1999), Proverbial (Ojo 2013), Deviant proverbs (Olateju 2016). The global emergence of postproverbials and Africanist deconstruction of African native traditional proverbs tend to cut across African cultures in form of cultural contrast and transition. Postproverbial condition is a burgeoning subject among scholars, most especially in African paremiology. This has led to the recent categorisation of African postmodernist proverbs by Aderemi Raji-Oyelade (2012) in a bid to have an analytical classification of their forms and manifestations. Postproverbials appear to deconstruct and reword the conventional proverbial ordering shifting the “paradigm and ethics of living in a changing world order” (Fashina 2008:314). Postproverbial, as a terminology, describes “all variants of twists and ruptures of traditional proverbs and tropes in postmodern and postcolonial thoughts” (Fashina 2008:314). The interaction of a people with language and culture of other societies changes man’s way of life and worldview. This is because language does not only function as a medium of communicating and exchanging ideas, it is an intrinsic cultural element of a people (Bamgbose 1995; Ayele-ru 2019). Like every other proverbial variant, postproverbial evinces subversive conditions of traditional proverbial order as a significant feature of a people’s culture.

Postproverbial is a slant evidence of a new order of proverb resulting from the phenomena of cultural mixture and change relating to all things among African contemporary youths. Blaise Pascal’s position that *Rein n’est pur qui écarte le mélange de tout, dirai-je que la vraie pureté se fout de toute pureté*. “There is no purity without

mixture of all other things, I will say that true purity damns absolute purity” (Blaise Pascal 1970 cited and translated by Ibitokun 2008:29), and Tchicaya U Tam’si’s, the Congo-Brazavillois poet, argument that “there is no perfect, unalloyed culture in any human community” (1970 cited by Ibitokun 2008:29). The above postulations underscore postproverbial dynamism as against insinuations that postproverbial is full of profanity, violation and desecration of cultural tradition. This goes to reinstate that “...man is a symptom of contrastive cultures, one of which is or may be predominant in him”...This is to say that every being is a pot-pourri of cultures (Ibitokun 2008:29), the contemporary African youths not exempted.

This proves that young people’s linguistic and creative imaginations vis-à-vis their social realities inform recent changes in African traditional proverbs in form of postproverbials. It is apposite to note that contemporary African’s (inter)action with the globalised society instigates culturo-linguistic proverbial transformations and changes.

Buttressing the aforementioned fact and inferring from sociologists such as Karl Marx and Max Weber, Fashina (2008:310) asserts that “[E]very society in the world constantly undergo changes in all facets of life.” Balogun (2019:15), in his inaugural lecture, also reiterates human intrinsic attitude to changes imposed by a synergy of condition and environment:

Human is inherently a cultural being. This stems from the fact that she has the attitude of always changing her situation and environment. More so, human is a gregarious animal that identifies herself amid others and this social interaction is mostly guided by distinct principles that have evolved overages. Culture evolves from social interaction and humans cannot but live in a social setting, hence necessitating culture.

As cultural being, human linguistic conditions are ultimately conjoined with social interrelation which is also subjected to unceasing changes. From the foregoing, postproverbial, as a linguistic figure, is a manifestation of human coexistence, linguistic interplay and social

changes budding from the complexity of cultures. The contraction and *mélange* of cultures metamorphosed into linguistic novelties such as postproverbials.

Ibitokun (2008:29), delivering the 1st Faculty Distinguished Lecture in the University of Ibadan, has earlier underpinned the synergy between language and culture when he notes “that Language is culture, and culture, the material product of an immaterial, spiritual essence is like “the word”, a buoyant, unstable, and secretive commodity to be bought, sold and haggled over the fleeting world of man”. While culture is changing and transitory, language as an intrinsic feature of a culture as well as the tangible product of a culture reproduces new expressions. Language is the barter with which culture is being exchanged to accommodate experiential nuisances emerging from the changing world of human society. Language, therefore, is a tangible expression of the intangible changes in the culture of a people. I, therefore, argue that the rupture of African traditional proverbs as a result of African-European *culturo-linguistic* interfaces transcends “playful blasphemies” (See Raji-Oyelade 1999); rather, it accounts for thoughtful transformation that are hinged on and influenced by *mélange* of cultures. Postproverbial, as:

Transgressive paremiology is the study of innovations and transformations in contemporary proverb scholarship. Its crucial interest is to deal with significant structural violence done to traditional or conventional proverbs, the deconstruction of the idiomatic pathogen of the conventional utterance which invariably affects its meaning, transmitted knowledge and the overarching philosophy of life. (Raji-Oyelade 2022: 228)

This cultural transcendent polemic is understood through semantic deciphering of postproverbial difference. Thus, the sociology, ideology and philosophy of postproverbialism as a cultural phenomenon are situated in the understanding of their meaning. African youths are stringing distinctive witty sayings from contemporary phenomena in their world space; contemporary Africans are relieving them-

selves from the stresses of anachronistic connotations of elsewhere semiotic traditions and conventions, and provoking new proverbial entities that are having equal comparative tendencies as the ancients; and postproverbial data are cutting across African cultures. It appears proverbial fixities are assuming novel (de)representations embedded sometimes in comic expressions in the world of contemporary young people. It is needless to talk of interculturality in form of ethnolinguistic inter-proverbiality.

Postproverbial realities are challenging the rigidity, traditionality and fixity of conventional proverbs. As Raji-Oyelade 2022: 228 states:

To be sure, conventional proverbs have never been dismissed as jaded, outworn or clichés in spite of their ubiquitous and repetitive use. Yet, the human penchant for creativity, modernist or iconoclastic energies, coupled with a critical detachment from the heritage of traditional wisdom, have questioned the sacrosanct status of the proverbial text in culture.

The dynamism of language accounts for postproverbial transformations in the linguistic space. African cultural expansionism is attracting proverbial potpourri in form of linguistic contribution to postmodernism. New proverbs intrinsically linked with traditional proverbs are invented; they are addressing the demands of how to express contemporary situational thoughts and ideas. The advance of proverbial conversions is assuming “new normal” for the benefit of the unborn. Postproverbial creations develop into a channels of reliefs from the stresses associated with the African postcolonial condition. The foregoing necessitates methodological indices for translating postproverbial corpus in paremiological studies; that is, bringing out postproverbial functions in interlingual translations in a way that it stands out from orthodox proverbs both in language and in meaning.

My views above, as rhetorics, are epistemological interrogations of conceptual imagination such as the following: Are rigidity, traditionality, and fixity of conventional proverbs being challenged? Is

dynamism of language trait being provoked into the linguistic space vis-à-vis proverbialisation? Are we driving towards proverbial pot-pourri in form of linguistic contribution to postmodernism? Are we having new proverbs intrinsically from the contemporary world addressing the demands of contemporary situational *sententiae*? Are postproverbials assuming futuristic “new normal” for the unborn? Can we see postproverbial creations as a “channels of “reliefs” from the stresses associated with the African postcolonial condition? And lastly, what are the necessary methodological indices of translating postproverbial corpus in research? The last question is the focus of this paper, which is, bringing out postproverbial functions in interlingual translations in a way that it stands out from orthodox proverbs both in language and in meaning.

3. Language and Meaning in Translation

A language is born from a conglomeration of words which are used to communicate meaning. These words are derived from ethno-cultural inferences. That is why Ong (1982: 47) asserts that, “[W]ords acquire their meaning only from their always insistent actual habitat, which is not as in a dictionary, simply other words, but includes also gestures, vocal reflections, facial expression, and the entire human existential setting in which the real, spoken word always occurs”. Language is a product of sociocultural inferences evincing meanings from human continual interaction with his environment. Alexander brings out the symbiotic relationship between language and meaning when he defines language as “a unified system of symbols conventionally agreed among its user to permit a sharing of meaning” (Alexander 2008: 9). Language associations are logically and predictably strung out of human experiences to account for the dilemma of meaning. Alexander (2008: 9) notes that,

human language is a system of symbols or representation of things, such that the words it employs to communicate stand for things but are not themselves things and the meaning of these symbols are inside people’s head, where they are asso-

ciated with, and shaped to some extent by, individual experiences.

Language as a symbolic representation of social phenomena engages the medium of wording to evince meaningful communications.

The interpretations of meaning are not in the symbolic representations of the social phenomena but are from the human inferences from the cognitive realm. This makes meaning to be difficult and diverse in interpretation, application and classification. As a result, the complexity becomes deeper when meaning involves figurative expressions (such as proverbial and postproverbial) and interpretation is predisposed to secondary associations. This suggests that proverbial figures can assume new meanings and shift an understanding of conceptual paradigm. This explains why proverbs are demanding vis-à-vis meaning explication hence proverbial meaning fixity is a mirage. It could, therefore, be reinstated that, “[P]roverb is an ever-growing phenomenon as far as language is involved in its enunciation, which allows meaning transfer from a recognized domain to a newly found one. Proverbs as cultural icons are capable of disrupting earlier assumptions or meaning by creating novel ways of understanding the human societies” (Oripeloye & Araroba 2018:115).

In postproverbial translation, therefore, meaning transfer becomes a very challenging factor. The target readership should be able to deduce the purposeful meaning embedded in the source postproverbial message translated into their language. In meaning transfer, it is important that a translator of a postproverbial familiarises himself with the knowledge of “why the text is written in the first place and why it needs to be translated, for who and for what purpose, that is, the relevance to target reader” (Samuel Kolawole, 2019:58). This calls for breaking linguistic elements of translation into units.

4. Translation Segmentation

Swiss Linguist Ferdinand de Saussure observes in linguistic term that a unit of *sign* contains *signifier* and *signified*. While the signifier

refers to the word, which is the combination of sounds that produce meanings, the signified refers to the concept. The signifier exists in the real world and the signified in the sense/concept. In translation, one needs to consistently be conscious that a unit of translation can signify a word, phrase (group), clause or sentence that refers to a particular sense or concept. This implies that a sign in form of word, phrase, clause or a sentence could form a unit of translation. In translation, it is dangerous to rely absolutely on structural arrangement of linguistic signs as unit of translation at the expense of a specific idea or to completely ignore the structural arrangement for predilection of meaning. Although there may be superimposition of ideas, there exists a distinct idea which brings out a specific point of view through structural representation. Hence, scholars, such as Vinay and Darbelnet (1958), have argued that the unit of translation should not only be seen from mere linguistic letterings, but should be considered from both the *lexicological unit* and the *unit of thought*. Though a unit of thought, lexicological unit and unit of translation sometimes convey the same concept, what separates them from one another is the point of view through which one examines a word or words. For instance, lexicological unit comprises lexical units which are used to form units of thoughts while a unit of thought refers to a conglomerate of lexicons that accounts for an idea.

Though unit of translation is subsumed under functional, semantic, dialectic and prosodic (Vinay and Darbelnet 1958), it is crucial to note that functional unit accounts for syntactic structure as well as the unit of thought, while semantic unit is concerned with the unit of meaning. Thus, a postproverbial translator must pay a close attention to both syntactic and semantic implications in order to achieve loyalty and functionality in terms of style, structure and content of a postproverbial in translation. Structurally, “a postproverbial sentence contains two proverbemes or clauses, being two linguistic units of the utterance, one serving as the main, signal clauses and the other operating as the completing clause of the text. The basic pattern of transformation is such that structural twist generally occurs at the

second clause of a typical traditional proverb” (Raji-Oyelade, 1999: 52). For a good and meaningful translation of African postproverbial that marks out the point of clausal deviation, the syntactico-semantic consciousness apparently calls for attention. This determines a translator’s loyalty and interlingual ability to transfer the intention and function of the postproverbial into the target milieu.

5. Imagining Translation Function and Loyalty

The aim of a proverbial translation is to produce a target text that will not betray the purpose and function of the source proverb in the target context. The target audience need to know that they are reading a foreign proverb in their own language. In translating African postproverbial, a researcher has to be loyal to the source proverb on one hand, and make the proverb to function understandably in the target language on the other hand. The irreconcilable loyalty difference in the two main approaches to translation as in either to translate literally or freely lasted for a very long time in the history of translation:

From Cicero, who made a distinction between translating “ut interpres” (like a translator) or “ut orator” (like an orator), and St. Jerome (*verbum e verbo / sensum de sensu*), to Schleiermacher (taking the reader to the text / taking the text to the reader) and Nida (formal vs. dynamic equivalence, see above), Venuti (foreignising / domesticating translation) and many others, translators of all centuries found themselves confronted with this “eternal dilemma.” Usually, they give preference to one of the two basic strategies, sometimes even declaring it to be “translation proper” as compared to the other one (e.g. Schleiermacher). (Christiane Nord 2016: 569)

Till the 70s, the focus of loyalty in translation has been directed towards literal translation, which is source-oriented translation. It was the advent of descriptive translation study and the skopos theory that advanced a paradigm shift to translation that is geared towards

dynamism, purpose and function of a translation in the target audience. This includes dynamic equivalence (functional equivalence) as against formal equivalence by Eugene Nida, descriptive translation study by Gideon Toury, functional theory by Hans Vermeer, and among others. The functional theoretical trends seem to blend the gap by proposing a translation whose equivalence is dependent on functionality in form of purpose. Nord calls this functional approach “purposeful activity” (Nord 1997; 2016). By purposeful activity, Nord (2016: 569) asserts that “The translator is an expert of intercultural communication carrying out a communicative activity directed at a particular communicative purpose or various purposes. These purposes are usually specified, tacitly or explicitly, in some kind of translation brief by another person acting as commissioner.” He adds that:

The source text is or was produced under a set of source-culture conditions for a source-culture audience. Its form and content is therefore determined by these conditions, including the text producer’s communicative purposes and their assessment of the conditions under which the text will be received. The target text will be used in a different situation determined by a different set of conditions. (Nord 2016: 569)

The cultural milieu under which a text is conceived is as significant as the cultural milieu to which it is communicated. In intercultural communication, a researcher should, therefore, note that a proverbial text has its immediate cultural environment and the text has specific pragmatic factors which must be taken care of in the new linguistic culture so that the text will achieve its communicative purpose in the new culture.

To achieve this purpose in postproverbial constructs, linguistic representational consciousness of the matter and manner becomes imperative. The commissioners of postproverbials are the users of postproverbial and the intention and deconstructive tendencies need to be evident among the target audience; otherwise, the translation

will be suggesting another postproverbial. Though Nord disagrees with Catford's postulation on *replacement of textual material in one language (SL) by equivalence textual material in another language* (Catford 1965: 20), linguistic representational correspondence is important in postproverbial translation. Loyalty in translation refers to the responsibility of a translator as arbitrator between two cultures in an intercultural interface. Loyalty here, as against traditional fidelity or faithfulness, "obliges the translator to respect the sender's communicative intentions, as far as they can be elicited, and turns functionalism into an anti-universalist model that takes different culture specific concepts of translation into consideration". (Nord 2016: 571) Loyalty in postproverbial translation extends beyond two linguistic spaces; it involves the culture of the traditional proverb from which the postproverbial is constructed, the postproverbial context and the locale of the target audience. The translator of a postproverbial, therefore, needs to mark the point of departure from the traditional proverbial clause, indicate the point of postproverbiality and be loyal to the target reader's comprehensibility as a matter of functionality in the process of linguistic negotiations.

Three main points are crucial to this study from Nord's (2016: 578-579) Function-Loyalty conclusion:

- a. The translation purpose determines the choice of translation method and strategy (functionality principle).
- b. The most important factor in the target situation is the function or hierarchy of functions expected to be achieved by the target text.
- c. A text producer (and the translator as a text producer) should aim at producing a text in such a way that the receivers recognize the function for which it is intended, accepting it as functional precisely in terms of this function. In order to achieve this aim, authors use linguistic and extralinguistic "function markers." These markers can only be interpreted correctly by the receiver if they belong to a "marker code" with which they are familiar.

6. *African Postproverbial in Translation*

Postproverbial function and translation loyalty in the target language call for literal translation approach technically conceived as transliteration. Transliteration as a loyal approach to translating African phenomena has to do not only with the bias of the matter but also that of the manner of the source text in target text. Adeyefa (2022: 68) conceives transliteration as imperative to African literary figures in African-European translation: “The choice of transliteration approach as against translation equivalence reinstates that a translator of African texts should be conscious of culturo-linguistic centralism and that stylistic investigations should seek to bring to the fore the preference of literal approach over Euro-centric equivalence in African literary translation”. Osofisan’s (2005) exemplification of Achebe’s *Arrow of God* makes this clearer. According to him, Achebe transliterates his thought in English instead of seeking acceptable target equivalent. Instead of Achebe to write the inward Igbo source text in the queen English as:

I am sending you as my representative among those people just to be on the safe side in case the new religion develops. One has to move with the times or else one is left behind. I have a hunch that those who fail to come to terms with the white man may well regret their lack of foresight. (Achebe cited in Osofisan 2004/2005: 24)

Achebe consciously transliterates his Igbo source text as:

I want one of my sons to join these people and be my eye there. If there is nothing in it, you will come back. But if there is something there, you will bring home my share. The world is like a Mask dancing. If you want to see it well you do not stand in one place. My spirit tells me that those who do not befriend the white man today will be saying had we known tomorrow. (*Arrow of God* 1966: 55)

Osofisan concludes that, “[T]he material, as we can see, is the same, but the character and the sensibility of the speech have altered, ren-

dering it more authentic to our ears, and more African in construction” (Osofisan 2004/2005: 25). Bariki’s (Okara, 1964 in Bariki: 189; Bariki 2021: 16-17) sampling of the translation of Gabriel Okara’s *The Voice* into French as *La Voix* by Jean Sévry aptly captures the same:

If my left foot against something hits as I walk, it’s a warning.
(Si mon pied gauche tandis que je marche une pierre heurte,
un avertissement ce doit être) Me know nothing? Me know
nothing? Because I went not to school I have no bile, I have
no head? Me know nothing? (Moi rien savoir? Moi rien savoir?
Parce que je ne suis pas allé à l’école, je n’ai pas d’humeur, je
n’ai pas de tête ? Moi rien savoir?)

Bariki adds that, “Sevry did violence to the French language in order to establish a connotative equivalence with the original in English” (Bariki 2021:16-17). Transliteration ensures one-to-one correspondence of linguistic lexicons and syntactic structure in the target language thereby furthering the advancement of African lingual resourcefulness and underwriting modernity in global linguistic innovation.

Thus, in translating African postproverbials written in African native languages into European languages as in English or French, the translator should note that:

One, the ultimate function of a translated postproverbial is to bring to fore the content and form of the postproverbial in the target text as well as to communicate the clausal modulation that births postproverbials in the target language. Two, the translator must be conscious of and loyal to the cultural and linguistic phenomena of the three locales involved in postproverbial translation so as to achieve the rationale for foregrounding eccentric modulation from traditional proverbial to postproverbial and the lexico-syntactic transposition conveying transformative function in the target language. Three, for the target readership to identify the intention and purpose of the target postproverbial, a literal translation in form of lexico-syntactic correspondence becomes imperative. In other words, a translitera-

tion approach is indispensable to achieving functional translation of postproverbial from African native languages into European languages such as French and English.

7. Translating African Postproverbials: The Yoruba-English Example

Some translations of Yoruba postproverbial expressions do not align with the functions of the postproverbials. They only explicate the meanings at the expense of lexico-syntactic functions. It is significant to revisit some postproverbial expressions in order to pinpoint the structural deficiency on the one hand; and the translation implications on the target language and audience on the other hand. For instance, the meaning of a Yoruba Postproverbial *Adóni láya ò f"ojú re woni, ò ʃe kókó tètè pa a'* was translated into English as *anyone who fucks a man's wife does not have a good motive for the cheated husband, so it is better that the husband kills him, and softly*. This meaning rendition does not distinguish the signal clause from the completing clause in the target language. It banalises proverbial conciseness and wittiness, take less care of structural peculiarity and semantic connotation. The idea of *Adóni láya ò f"ojú re wo ni* is not aptly captured in "*anyone who fucks a man's wife does not have a good motive for the cheated husband*". Similarly, the clause "*and softly*" does not reflect in the source excerpt at all. In the same vein, the translation of *o ʃe kókó tètè pa a'* is struggling in *not have a good motive for the cheated husband*. The same is *Adóni láya ò jèbi, iwọ ni kó lọ lo pàrágà* translated as *anyone who has sex with one's wife should not be rebuked, one should rather warn his wife and then take strong doses of the African aphrodisiac or the African equivalent of Viagra*. (Ademowo & Balogun, 2015:16). The translation constructs seem to be far from the source postproverbial representations, considering the form and content. Suggested literal translations representing both the signal clauses and the completing clauses in English and French will be as follow:

SPP. Adóni láya ò f''ojú re woni, ò ʒe kókó tètè pa á.

TPP. **One who fucks one's wife doesn't wish one good, why can't you kill him instantly?**

TPP. **Celui qui baise la femme d'autrui ne le souhaite pas du bien, pourquoi ne pas tuer la personne instantanément?**
(Translation mine)

SPP. Adóni láya ò jèbi, ìwọ ni ko lọ lo pàràgà.

TPP. **One who fucks one's wife is not at fault, it is you that should take pàràgà (aphrodisiac).**

TPP. **Celui qui baise la femme d'autrui n'est pas fautif, c'est à l'autre de prendre (que le mari prenne) paraga (des aphrodisiaques).** (Translation mine)

Thus, the understanding of African postproverbial expressions in translation calls for a procedural methodology.

8. *Towards a Methodology for Translating African Postproverbials*

For clarification, in all that follows, methodology in this study simply refers to the procedures to take into account while translating postproverbial data/corpus into foreign languages in academic research. Translation is conceived as a systematic transfer of proverbial constructs from one language to another language; that is, an interlingual negotiation of proverbial and postproverbial expressions in research. A translator in this study is a researcher, not necessarily a professional translation practitioner, who communicates postproverbial expressions in academic research.

Apt examples are purposively drawn from selected proverbs and postproverbials (in a Nigerian native language, Yoruba) in *Playful Blasphemies: Postproverbials as Archetypes of Modernity in Yoruba Culture* (Raji-Oyelade, 2012) and two inaugural lectures presented at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria. The first was presented on Thursday, 14 February, 2013 and is titled *Fluent In(ter)ventions: Webs of the Literary Discipline* by Aderemi Raji-Oyelade, while the second was pre-

sented on Thursday, 18 August, 2016 and is titled *Language and Style[istics] in Literary and Routine Communication: The Yoruba Example* by Moses Olufunmilayo Adesola Olateju. This is with a view to engaging postproverbial categorisations and proposing a methodology for translating African postproverbials into European languages such as French and English.

As earlier asserted, loyalty and functionality of a postproverbial in translation do not only account for the postproverbial message but also the structural reconfiguration of the linguistic components that inform the source message in the target language. A postproverbial translator should engage a form of transliteration which depicts and conveys postproverbial markers and transformative functions, respectively. They should adopt a literal translation method that accounts for lexico-syntactic negotiations in the target language. It is only then that the target readership could understand the intention and purpose of postproverbial categories in translation. According to Raji-Oyelade (2012: 53-66), there are four categories of postproverbial. The categorisation is based on the semantico-syntactic transformation or interplay between the signal clause and the completing clause in the traditional proverb introducing a postproverbial. This could be in form of lexico-syntactic dropping, amending, replacing or rupturing of a proverbeme. The knowledge of this structural essence will enhance postproverbial translation. The signal clause is the introductory part of the (post)proverbial expressions, while the completing clause is the concluding part. As foregrounded in translation segmentation above, a clause brings out a specific point of view through structural representation. It refers to a lexicological unit or unit of thought which accounts for a particular signifier or signified (sense or concept). A clause is therefore considered as a semantic unit of a proverb which accounts for a specific idea or sense.

8.1. Category I

The first category, which is the most popular category of the current postproverbials, has mostly its transformation in the completing

clause and transformation rarely occurs in the signal clause. The first category of postproverbials has three manifestations namely: simple, complex, and parallel. In the simple type of category I, the transformation takes place at the completing clause. In the following examples, Source Postproverbial (The source language postproverbial, Yoruba) is represented as (SPP); Target Postproverbial (The Yoruba translated postproverbial into English) is represented as (TPP) on one hand; Source Traditional Proverb (The conventional proverb in Yoruba language) is represented as (STP) while the translated version in English and French are represented as (TTP) respectively:

- (1) SPP. Màálù tí kò nírù, wọn pọ ní Sááńgó.
 TPP. **Cows that have no tails, are many at Sáńgó.**
 TPP. **Les vaches qui n'ont pas de queue sont pleines à Sáńgó.** (Translation mine)

STP. Màálù tí kò nírù, Ọ́lórún níf bá a lé eşinşin.

TTP. **Cows that have no tails, it is God that drives away flies from them.**

TTP. **(Pour) les vaches qui n'ont pas de queue, Dieu qui chasse les mouches.** (Translation mine)

(Olateju, 2016:47)

- (2) SPP. Àtètè mólè, olè n sá lọ.
 TPP. **Because the thief is not arrested on time, the thief is running away.**
 TPP. **Parce que le voleur n'est pas arrêté à temps, le voleur s'enfuit.** (Raji-Oyelade, 2013:18)

STP. Àtètè mólè, olè n mólóko.

TTP. **Because the thief is not arrested on time, the thief is arresting the farmer.**

TTP. **Parce que le voleur n'est pas arrêté à temps, le voleur arrête le fermier.** (Translation mine)

(Olateju, 2016:47)

- (3) SPP. Ayé l'òjà, ẹ fímí lẹ s'òjà.
 TPP. **The world is a marketplace; so, leave me in the market.**
 PPT. **Le monde est un marché; laissez-moi au marché.**
 (Translation mine)

STP. Ayé l'òjà, ọrun n'ilé.
 TTP. **The world is a marketplace; heaven is the home.**
 TTP. **Le monde est un marché; le ciel est la maison.**
 (Translation mine)

(Raji-Oyelade, 2013:18)

- (4) SPP. Ẹsin iwájú, ni ó gba pò kíní.
 TPP. **The leading horse, will take the first position.**
 TPP. Le cheval de tête prendra la première place. (Translation mine)

STP. Ẹsin iwájú, ni t'èyin n wò sáré.
 TTP. **The leading horse, is the one by which the followers set their pace.**
 TTP. **Le cheval de tête est celui sur lequel les suivants fixent leur allure.** (Translation mine)

(Raji-Oyelade, 2012:53)

First, the understanding of the unit of thought(s) informs the translation of lexicological units. Here, a translator must be conscious of the fact that there are two units of thought accounting for two clauses. Illustrating with the last example (3), it is observed that, in the SPP, the transformation takes place at the completing clause. The SPP has the same signal clause as the traditional proverb alluding to horses' sequential-race-dependence as an exemplary philosophy of human life-race. The ideological insight of the SPP completing clause promotes good, impartial, sound, and reasonable judgment as against the completing clause of the TTP that teaches carefulness, persistence, moderation, and prudence. In other words, though signal clauses of both the postproverbial and the proverb relate to life as

a race, the former relates to position as first, while the latter underscores hard work as the essence of success.

Secondly, the point of transformation should be marked in the TTP so as to help the target audience understand the clause that informs the SPP. In line with this, the translator employs the punctuation mark (comma) to demarcate the Noun Phrase (The leading horse) from the predicate thereby introducing the point of twisting as well as unearthing both the proverbial deviance and the syntactic structure. The punctuation becomes necessary to bridge the representation of both the content and the form in the target PP thereby enabling the target readers who are not familiar with the Yoruba language to note the end of the signal clause and the beginning of the completing clause as that of the source postproverbial.

The same rule applies to postproverbials with two phrases at the completing clause. The punctuation marker is imperative after each clause to ascertain the point of transformation and demarcate the unit of thought. This is exemplified below:

- (5) SPP. Àgbàtán làá gbòlẹ; bí a bá fún un ní oúnjẹ, a ó fi ọbẹ sí i.
 TPP. **The lazy man must be fully supported; when you give him food, you must provide the stew**
 TPP. **Le paresseux doit être pleinement soutenu; lorsque vous lui donnez à manger, vous devriez également lui fournir le ragoût.** (Translation mine)

STP. Àgbàtán làá gbòlẹ; bí a d'áṣọ fún un, á pa á l'áró.
 TTP. **The lazy man must be fully supported; when you buy him a cloth, you must also dye it.**
 TTP. **Le paresseux doit être pleinement soutenu ; lorsque vous lui achetez un tissu, vous devez également le teindre.** (Translation mine)

(Raji-Oyelade, 2012:54)

The above postproverbial, as well as its traditional counterpart, suggests the same relational support for the weak, helpless, and vulner-

able, among others. The ideological implication denounces half-finished assistance and teaches lasting, unreserved, and benevolent succor. The two phrases are totally transformed and, at times, contracted to form a phrase unit. First, a translator has to be conscious of the three translation units: the signal clause and the two concluding clauses. The translation units are segmented by semicolon and commas respectively. Thus, a translator needs to be meticulous in dealing with the lexico-syntactic translation equivalence in the source language. The replications of the punctuations that segment translation units are good markers of syntactic configuration. This, in turn, may help as well as guide the target readership to decipher lexical substitution and domain transfer in the proverbial-postproverbial association and dissociation. Since *òlẹ* (lazy person) is not gender-specific, the above can also be translated as:

TPP. A lazy person must be fully salvaged; when you give him/her food, you must provide the stew.

TTP. Une personne paresseuse doit être complètement sauvée; lorsque vous lui donnez de la nourriture, vous devriez aussi lui fournir le ragoût. (Translation mine)

TTP. A lazy person must be fully salvaged; when you buy him/her a cloth, you must dye it.

TTP. Une personne paresseuse doit être complètement sauvée; lorsque vous lui achetez un tissu, vous devez le teindre. (Translation mine)

In the same vein, the translator takes advantage of the punctuation markers when there are four clauses with two clauses at the signal and two clauses at the completing, respectively. The postproverbial transformations take place at both the halves of the signal and completing clauses. Examples are shown below:

(6) SPP. B'òṃṣṣé bá ṣubú, á sunkún; bí àgbà bá ṣubú, á dídè.

TPP. When a child stumbles, s/he bursts into tears; when the elder falls, s/he gets up.

TPP. Quand un enfant tombe, il éclate en sanglots ; quand l'adulte tombe, il/elle se lève. (Translation mine)

STP. B'òṃodé bá ṣubú, á wo iwájú; bí àgbà bá ṣubú, á wo èyìn wò.
 TTP. **When a child stumbles, s/he sets his/her eyes on the destination; when an elder falls, s/he takes a backward glance.**

TTP. **Quand un enfant tombe, il regarde vers l'avant ; quand un adulte tombe, il/elle regarde en arrière.** (Translation mine)

(Raji-Oyelade, 2012: 56)

The employment of two semicolons mapping two parallel clauses having both the signal clause and the completing clause should be exactly reproduced in the target postproverbial to account for the clarity of structural parallelism in the target language. The translational duplication of the punctuations above evinces the fact that there are transformations at the halves clauses of both proverbial and postproverbial expressions. This has adequately accentuated the semantic transfer. Thus, a translator may need to introduce punctuation marks (i.e. two semicolons) to map the two parallel clauses so as to have both the signal clause and the completing clause adequately reproduced in the target postproverbial.

Significantly, both the units of thought and the lexicological units are important in translating postproverbs. And, a translator must strive to convey not only the content and the structure but also the lexical components into the target language, as closely as possible. Thus, a translator must consider the choice of lexical signifiers that closely express the lexicological unit in the target language. This methodology therefore advocates for the consciousness of the strategy of transliteration postproverbial translation. Since *fall* above also suggests 'to leave an erect position suddenly and involuntarily' (Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 2023), it will not be out of order to retain the same lexical unit in the target language. To balance the two poles for the target audience, we can also have a translation like:

SPP. Bí ọṃodé bá ṣubú, á sunkún; bí àgbà bá ṣubú, á dide.

TPP. **When a child falls, he/she bursts into tears; when an elder falls, he/she gets up.**

TPP. Quand un enfant tombe, il fond en larmes ; quand une personne âgée tombe, elle se lève. (Translation mine)

STP. Bí ọ̀mọ̀dé bá ọ̀bú, á wo iwájú; bí àgbà bá ọ̀bú, á wo èyìn wò.

TTP. When a child falls, he/she looks forward; when an elder falls, he/she looks backward.

TTP. Quand un enfant tombe, il regarde devant lui ; quand une personne âgée tombe, elle regarde derrière elle. (Translation mine)

8.2. Category II

The second category has two types of signal clause rupture. The first has lexical replacement in the signal clause which necessitates a dropping of lexical item in the signal clause to maintain sameness in the concluding clause. The second has a lexical deletion in both the signal clause and the concluding clause for a corresponding replacement. Lexical componential reproduction to adequately transfer this postproverbial to the target readership. To this end, a literal translation of the lexical items becomes imperative. This may be complemented with appropriate lexical equivalents in the target language so as to introduce the semantic distinctions in the two languages to the target audience. Examples are shown below:

(6) SPP. Ojú la fi ń mẹ́ran láwo.

TPP. With eyes (sight), we pick the good meat in the stew.

TPP. Avec les yeux (la vue), on choisit la (bonne) viande dans le ragoût. (Translation mine)

STP. Orí la fi ń mẹ́ran láwo.

TTP. With head (luck), we pick the good meat in the stew.

TTP. Avec la tête (la chance), nous choisissons la bonne viande dans le ragoût. (Translation mine) (Raji-Oyelade, 2012: 58)

It is observed that *orí* (head) in the signal clause has been replaced with *ojú* (eyes) in the SPP. Though the translator through literal translation relays the SPP expression into the TPP with accurate syntactic markers, it is important to note that the parentheses will account for the lexical equivalent and not the target lexis in the TPPs. This is necessary to sustain the translation's literalness; as in:

SPP. *Ojú la fi ní mēran láwo.*

TPP. **With eyes (sight), we pick the (good) meat in the stew.**

TPP. **Avec les yeux (la vue), nous choisissons la (bonne) viande dans le ragoût.** (Translation mine)

STP. *Orí la fi ní mēran láwo.*

TTP. **With head (luck), we pick the good meat in the stew.**

TTP. **Avec la tête (la chance), nous choisissons la (bonne) viande dans le ragoût.** (Translation mine)

(8) SPP. *Àpónlé ni Málà, Awúsá l'Awúsá ní jé.*

TPP. **It's sheer honour to be called "Mallam", the proper name to call an Hausaman is Hausa.**

TPP. **C'est un honneur d'être appelé «Mallam», le nom approprié pour appeler un haoussa est haoussa.** (Translation mine)

STP. *Àpónlé ni Ìya Káà, kò sēni tó wà ní Káà tí kò l'órúko*

TTP. **It's sheer honour to be called "Court Matriarch", there's no Ìya Káà who does not have a (proper) name.**

TTP. **C'est un honneur d'être appelé «Matriarche de la Cour», il n'y a pas de Ìya Káà qui n'a pas de nom (propre).** (Translation mine)

(Raji-Oyelade, 2012: 56-57)

From the above postproverbial expression, the phrase *Ìya Káà* is replaced with **Maala** in the signal clause while the entire concluding clause is completely dropped for **Awúsá ni awúsá ní jé** so as to substantiate ethno-cultural connotation. For the purpose of target audience comprehension, transcoding the two loan lexical words **Maala**

and **Awusa** becomes imperative. The word **Maala**, a transliterated Yoruba version of *Mallam* or *Malam* originated from the Arabic language and refers to a Qu’ranic scholar or Islamic cleric. In contemporary parlance, most Hausa men from the northern part of Nigeria are referred to as **Maala** among the Southwestern Yoruba people. It is not uncommon in the Southwestern Nigerian sociolinguistic community to hear people addressing male northerners (most especially the Hausa) as **Maala** or **Mallam**. The other **Awúsá** is a Yoruba transliteration of **Hausa** which refers to a people of Northern Nigeria. The postproverbial, like the conventional proverb infers the dignity of self-respect. The fact that the idea of *Ìya Káà*, a matriarch in a typical ancient community, where communal leaving is common, is going extinct ignites the switch to Malam-Hausa lexical replacement which appears to be common in Nigerian sociolinguistic community.

A translator of this kind of postproverbial should not only note the lexical codeswitching in both the TTP and SPP but should also attempt to retain the strategy of borrowing so as to uphold the stylistic imports embedded in the two source expressions. If need be a parenthesis may be created to enhance the target audience’s comprehension. On no account should the stylistic conditions demonstrated through lexical borrowing be trivialized through the deployment of the explicitation strategy. Thus, lexical borrowing and parentheses are also indispensable to ensuring lexico-semantic equivalence in postproverbial translation as shown in the above translation.

8.3. *Category III*

The category has its transformative manifestations at either the signal or completing clauses. One major feature of this category is the tonal potentiality of the category. The tone may occur phonologically and lexically. Examples are shown below:

(9) SPP. Èṣù (rú) ṣ’àṣejù, Ọlórún lúgò dèé.

TPP. **Satan disrupts and overreaches himself, God waits in ambush for him.**

TPP. Satan se perturbe et se surmène, Dieu l'attend en embuscade. (Translation mine)

STP. Èşúró ş'àşejù, ó tẹ lówọ oníyán.

TTP. Water-yam overreaches its own sweetness, it loses flavour and use before the pounded yam vendor.

TTP. L'igname d'eau (Dioscorea alta L.) dépasse sa propre douceur, elle perd sa saveur et son utilité devant le vendeur d'igname pilée. (Translation mine)

(Raji-Oyelade, 2012:58)

Though there is a change in linguistic representation in the SPP, the ideological import is the same as that of the TTP. They both reprove pride, egoism, and arrogance, among others. In the (post)proverbial expressions, the play on words highlights semantic postmodernist innovations. For instance, the play on words occurs on *èşúró* (water yam) in the proverbial expressions, while *èşù* (satan) *ró* (confuses) is deployed in the postproverbials as a biblical allusion to pride. Word-play draws on homophonic and polysemic form of structural interplay to infer a particular effect and connotation, its idiosyncratic characteristic makes it a challenging task in translation practices.

In a poetic translation, a translator may impose a close punning construct that roughly accounts for the sound effect at the expense of grammatical and connotative essence in the target language. Though overreach mostly collocates with a reflexive pronoun (i.e. overreach oneself), as a way of illustrating phonoaesthetic translation,

Èşù ş'àşejù

can be punned as

Satan overreaches his reaches.

The nominal *reach* purposively pluralized as *reaches* above suggests “degree, position, rank or status” (Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 2023). It is deliberately deployed to translate the phonoaesthetic af-

finity in the SPP signal clause, which can also be compensated with additional words in form of parenthesis.

In the main, wordplay and pun's phonoaesthetic tendencies are mostly handled in translation through the deployment of substitution and compensation strategy. While substitution is "the process by which the translator replaces a source text (or an item or a meaning in the source text) by a text (item or meaning) in the target language, deemed to have some relation of equivalence to it" (Laver & Mason 2018: 129), compensation underscores "the manipulation of a target text in order to recover some of the semantic information lost in the process of translating the source text, usually because of the lack of equivalent terms in the source and target languages" (Laver & Mason 2018: 20). As a result, it is not out of order to substitute *Èşúrí ş'àşejù* in the signal clause of STP for **Water-yam overreaches its own sweetness** and the signal clause of the SPP *Èşù (rú) ş'àşejù* for **Satan (distrupts and) overreaches himself** as suggested above. While *Èşù* is substituted for *Satan*, the addition of the lexical verb *distrupts*, as a compensating strategy, is to enhance the understanding of the connotative implication in the target language. In the same vein, a phonoaesthetic negotiation may look thus:

SPP. *Èşù ş'àşejù, Ọlórún lúgò dèé.*

TPP. **Satan overreaches his reaches (himself), God waits in ambush for him.**

TPP. **Satan dépasse ses limites, Dieu l'attend en embuscade.**
(Translation mine)

It is imperative that the translator takes cognizance of phonological innovations and brings it to the consciousness of the target readership.

8.4. Category IV

In this category, the entire signal and completing clauses in both proverbial and postproverbial expressions are retained. However, there is an additional clause to the postproverbial expressions. The addi-

tion is usually an extension, elongation, and deflation of the main proverb. Examples are illustrated below:

SPP. *Ẹyin ni ní di àkùkò, tí wọn ò bá ẹ é jẹ.*

TPP. **It is the egg that becomes the cock, if it is not cooked and eaten.**

TPP. **C'est l'œuf qui devient le coq, s'il n'est pas cuit et mangé.**
(Translation mine)

STP. *Ẹyin ni di àkùkò.*

TPP. **The egg becomes the cock.**

PPT. **C'est l'œuf qui devient le coq.** (Translation mine)

(Raji-Oyelade, 2012:61)

In the above example, there is an addition of “*tí wọn ò bá ẹ é jẹ*” (if it is not cooked and eaten) to the traditional proverb: *Ẹyin ni ní di àkùkò* (. It is the egg that becomes the cock). In structural segmentation of the STP in translation, a translator should treat the traditional proverb as a translation unit and the additional clause as another translation unit complementing each other. It is also required of the translator to deploy a literal procedure in line with the transliteration approach.

In translating this category of postproverbials, therefore, though the semantic effects and distinctions are germane, it is essential to carefully render both the signal clauses and the completing clauses into the target milieu with the consciousness of structural associations and dissociations as well as linguistic idiosyncrasies embedded in the SPP. This is because it is not every reader of postproverbial is familiar with the language of the STP, hence a superimposition of syntactic or linguistic postproverbial markers in the form of punctuations are sometimes unavoidable though this may contradict the syntactic convention of the TL. It is important to reiterate the translation of the postproverbial **Ẹni tí yòò joyin abẹ àpáta, yòò mú ra kólé** as ***He who savours the honey in the rock, will brace up for hard work.*** Structurally, the punctuation mark (comma) seems impera-

tive to mark the point of the completing clause that introduces the locus of postproverbiality. Though it appears unacceptable in the traditional sentence structure of the English language, it is invented to achieve translation functional principles such as the point of postproverbial among the target audience.

We postulate that an African postproverbial translator should employ a literal translation approach in the form of transliteration while translating. A literal translation approach, here, advances a faithful transfer of source postproverbial distinctions into the target language with the consciousness of the target audience's comprehensibility. The approach engages borrowing, calque, and transposition strategies to solve the challenges of postproverbial interlingual translation. The strategy of borrowing refers to the transfer of untranslated words into the target language. It accounts for loaning source language nuances to the target audience. In the same vein, calque refers to an imitation of the syntactic patterning of a source expression in the target language. In borrowing, the loanwords may be explicated in parentheses to account for the target audience's comprehension while calque may be complemented by the transposition strategy to enhance linguistic intelligibility. The transposition will also account for the grammatical exigencies of the target language syntagmatic norms. The literal approach to translation will accentuate the purpose of a postproverbial in translation and afford the target audience an understanding of the intricacies of a postproverbial corpus in literary communications.

9. Conclusion

This postproverbial exploration suggests that it is not impossible to ascertain procedural methodology guiding the translation of postproverbial expressions from African native languages into European languages such as French and English. Sequentially, the study proposes that a researcher in African postproverbial studies should be loyal to the ultimate function of postproverbial corpus undergoing interlingual translation, which is reproducing the substance and

structure of African postproverbials to a foreign audience; in post-proverbial translation, punctuations (such as comma and semi-colon), good markers of signal/concluding clause's distinctions, are central to lexico-syntactic correspondence as they underline points of postproverbial twisting and structural patterning; to this end, researchers translating African postproverbial expressions into foreign languages should consider a literal approach in form of transliteration, which is faithful to the source postproverbials. Further study may engage the linguistic habits of postproverbials in interlingual translation, exploration of postproverbial traditions and translations in other African native languages, and the implications of postproverbial (re)creations vis-à-vis literary translation, among others.

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CHINYERE T. OJIAKOR

IGBO POSTPROVERBIALS: THE DYNAMIC ACT OF THE CULTURAL DEVIANT

Abstract: Igbo cultures, often regarded largely as oral cultures, have preserved through many generations the wisdom, wits, worldview, identities of its people through proverbs. This it also does in its other folkloric genres – music, incantations, gossips, dance, tales as well as its religion and apparels. Culture, however as a dynamic process, overwhelms the basic instinct for stability and fixity alluded to proverbs especially with regard to the colonial experience and globalization. The objective of this study is to investigate the nature of hybrid synergetic crossings reflected in the traditional Igbo proverbs which define them as new wisdoms. This tendency towards change in existing proverb is referred to by Raji-Oyelade as postproverbials. According to him, postproverbials are twisted and hybrid speech act; a subversive alternate or parallel saying derived from the original content, and sense of the conventional proverb. A major significance for the study of postproverbials is that they reflect the urban imagination of Africa, appearing in literature, music, film, and social media and in other fictional and non-fictional spaces. Scholarly interpretations on Igbo proverbs abound but some measure of novelty in this work, though, is the attempt on the alternate of the fixity that hitherto characterise Igbo paremiology. Thirty randomly selected proverbial expressions as well as their postproverbials (re)constructions were subjected to critical analysis. The postcolonial theory is instrumental in the reading, analysis and interpretation of the selected proverbs. This paper investigates the nature of selected Igbo proverbs and their ‘altering alternatives’ and findings reveal that there are noticeable changes in the rendering of the selected old wisdoms. These changes occur largely either due to lack of an in-depth knowledge in the usage of the traditional proverbs, disconnection with the custodians/sources of the Igbo proverbs, urbanisation influence on the Igbo speakers or both.

Keywords: Igbo. Culture. Proverbs. Postcolonial. Deviant. Postproverbial.

1. Introduction

This study aims at examining the intersection of convention and invention which produces innovative creations that are formulated with the distinct desire to negate traditional Igbo wisdom to create new ones. People want to change, they like innovation, and they want to have their own memorable wisdom-and how do they do this other than to modify, parody, subvert or simply vary existing wisdom? Proverbs are critical in the understanding of African cultures and wisdoms. From an African perspective, a proverb is an aphorism or simply put, a traditional saying, usually metaphorical in concept and embodying a perceived inherent truth. Differently put, a proverb is according to Julie Umukoro, “a short well-known phrase stating a general truth or moral” (2021: 37). Ruth Finnegan (quoted in Raji-Oyelade 2022: 9), opines that:

Proverbs exhibit the brevity and the quality of the poetic; they are figurative and metaphoric expressions containing the observances of natural motifs, historical allusions, or other time-specific references which direct attention at the occasion of their original inspiration and citation.

One rarely reads through literary texts by African authors without encountering more than a dozen proverbs. Such expressions permeate the works of Chinua Achebe, Wole Soyinka, Onuorah Nzekwu, Ngūgĩ wa Thiong’o, Ola Rotimi, Ama Ata Aidoo, T. M. Aluko to name just a few. Though the use of proverbs may differ from society to society, what is common to proverbs everywhere is that they touch on a wide array of human concerns and activities. Proverbs are highly regarded in the thinking and communication process of Africans as a whole. Generally, the social functions of proverbs in African cultures have been well documented in folklore scholarship. Proverb in the Igbo matrix remains in the words of Nwachukwu-Agbada “a documentation of the lives of the people at a particular time” (40), and like other oral forms, it records the history, experiences, trauma and tension of the society at every stage of its origin. As an oratory and

linguistic tool, when proverbs are applied to conflict situation, they can function, opines Ajiboye “as ice breakers in relieving tension, as therapeutic tools in facilitating trauma healing, in promoting introspection which brings about change, in promotion of interpersonal communication etc.” (2012: 305-317).

Finnegan’s memorable and crucial reference to the structural nature of the traditional proverbs points at its quality of “terseness and relative fixity” (2012: 393). Igbo proverbs are context-dependent and are often used to describe, in very few words, what could have otherwise required a thousand words. It is also a euphemistic means of making certain expressions in the Igbo society, thus the Igbos have come to typically rely on this as means for certain expressions. Mostly employed by elderly people, proverbs are valued in orature as they help to construct and comprehend society. They are used not only to reflect on established norms, but also as a means of preserving a community’s memory of past events. According to Daramola, “there are different sets of proverbs that accompany various activities, events, things and ideas” (2004: 27). As it is true of many cultural groups; the Igbos of the South-East geopolitical zone of Nigeria holds the use of proverbs in high esteem. Being a very oral culture, virtually all the strata of their lives and thoughts are dominated by proverbs. Many use proverbs to demonstrate or illustrate their expertise in speech. Rarely do the Igbo bother to explain proverbs, except of course to kids and the ignorant who ask. They take proverbs as witty sayings essentially made exclusively for the consumption of the wise, hence the saying in Igbo proverbs, “Onye a tũrũ ilu kọwaa ya, ego e ji lụọ nne ya, lara na iyi” (if you make a proverb to someone and at the same time explain it to him, the bride price paid on his mother is in vain.) another proverb in Igbo that supports this claim is: ‘a tũrũ Ọmara Ọ mara. A tũrũ ofeke, O fenyẹ isi n’ohịa’ (if you make a proverb to a wise person, he will understand, but to a foolish person, he will fly into a bush). To underline the traditional, perhaps aesthetic, relevance of proverbs in specifically Igbo conversations, Chinua Achebe ascertains in *Things Fall Apart* that “ilu bụ mmanụ ndị

Igbo ji eri okwu—proverbs are the palm-oil with which words are eaten” (1958: 7). Nwanolue Emenanjo sees proverbs as the remnant of speech after the speech style. Whatever definitions are given to proverb, it is appropriate and suitable to consider the context and its functions to the language and culture of the people. To this end, Chima defines proverb as a “coded speech that eclipse the speech which after being decoded reveals the actual meaning of the speech” (nd: 1).

The proverb is perhaps the most important philological evidence of the verbal ingenuity and intellectualism of non-literate African societies; it is for many African groups the nucleic repository of the cultural heritage of ethnic nationalities in which myths, legends and histories are distilled in as brief metaphorical words as possible. One of the most important developments in the study of proverbs was the fascinating phenomenon of deliberately changing proverbs not only as an act of wordplay but also with the intent of creating new proverbial wisdom that fits new times and changed social mores in Africa. This approach attempts to explain proverb use according to Arewa and Dundes, “in relation to the context of a speech event, rather than only in terms of the content and meaning of the proverb” (1964: 75). Social change occurs in every community the world over. Change, therefore, is seen in the words of Igbo and Anugwom as “the only consistent fact in human or social life” (9).

Accordingly Ruth Finnegan opines that, “the structures of the traditional proverbs are subject to relative fixity” (393), which post-proverbial and its strands: postmodern, new and anti-proverbs try to deconstruct. The intersection of convention and invention which produces innovative proverbial speech acts in the words of Raji-Oyelade, “has been the subject of discussion in a number of essays and books including Wolfgang and Barbara Mieder’s *Tradition and Innovation: Proverbs and Advertising*’ and Kwesi Yankah’s *The Proverb in the context of Akan Rhetorics: A Theory of Proverbs Praxis*” (2022: 25). There is no doubt that this sub-form of the proverb is essentially a product of the modernist sensibility of western literacy and industrialization.

In referring to the nature of proverb re-creation, in her review of Raji-Oyelade's book on the subject, Pepetual Chiangong specifies that these changes have resulted in radicalised proverb types which Raji-Oyelade calls 'postproverbials'. Postproverbials, she explains, are subversive variations of conventional proverbs, which might as well perform a different function which is far removed from the original role of the traditional or conventional proverbs (2012). In a similar vein, this process or phenomenon is explored in this study through the use of the postcolonial theory, with a proposition that modern reconstruction of Igbo proverbs are more of instruments of change, constructive witticism and a discursive strategy of mimicry in a post-modern Igbo society.

2. Theoretical Framework

The study is guided by the postcolonial theory. This is because post colonialism is the platform through which one can investigate issues bordering on hybridity and syncretism in third world nations. It is a critical approach that deals with literature produced in countries that were once or currently colonies of other countries. The term 'hybrid' used above refers to the concept of hybridity, an important concept in post-colonial theory, referring to the integration (or mingling) of cultural signs and practices from the colonizing and the colonised cultures. The postcolonial studies are by now a largely historical undertaking. This colonization of non-European globe began when European countries with navies began to discover that many foreign countries eluded contact with Europe. It was a fairly simple matter, the European found, conquer and colonize them. This was the case from India to Africa to the Americas. This extraordinary venture in conquest had some positive consequences that are difficult to separate from the numerous painful and deleterious consequences that attended them. Europe brought modern political forms and institutions to the conquered countries, along with educational systems and common languages that bound the world together for the first time. English according to Michael Ryan became, "a prominent lan-

guage in south Asia, parts of Africa, and the Americas as French and Spanish, for similar reasons, became common in other parts of the non-European globe” (215). Most writers and intellectuals embraced the opportunity for creative mixing that the colonial and postcolonial situation afforded. The assimilation and adaptation of cultural practices, the cross-fertilization of cultures can be seen as positive, enriching and dynamic.

Now, culture is like a colour in a larger river of other colours. It has shallow hues outwards and deeper hues inwards. And time pulls the penumbral hues into the umbra heart just like a painter moves his paintbrush to mix a red colour with a green colour to produce yellow, so also two cultures mix to produce a novel hybrid. The more ideas and people move around like the hand of the painter, the more a culture adopts new modes and abandons old ones or allow them to go into desuetude like the colours. Notable theoreticians in this field include Edward Said, Gayatri Spivak and Homi Bhabha among others.

In modern times, therefore, the pull for this adoption and abandonment especially in paremiology is more intense than ever. Their penetration into every Igbo land occurs through admixture as explained in the colour theory explained above (colour theory is both the science and art of using colour. It also involves the messages colours communicate; and the methods used to replicate colour). This is because of the particular nature of the dispersal of knowledge in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, which crosses over barriers of community, sometimes, even languages. In view of the theories hinged upon, the researchers hypothesize that while older known proverbs originate within an old community and remain within it, without many outlets to travel out with its users, newer modern known proverbs (postproverbials) travel away from their source communities and become globalized in other nearby communities. From this way of thinking results such terms as hybridity and syncretism- the idea that identities and languages from both sides of the imperial equation can combine to generate new subjective and linguistic possibilities.

3. *Conceptualizing Proverbial Stance in the Igbo Narrative*

Major scholarships on African proverbs have sustained the idea of the sacrosanct structure of the proverb. Raji-Oyelade in *Playful Blasphemies* argues that:

The notion of the fixity of form is almost contradictory to the original idea of the dynamisms of societies and cultures, that it is impossible not to recognise a certain radical shift or the transgressive force in the making and use of proverbs in recent times. (4)

He went on to state that “the invention when it occurs, may be ironic, banal, or radical in meaning and in relation to the understanding and usage of the typical traditional proverb” (2022: 36). Igbo proverbs are context dependent. A proverb can perform different acts with different meaning depending on the context it occurs. Iloanusi observes that, “the meaning of proverbs is contextual which makes it violate compositionality and thereby contributes to their various interpretations” (2014: 3). This is in line with what Mey Jacob says with regard to speech act. She asserts that “the language we use and in particular the speech acts we utter are entirely dependent on the context of the situation in which such acts are produced” (2001: 94). Richard Honeck argues that the history of proverbs within the species said that:

it is clear that the proverb has fascinated the lay person as well as the scholar. Paremiology, the study of proverbs, is practiced by many different kinds of people including cultural anthropologists, psychologists, folklorists, linguists, sociologists, educators, psychiatrists, historians, students of religion, literature buffs, and even lawyers, advertising executives, management consultants, and an occasional proverb aficionado”. (1997: 13-14)

Therefore, it is clear that proverb is practised by many people from different studies and it shows how important proverb is. Schol-

ars have concluded that culture that treat the Bible as their major spiritual book contain, in the words of Wolfgang Mieder, “between three hundred and five hundred proverbs that stem from the Bible” (1990: 12). Hans Walther assembled approximately 150,000 Latin proverbs and their variants from the Middle Ages through the 17th century in the volumes of *Proverbia Sententiaequae Latinitaris ac recentioris aevi*. His collection shows that many of the proverbs were common throughout Europe either in the Latin original or through loan translations into the vernacular languages. Nigerian paremiological publications circulating globally include the article in volume 30 of *Proverbium*, “In Capsule: Saws and Sex Mores among the Igbo of Nigeria” (Ezeh, 2013). In this important work, the career anthropologist, Peter-Jazzy Ezeh, examines proverbs and related forms on sex and sex-related matters as part of the study of the Okposi, an Igbo of Nigeria’s glottocultural group. Using participant observation in the autoethnography, he listed and explored “plains”, proverbs, idioms and *Ncha*. Ezeh comments on samples he collected, revealing, by subtext, the Okposi’s innate high value of the sacred body parts of wives and mothers, of which verbal desecration can mean the destruction of the social self. Available also mostly for circulation in Nigeria, are many published Igbo paremiographies and short notes in published works by writers. These publications focus more on comprehensive ethnic proverbs but write little on postproverbs, indicating that there is limited availability of or accessibility to such post proverbs. Among them are F.C. Ogbalu’s *Ilu Igbo (The Book of Igbo Proverbs)* presents over 1000 Igbo proverbs, grouped by topic, some with English translations (Ogbalu, 1965). Other paremiographies include Ogbalu (1974), Basden (1966), Carnochan & Belonwu (1963, 1967, 1976), Okonkwo (1977, 1979), Njoku (1978), Njoku (1990), Obi (1978), Davids (1980), Penfield (1983), Amadiume (1995), Okafor (2001), Onwudufu (2007) and Duru (2014), etc.

There are studies in Nigeria which try to show how proverbs can influence social change. This is different from the study of proverbs which result from social change. Such publications would include,

“Contradictory Yoruba Proverbs about Women: Their Significance for Social Change” (Yusuf, 1995: 206-215). There are also studies which apply proverbs to modern challenges. For example, there is the use of proverbs as heuristics in the domain of dominoes (Borajo et al.). There is also the use of proverbs to influence social attitudes and values through the mass media (Lau, 1996).

In previous works on the Igbo proverbs, little attention was devoted to the transformative as well as the inherent dynamism of the verbal art as a speech act and as materialist evidence of changing consciousness and perspectives. Previous research had concentrated exceedingly on the ethical role of the Igbo proverbs thereby resulting in the paucity of research on transformations in the style and structure of the proverbs. Although some scholars have illustrated the transformative potentials of proverbs especially in performance, they do not closely examine the nature of such transformations. More so, paremiological publications or studies dealing specifically with post Igbo proverbs are almost non-existent. While carrying out documentary research for the literature review as part of solving the problem, the researchers discovered that paremiological publications on post- Igbo proverbs were almost non-existent. They only encountered study which dealt with this type of proverb in passing: Nwadike's *The Igbo Proverb: Wider Perspective and Jephthah Elochukwu Unaegbu's* “Igbo Post-Contact Proverbs of the Inyi Community”. There are also snatches of such studies hidden in *Matatu Journal for African Culture and Society*. This desideratum of postproverbial scholarship is not limited to Igbo proverbs. Just as there is the need for a compendium of modern Igbo proverbs, there is also the need for a dictionary of modern African proverbs, that is, proverbs which originated within the 20th and 21st centuries.

The current work examines proverbs which have emerged as a result of the speaker's contact with other social and cultural systems that are different from ‘strict’ traditional Igbo cultures. These post Igbo proverbs, when isolated, will be useful for historical studies whose aims are to assess the mode and rate of acculturation and evolution in

this given ethnic group. It will also provide information as ethnography for quality measures in comparative studies or ethnologies.

4. Methodology

The research was mainly qualitative. It was conducted through an analytical research design, that is an interactive document research which describes and interprets the past or recent past from selected sources. These sources may be documents preserved in collections or participant's oral testimonies. This design is ideal in a situation where a researcher attempts to analyze a situation and make evaluation. For the present research, it was instrumental in examining the influence of the Igbo postproverbial as a deviant act. By implication, the discourse of Igbo postproverbials is referentially the radical discourse of literacy and modernity among Igbo youths.

4.1. Data Collection Techniques

Data for this paper were collected from diverse sources. The corpus is made up of thirty pairs of proverbs consisting of the traditional proverbs which were sourced from both the internet and participant observation from villages in Anambra State where the aged speakers live and represented as p1. The postproverbials are essentially sourced from urban usages with critical eyes on the mass media, literature and music made especially in the Igbo language and others that originate from contact with other cultures. The researchers identified these music and films as fertile grounds for postproverbials created either as conscious inventions or as erroneous renditions of the original traditional Igbo proverbs and are represented as p2.

5. Igbo Postproverbials, the Dynamic Act of the Cultural Deviant: Escaping Fixity

Proverbs are integral part of worldviews and cultures world over. The availability of fused traits in proverbs is, therefore, not surprising. Isidore Okpewho cited in Olutoyin Jegede foregrounds the "aware-

ness of new times which required new sensibilities” (2012: 285). It is a belief that the emergence of a new proverb to contradict an older one demands research into the change of circumstance which predicated the new stance. The researchers maintain that the agency of colonialism and its aftermaths cannot be expunged from the origin of these thoughts prevalent in the diverse literary forms produced in the twentieth century Igbo worldview. They categorized them in two typologies of proverbs which reflect the original Igbo proverb and its meaning. In the first type, simple old proverbs are clearly evident. While in the second type, clearly from films and music, key words and/or phrases are either replaced or reinvented or even perform different actions. What distinguished them from other kinds of proverbs is that they contain subjects and objects which came with the white man or with other cultures outside Igbo land. This article will list them alongside their meanings. Each is presented first in Igbo language, and then an English translation is provided. The meaning follows and the occasions when it was used are also revealed.

1. P1: O nweghị ihe anya hụrụ gbaa nmee.

Translation: Nothing the eye see will make it bleed.

Meaning: Nothing under the sun is ever new

P2: Ọdighị echi: O chiee, awara ya gọta.

Translation: Nothing is happening; if it sohappens, a gutter will be constructed for it.

Meaning: There is no situation without solution. This proverb, pending on who is making it, has dual meaning. An elder consoling someone may use it as consolation or youngsters making it to demonstrate fearlessness. In Igbo cosmology, this proverb foregrounds the saying that nothing is practically new.

2. P1: Onye nyere uze akwụ a hụrụ na ọkụ.

Translation: Who gives a squirrel palm fruit that has been roasted in the fire?

Meaning: Squirrels are used to eating their palm fruit raw-- they are unable to roast it.

P2: Onye nyere nwa enwe une nracha.

Translation: Who gives a monkey banana?

Meaning: Don't expect from a person something he can't get [afford].

3. P1: O nweghị onye ihe ọma na asọ nsọ.

Translation: There is no one who does not like good things.

Meaning: Everyone desires good things.

P2: Onweghị onye na achọ ofe azụ adighị na ya.

Translation: No one desires soup without fish in it.

Meaning: Everyone desires good things

4. P1: Onye nwee ego, O nwee ụmụnna.

Translation: When one becomes wealthy, he has many kinsmen.

Meaning: Riches draw a lot of friends.

P2: Nwoke kpata ego, agbatobi akalịa.

Translation: When a man makes money, his kinsmen increases.

Meaning: This Igbo proverb on money means that when a poor unnoticed person suddenly makes money, he is known by all.

5. P1: Gwam ọyị gị, ka m gwa gi onye ị bụ.

Translation: Show me your friend and I will tell you who you are.

Meaning: The kind of people you associate with, says the kind of person you are.

P2: Mgbe otu onye isi dị mma kpọrọ ndị ara iteghete gafee, ihe anyị mara bụ nandị ara iri gafere.

Translation: When a sane person walks in the company of nine mad people, what we know is that ten mad people walked by.

Meaning: The people you associate yourself with, show your true character.

6. Proverb: Afụ dimkpa, afụ ogologo ime ya.

Translation: When you see a grown man, you see his pointed nose.

Meaning: A good thing does not hide.

P2: Afụ dimkpa, anụ isi ego.

Translation: When you see a grown man, you smell money.

Meaning: This foregrounds either wealth or strength. In the case of wealth: it means when a wealthy person enters all money problems are solved and vice versa.

7. P1: Ọ bụrụ na ọnwụ egbughị ji eji chụọ aja, Ọ ga epu ome.

Translation: If death did not kill the yam of sacrifice, it will germinate.

Meaning: When there is life, there is hope.

P2: Ọ bụrụ na ọnwụ egbughị nwata akwụkwọ, Ọ ga abụ onye nkuzi.

Translation: If death does not kill a student, he will become a teacher.

Meaning: That the most important thing is life, in other words, existence precedes essence.

8. P1: Onye ndidi na eri azụ ukpoo.

Translation: A patient man eats fish drawn by the hooks.

Meaning: It points at the virtue of patience.

P2: Anụ nwere ndidi na anụ mmiri ọma.

Translation: A patient animal drinks goodwater.

Meaning: This Igbo proverb upholds the virtue of patience.

9. P1: Nwere ire guọ eze gị ọnụ.

Translation: Count your teeth with your tongue.

P2: Nwere ire guọ eze gị ọnụ abughị na o nwere nke na efu efu.

Translation: Count your teeth with your tongue does not mean you are losing any.

Meaning: This means that one should always be careful and look before they leap.

10. P1: Aka aja aja, buṅu mmanu mmanu.

Translation: Hands that touches the sand, is mouth that has oil in it.

P2: Aka na aga na akukuoku na agakwa na akukunu.

Translation: Hand that goes near the fire is the same that goes around the mouth.

Meaning: What this means is that the person who tills the ground, is the one who eats or who has something to eat during famine.

11. P1: O ga eme gi ka filmu.

Translation: It will pass you by like a film.

Meaning: To call someone's attention to a dangerous eventuality.

P2: O ga eme gi vum na anya.

Translation: It will clear you in the eyes.

Meaning: You may realize late the consequences of your actions.

12. P1: Beta anu, beta anu, o kwanu na ahụ nama.

Translation: Cut more meat! Cut more meat! It is from the body of a cow.

Meaning: This means that excessive demands comes from the same source, probably the head of the family

P2: Ogaranya bu omume omume.

Translation: Being wealthy is being lavish in spending.

Meaning: When it comes to squandering other people's properties no one considers the waste.

Note: "Nama" is a Hausa word for meat. Cow meat was usually referred to when the Hausa Fulani had contact with the Igbo. Thus, the proverb came after contact with the Hausa word.

13. P1: Nwata na ata akara na-ata ego ya.

Translation: The child who eats bean balls, known as akara, spends his own money.

Meaning: Nothing goes for nothing. Every action has its consequences.

P2: Kwa! Kwa! Kwa! Kọbọ gị sokwaa.

Translation: Ha! Ha! Ha! Your kobo goes with it!

Meaning: Remember that as you smile and enjoy the company of a girl, you will eventually pay for it.

Note: Kobo is the smallest coin in the Nigerian currency.

14. P1: Anaghị eji ahụhụ anya isi.

Translation: No one brags with suffering.

Meaning: One should not tamper with things undoable

P2: Ahụhu na enye ọbara.

Translation: Suffering gives blood or one uses suffering to get refreshed.

Meaning: This is used in a derogatory manner to make fun or ridicule one who is trying to do the unthinkable.

15. P1: Onye kwuo ebe mmiri nwetara ya, enye ya ebe ọ ga anọ na akụkụ ọkụ yachaa onwe ya.

Translation: If one tells of the place where the rain met him, he is given a place to warm up by the fire.

Meaning: This means that people should desist from dissembling or concealing things.

P2: Onye kọo mkpa ya; enye ya mitini.

Translation: When one tells his problem, a solution is proffered.

Meaning: If one explains his condition [situation] one does for him what ought to be done. [He is treated as he ought to be treated; receives the help he needs.]

16. P1: Egbe belụ ugo belụ, nke sị ibe ya ebela, nku kwaa ya.

Translation: Let the hawk perch, let the eagle perch; the one that tells the other not to perch, let his wing break.

P2: Egbe belụ, ugo belụ, nke sị ibe ya ebela, gosi ya ebe ọ ga ebe.

Translation: Let the hawk perch, let the eagle perch; the one that says the other should perch, let him show him where to perch.

Meaning: The one who tells his companion not to stay [tries to displace him], let him show him where to perch.

17. P1: Ihe aghụchatara na eze anaghị eju afọ.

Translation: Particles removed from the teeth after food does not fill the stomach.

Meaning: Greed and avarice is worthless.

P2: Onye ụgwọ ọnwa ya ezughịrị, ọ bụ ova taimụ ga ezu.

Translation: He whose monthly salary is not enough, the over time he puts in will not be enough too.

Meaning: That sidekicks like bribes so taken in the face of work will never amount to anything.

18. P1: Nwata kwọchaa aka, o soro okenye rie nri.

Translation: When a child watches his hands, he dines with the elders.

Meaning: A youngster that is sensible is yoked with elders as they deliberate.

P2: Nwa na eso okenye, Ọ taghị ose, Ọ taa oji.

Translation: The child that follows an elder; if he does not eat pepper, he eats kola.

Meaning: This proverb means that when a young man shows that he can use his brains well, he is invited in deliberations with the elders.

19. P1: Ọkụkọ ara na agba, ahụbeghị ufu mmanya na egbu.

Translation: A chicken who claims to be mad [wild] has not seen the drunken fox.

P2: Na ọkụkọ na anyụ oke nsị, bụ na ọgbogwu abịabeghị.

Translation: That the fowl defecates a lot is because the duck has not come.

Meaning: If one who is always ready to face death [belligerent] meets one who is also ready to face death, he begins to crave life.

20. P1: O nwere ihe dị iche na ègbè na égbé.

Translation: There is a difference between hawk and gun.

Meaning: In Igbo dialect, the words gun and hawk are spelt the same but pronounced differently with tone marking. That is why is their new wisdom they warn that there is a big difference between the two. This is to ward off eminent attack or insult.

P2: O nwere ihe dị iche na chaaja na pawa bank.

Translation: There is a difference between the charger and power bank.

Meaning: This Igbo proverb foregrounds the efficacy of follow comes.

21. P1: Oke osimiri anọkataghị rie onye ọbụla nke ọ na ahụghị ụkwụ ya.

Translation: The Ocean never swallows a person whose legs it does not come in contact with.

Meaning: Nothing just happens; to every occurrence, there a reason.

P2: Onye mmiri hụrụ ụkwụ ya, ka ọ na eri.

Translation: The Ocean only swallows whoever it saw his/her legs.

Meaning: This means that we bear the consequences of our actions.

22. P1: Onye jisịe ike, O luo alaeze. Onye jekata ghara, nke O jelu eje, ala ya n' iyi.

Translation: When one tries in good works, he reaches heaven; but when he abandons it halfway, all his efforts lays waste.

Meaning: One who ploughs in the kingdom and keeps looking back is not worthy of his/her call.

P2: Onye jisịe ike, O luo alaeze. Onye jekata ghalụ, nwanne ya enyelụ ya aka.

Translation: When one tries, he reaches heaven; if he gets weary, let his brother assist him.

Meaning: This proverb was popularised by the clergy in admonishing backsliders. It foregrounds the need to be steadfast in every worthy project one embarks on.

23. P1: Ejighi akpata atufuo aba ogaranya.

Translation: No one gets wealthy by throwing away what they have acquired. **Meaning:** This Igbo proverb about money means that wasteful people will never become wealthy.

P2: Ogaranya bu omume omume.

Translation: Being wealthy is being showy by spending the money.

Note: This proverb deviates from the traditional 'wasteful people will never become rich' to say that misers should not be considered wealthy people.

24. P1: Isi kotare ebu, ka ebu na-agba.

Translation: It is the head that disturbs the wasp that the wasp will stink.

Meaning: Bad things will always find bad people out.

P2: Nkpakana ga ama ozo ma ozo ga ala.

Translation: The Chimpanzee will be caught by the trap, but the Chimp will escape.

Meaning: Means that trouble makers will scale the consequences of their actions.

Note: The Igbo traditional proverb is used in warning trouble makers about serious consequences but the altering alternative says that makers of trouble will eventually scale any consequence.

25. P1: A na ekwu okwu ndi oke tagburu, ngwere achiri ego gaba ipi eze.

Translation: While we mourn those who died from rat bites, Lizards take money to go sharpen their teeth.

Meaning: When people face troubled times; harsher ones keep coming.

P2: A na ekwu okwu ndị oke tagburu, ngwere enwere nnu na-eso eze ya.

Translation: While we mourn the deaths of those who died from rat bites, Lizards sharpen their teeth with salt.

Meaning: It means that people should face more important matter instead of wasting time with platitudes.

26. P1: Ndụ dij, olile anya dij.

Translation: As long as there is life, there is hope.

Meaning: The possibility of all things when there is life.

P2: Ka anyasị eteka, chi ga-efo.

Translation: However long the night, the dawn will break.

Meaning: This proverb means that tough times don't last forever. We should keep hope alive and wait it out.

27. P1: Ugo chara acha n'eri awọ.

Translation: A mature eagle that eats toad.

Meaning: The eagle is known to be the king of birds and is not supposed to eat despicable foods like toads.

P2: Ugo riee awọ, mma ya arọ.

Translation: The moment an eagle decides to feed on a toad, the beauty is lost.

Meaning: This saying means that a person of honour should be careful not to bring himself into disrepute.

28. P1: Mmiri ejula awọ ọnụ.

Translation: Water has filled the toad's mouth.

Meaning: Something there is no way to explain or express.

P2: Awusa abatago Oka.

Translation: The Hausa man has entered Awka.

Meaning: A problem has become direr and would likely overwhelm the speaker. It is used when a situation would consume the speaker if he does not act fast.

Note: This new wisdom was formed in post Nigerian civil war.

29. P1: Ebule laa azụ, Ọ bịa ọgu.

Translation: The ram retreats before attacking an enemy.

Meaning: That one should take time to assess a situation before jumping in.

P2: Ebule ji isi eje ọgu.

Translation: The ram fights with the head.

Meaning: This postproverb is one of the two used by the researcher to demonstrate the traditional proverb shift from the root and performing a different function far removed from the traditional proverb. It foregrounds the idea of tackling challenges head-on without assessing the situation as against the proverbial stance in the root proverb.

30. P1: Ọ bụ m ka Aba na amụrụ ọkpọ?

Translation: Is it me that Aba people are learning how to box?

Meaning: Something that is so impossible to achieve.

P2: Ọ bụ m ka Aba na amụrụ ọkpọ; Ọ mụsịa, o tie na aja.

Translation: Is Aba learning how to box for me? After training, they will box the sand.

Meaning: Every evil thought directed at me is effort in futility.

The researcher observed that more radicalised proverbs were obtained from mass media and music than during participant observation or the internet sources. Twenty radicalised proverbs were obtained from there while only ten reconstructions were naturally situated utterances that occurred during the events in which the researchers used participant observation. This shows that there is a much larger corpus of postproverbials known to actors/actresses and musicians than are used during ceremonies. All the ten (10) postproverbials obtained during participant observation were utilized by Igbo indigenes that were younger than *ndiokenye*. *Ndiokenye* were men/women above seventy-five years and who are versed in the Igbo way of life. Post-modern proverbs are used more readily by the younger generation than by the older generation as is observed in this work.

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, the author proves that radicalised or postmodernist proverb-formulation is a recurrent feature among Igbo youths, and that it also permeates the urban space. While proverbs are noted for insights and wisdom, postproverbials are not without wisdom. Emphasising that postproverbiality is not a spatio-temporal process, they note here, that it is a common phenomenon in many cultures, and will certainly be a continuous process—especially according to Pepetual Chiangong, “with digital media - because humans today seem to be endowed with a ‘manipulative imagination” (93). Such hybrid forms are not only linguistic inventions that either resist or echo conventional proverbs, but they are also playful linguistic reinventions, given the social, political and cultural circumstances to which the speakers are exposed. More so, the researchers were able to distil thirty post Igbo proverbs, thereby helping to increase knowledge and literature about Igbo post-contact proverbs. When such findings are eventually published, there would then be published literature on postcolonial Igbo proverbs thereby settling the issue of the dearth of scholarship. They conclude that a wider research on post-modern proverbs in Igbo cultures is necessary to ascertain properly the corpus of this type of new proverbs and their influences in Igbo life and customs.

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ADEOLA SELEEM OLANIYAN - ADEOLA MERCY AJAYI

A COMIC WISDOM: TAKING A PHILOSOPHICAL INTERROGATION OF BABA SUWE'S POSTPROVERBIALS

Abstract: Proverbs, in their sacrosanct original state, are houses of oratory wisdom, erected by sages on bricks of words, preserved over time and passed across generations for reuse in future occurrences that are considered to have similar connotations. The conservative idea of proverbs, in their revered state, tends to suggest that there cannot be new and additional proverbs in recent days than the ones that have been handed down in the remote past. By implication, it seems to be as if the past that produced the proverbs was never a present at a particular time or that the past had a “wisdom-making machine” that is absent in the present day. The danger in this assumption is that it practically closes the window of continuity of oratory wisdom. Contrarily, the idea of postproverbiality, practically, reopens the closed window. To this end, although it is presented in a humorous witty way that makes people laugh and dowse their emotions, the idea of postproverbiality deliberately challenges the sacrosanctity of the existing proverbs to update, condemn or create additional new proverbs. Baba Suwe played an active role in transforming the existing Yoruba proverbs in the movie industry. By way of exposition and analysis of some of his proverbial creativities, this paper posits that Baba Suwe’s proverbial transformations pass as eponymous postproverbials. The paper also proceeds to critically interrogate some of these proverbial transformations to sieve out the wisdom embedded in them.

Keywords: Proverbs, Postproverbials, Yoruba Movies, Culture, Comedy.

1. Introduction

Western philosophy is said to have been birthed in ancient Greece out of awe or curiosity around the 5th Century B.C. as opposed to African philosophy which is alleged to have grown out of frustration, bearing in mind the three subsets of “wonders” that are, according

to Socrates, the mother of philosophy. However, as jealously as the Westerner world flaunts the “glorious” birth of their philosophy, it focused on humans’ external natural environment rather than making humans’ existential predicaments the object of study until the advent of Socrates who was accredited for returning philosophy to earth. The allegation that African philosophy was birthed out of frustration seems to be true because the alleged one was the African philosophy that was birthed in Africa by the Westernised Africans, (Africans who have acquired Western education) as a reaction to colonial realities and Eurocentric claims. However, this allegation is not genuine more than the fact that what was considered African philosophy is a blueprint copy of Western-type philosophy and this explains the more, why it unavoidably, inherits most of the Western-type philosophical predicaments.

Meanwhile, there is an authentic African Philosophy that predated the one that had its birth in African universities out of frustration and remains intact and unadulterated amidst every colonial influence. This is regarded as Traditional African Philosophy as against the Western-type African Philosophy. Interestingly, John Kekes argues that the goal of philosophy is to help humans come to terms with their “perennial problems” (32) which, according to Adeshina Afolayan and Toyin Falola, can be divided into two: the problems of life and the problems of reflection (10). Traditional Africans also must have engaged, sometimes, with this problem of reflection but they must have been, more often, preoccupied with the problems of life. This is embedded in many of their folklores, mythological narrations, songs, *ifa* renditions, incantations, and, of course, proverbs, among others. Having been so carried away by the Western philosophical style, Westernised African philosophers are so much more concerned now with the soul-searching agenda and problem of reflection than the problem of life.

It would be considered here that there is no reasonable argument against the existence of African philosophy anymore. Of course, Sophie Oluwole has practically put the last nail in the coffin of the con-

trovsky when she says “the futility of the continuation of the debate on the existence of African philosophy is today generally conceded” (18). However, the genuine and pertinent question after the existence of African philosophy has been proved beyond any reasonable doubt, is; what should be the major concern of the contemporary African philosophers? This is where Afolayan and Falola’s submission to the African philosophers becomes so relevant that “there is a need for African philosophers to get on the street and get their theories dirtied by the predicament on the continent” (12). This implies that rather than being fully absorbed in abstract reflection on the foreign philosophical discusses that might bear little or no relevance to a layman on the street, African philosophers should look inward to expose, interrogate, critically analyse and, where necessary, update the piecemeal philosophies that are handed down by their forebearers in form of folklores, mythological narratives, fables and, of course, proverbs. In this regard, we shall interrogate how a street comic actor, known as Baba Suwe, challenges the status quo of Yoruba proverbs in his movie feature to see whether they pass as postproverbials. We shall also interrogate them to extract the wisdom embedded in them.

The next section shall be dedicated to examining the tenets of proverbiality and how it has been exposed to transformation amidst the assumed rigid status. After a firm understanding of proverbiality, we shall look into the circumstances and conditions that are individually necessary and collectively sufficient to the birth of postproverbials from existing proverbs. The section that follows this shall be sold to a brief, but purposeful, biography of Baba Suwe after which we shall move to an exposition and analysis of his proverbial transformation in the section that follows it. With the aid of the postproverbial diagnostic tools provided by Aderemi Raji-Oyelade, this paper shall establish that Baba Suwe’s proverbial attempts qualify as eponymous postproverbials. The next section shall be dedicated to an interrogation of the Baba Suwe postproverbials to extract the senses that are embedded in the nonsensical exercises after which this paper shall draw its conclusion.

2. *From Proverbiality to Postproverbiality*

Every linguistic community has the potential capacity to produce proverbs and/or subgenres of the same, such as apothegm, adage, wellerism, and so forth (Aleksa Varga and Raji-Oyelade 269). Proverb occurs in different languages in different forms with some intersection in meanings and forms across languages. Here, we shall take it in abeyance that *òwe* is a proverb even though we are aware of the controversy on whether the English concept “proverb,” in every essence and existence, captures the Yoruba concept “*òwe*,” or Yoruba *òwe* is nothing more than a close variant of proverb (Owomoyela 1-6). However, to avoid being entrapped in the long controversy, here, both “*òwe*” and “proverb” shall be employed interchangeably and the definition of proverb presented by Owomoyela shall be adopted here thus;

Proverbs, often incisive in their propositions and terse in their formulation, are deduced from close observation of life, life forms and their characteristics and habits, the environment and natural phenomena, and sober reflection on all these. Because proverbs are held to express unexceptionable truths, albeit with some qualification, their use in a discussion or argument is tantamount to an appeal to established authority. (Owomoyela 12)

In other words, proverbs are a reservoir in which people store their experiences for easy transference across generations; a light to navigate through future reoccurrence of the same. This is made possible by the judicious articulation of words, to form a maxim of one or more complete sentence(s). In traditional African settings, judicious and sufficient invocation of proverbs in appropriate points, and the discussion were so valued that it is considered one of the significant measures of a person’s wisdom (Aleksa Varga and Raji-Oyelade 277). This is so because proverbs, when consistently and appropriately invoked in discussions, make one’s discussion more robust and clearer to the audience, and, by so doing, the proverb gets transferred from

one person to another and across generations. The role proverbs play in driving one's point home has been illustrated by O. Delano (ix) with the popular Yoruba proverb that says thus: “*òwe l'ẹsin ọrọ, b'ọrọ ba sọnù, òwe la fí ńwa*” meaning “proverbs are the horse of words; if words are lost, proverbs are used to find it.”

Lawrence Boadi, citing instances from Akan proverbs (an ethnic group in Ghana), romances the aesthetic and poetic values of proverbs “in driving points home to the audiences” to the point of its exaggeration so much that he sacrifices the didactic and pragmatic roles of proverbs in the traditional African settings. He even sets a hierarchy of proverbs into “low-valued” and “highly-valued” proverbs not based on any usefulness or truth value but on rhetoric measure and its ability to estrange novices (183-191). Interestingly, Kwame Gyekye saves the face of Akan proverbs, and by extension, African proverbs, from taking this erroneous assumption to be true of Akan, not even Africa. According to Gyekye, the sole aim of African proverbs is to establish the truth (64-65). The transversal of proverbs in the traditional African settings was essentially oral because the writing culture was not predominant in many traditional African societies (Oluwole 68) until very recently when Western-trained African scholars were gaining interest in documenting this old wisdom. Notably among the documentation of Yoruba proverbs is Owomoyela's collection and translation titled: *Yoruba Proverbs*. Before Owomoyela, Samuel Ajayi Crowder's *A Vocabulary of the Yoruba Language* was published in 1843.

Interestingly, the advancement in science and technology, which, from a pessimistic mind, might have been thought to be a “killer” of this indigenous African cultural practice, is now showing to be a promoting agent for the conservation and dispersal of cultural values from one angle. A good reference to this is the mass media, information, and communication technology. At first, it was experienced in the music industry when, with the invention of studio recorders and audio-playing devices, several talented musicians were not only able to create different music styles but also revive and promote the ancient ones. In Yoruba land, these ancient and new music styles

include; Gèlèdè, Kete, Àwúrèbe, Àpàlà, Jùjú, Fújì Afrobeat Songs, Gbèdu, Gospel Songs, Wákà, Ajíwéré, among others. Through these music industries, talented musicians were able to employ different African proverbs to drive home their points and spice them up with beats and percussion that helped in dowsing people's emotions. In addition to the verbal invocation of proverbs, they may also use talking drums to express proverbs where they deem it necessary. However, beyond dancing, music industries have helped a lot in "collecting," "retrieval," "authenticating" and "enunciating" many traditional proverbs.

This music industry helps in the collection processes in the sense that proverbs were authored by people at a particular place and a time past, no matter whether it maintains anonymity or not. For this reason, some proverbs which would have been localised to an area of production for usage were able to travel afar when employed in a musical recording. The old, moribund, as well as, the forgotten versions of proverbs also, at times, got retrieved in the course of the research of the musicians. In the same way, several proverbs had been significantly caricatured in the course of usage and had almost superimposed the originals. Glory be to the talented and dedicated musicians who, with the aid of their exhaustive research effort, unveil the correct expression of many proverbs. Otherwise, many proverbs would have been forgotten, lost and eventually have their corrupt version instead of the originals. Likewise, while some proverbs are straightforward to understand, some of them have historical underpinnings that, if not narrated, the meaning of the proverbs may not be easily and adequately captured. Some of these historical underpinnings were researched and popularised by talented musicians who meant the business. While some people might give kudos to Saheed Osupa, a renowned fuji musician per excellent, as topping the table today in the aforementioned benefit, this paper would like to look beyond today to acknowledge the efforts of his progenitors which include, Sikiru Ayinde Barrister, Yusufu Olatunji, Haruna Ishola, Dauda Epo Akara, Orlando Owo, among others.

As important as the contribution of the music industries to the collection, retrieval, authentication, dispersal and popularisation of Yoruba proverbs, the contributions of the theatre industries, arguably, outnumbered and outweighed the musical industries' contributions. This might be so because, just like real-life conversations, theatre practitioners, always involve more actors in a movie, constantly engaging in discussions with one another in the name of discharging their professional duties of producing movies. To engender quality work, the stage writer, in the course of stage-writing the work, consistently consults his/her "Proverb Banks" and employs adequate and well-researched proverbs in the appropriate stages of the work, which shall be well mastered by each actor before the action. This research and rehearsal opportunity, which the theatre practitioners enjoy, gives them an edge over a real-life discussant, who may invoke proverbs inappropriately for its assertion might be impromptu or because he/she is not under any serious "watch" or "sanction" for any (sub)conscious, (in)adequacy or miss(use) of proverbs.

Traditionally, "relative fixity" or "rigidity" was considered one of the hallmarks of any typical proverb (Finnegan 393), including Yoruba proverbs. As good as the proverb tradition and its usage is, this relative fixity or rigidity of Yoruba proverbs, like its counterparts in any other linguistic community, suggests that wisdom is in the exclusive list of the ancient people; that no new proverbs can be added to the inherited ones as if there was a "Wisdom Making Machine" in the ancient era that is completely lacking in the contemporary era or as if the ancient "yesterday" was never a "today" in a time past or as if the said ancestors were never at a time living beings or as if the present living beings are not going to die one day and attain ancestorship status. Meanwhile, arguably, the contemporary era would always have better potential to produce intellectual wisdom than it is possible for the previous era of any place at any time in the geographical location. This is biologically provable in the sense that no evolution theory-informed mind would reasonably dispute (Darwin, Vernadsky, etcetera). Besides, it is also so on the ground that the ad-

vancement in technology has, tremendously, assisted in the production and documentation of knowledge. The African continent is not an exception in this fast-moving train. Many African philosophers have criticised the rigidity status of African proverbs. Notable among these critiques was Barry Hallen's who laments thus:

What was said to be distinctive about African oral traditions was the relatively uncritical manner in which they were inherited from the past, preserved in the present, and passed on to future generations. So regarded, traditions resembled 'rules' governing the 'game of life' that determined in a relatively absolute manner what Africans believed and how they behaved, and that they therefore had no intellectual incentive to articulate, explain, and certainly not to challenge. (19)

Interestingly enough, as a disapproval of Hallen's critique, there has been a significant break loose from this intellectual bondage that tends to delimit contemporary African creative efforts in contributing to the proverbial discussion. This demystification attempt at proverbs is what Raji-Oyelade identified and conceptualised as post-proverbial. Drawing a line of a continuum with this postproverbial project is another strand of it that aims at emancipating the female gender, which Olayinka Oyeleye termed as Feminist postproverbial. This is a pointer to the fact that the postproverbial is a potential field of research that could be employed as a tool by Africans in the nearest future to challenge and readdress the existing social orders that are found faulty, including environmental ethical issues and also, with it, we can come to term with newly evolving human social realities.

However, it is arguable that the proverb transformation might not be as strange and a pioneering imagination of the modern world as Finnegan (393) would have us believe. Rather, it is arguable that its origin must have been as long as the human creation of proverbs albeit it might be in subconscious ways. Consider a slight alteration that might occur when one tries to customise a proverb for a particu-

lar discussion by making the proverb reflect a discussant or someone else name. For instance: *Bí a bá mú ọ̀pọ̀lọ́, tí kò bá jọ kọ̀nkọ̀, à gbe jù sí'lè ni* (if we take a frog, which is not like a toad, we drop it). This proverb could be customised thus: *Bí a bá mú ọ̀pọ̀lọ́ Ajadi, tí kò bá jọ kọ̀nkọ́ Adeogun, à gbe jù sí'lè ni* (if we take Ajadi's frog, which is not like Adeogun's toad, we drop it). This proverb could be invoked when one mistakenly arrests Ajadi for a crime committed by Adeogun and then comes overriding evidence. As slight as this alteration might seem, it, at least, points to the flexibility status a proverb might have, by its very nature contrary to the rigidity or fixity claim.

Another instance we can cite is the existence of some versions of proverbs that have almost successfully overridden the originals so much that they have been taken for the original because of their popularity. For instance, “*òwe l’ẹ̀şin ọ̀rọ́, ọ̀rọ́ l’ẹ̀şin òwe, b’ọ̀rọ́ ba sọ̀nù, òwe la fíń wa,*” is an overridden version that has been taken as the original of which it is a popular Fuji musician, king Sunny Ade’s version. This version is nothing but a transformation of the original version which is “*òwe l’ẹ̀şin ọ̀rọ́, b’ọ̀rọ́ ba sọ̀nù, òwe la fíń wa,*” meaning “proverb is the horse of words, if words are lost, it is proverbs that are used to find them.” Kindly note that “*ọ̀rọ́ l’ẹ̀şin òwe*” was added to spice up the music with no valid epistemic ground. In the same way, the popularly alluded “*ẹ̀ni tí ò le ẹ̀şe alábaárù l’Ọ̀yìngbò, kò le se bí Adégbọ̀rọ́ l’Ọ̀jàaba*” meaning “**he who cannot be a head-porter at Ọ̀yìngbò, cannot be like Adegboro at Ọ̀jàaba** has been taken as the original if not for Raji-Oyelade who, having hailed from the Adegboro family, was able to retrace and re-establish that this is just but a nineteenth-century version. Accordingly, the original, which was the eighteenth-century version, goes thus; “*ẹ̀nití ò le ẹ̀şe bí ẹ̀lẹ̀dẹ́ l’ónà l’jẹ̀bù, kò le se bí Adégbọ̀rọ́ l’Ọ̀jàaba*” meaning “**he who cannot be like a pig at l’jẹ̀bù Road, cannot be like Adegboro at Ọ̀jàaba.**” He re-narrated the history to back his claim up. “*Ọ̀jà tà, ọ̀jà o tà, owó alábaárù yóó pé,*” meaning “whether the merchandise is sold or not, the wages of the head-porter shall complete,” is yet another version, which superimposed on the original version which

is; “*ògò tà, ògò ò tà, owó alábdàárù yóó pé,*” meaning “whether the drum stick earn money or not, the wages of the head-porter shall complete.” The point is that we have many of them which have been taken to be proverbs yet they are conscious or subconscious transformation proverbs of seemingly forgotten original proverbs. These are nothing but pointers to the fact that the transformation of proverbs, as against relative fixity of the same, has always been part of human history from antiquity only that it exists in different degrees, mindsets, frequency and popularity.

More beyond this, it is arguable that people must have, over time, been engaging in twisting proverbs humorously but this might always end up in laughing it away. The establishment and flourishing of movie industries have not only contributed to proverbiality but also its transformation as well. Yoruba Comic actors of different eras, which include Baba Sala, Dejo Tunfulu, Depe, Pa Kasumu, and Mr. Latin, among others, have engaged in challenging the sacrosanct status of Yoruba proverbs. The existence of short video clips is also contributing to the transformation of proverbs. Worthy of mention is the Oriogbade’s short comic video clips that trend on the TikTok App on social media. Beyond the contributions of all the aforementioned Yoruba comic actors put together, it is argued, is the sole contribution of Baba Suwe. So much were his contributions in the witty twisting of Yoruba proverbs in his time that he proclaimed himself as the Chief Atuwe of Nigeria Limited.

However, it is pertinent to raise some questions here. Does every alteration of proverbs amount to postproverbial? Put differently, can every altered form of a proverb be passed as a postproverbial? To answer this question, an allusion shall be, concisely, made to the postproverbial theorist, Raji-Oyelade. According to him, postproverbials are “alternate creations derived from and which stand against traditional proverbs” (*Postproverbials* 75). It is explained further that postproverbials are extensions, reactions or even departures from the sets of conventional proverbs which have become part of the essential and indigenous philosophy of the Yoruba people (Aleksa Var-

ga and Raji-Oyelade 273). In other words, they are “modernist recreations that are derived from and exist side-by-side in rather equal phonocentric status with traditional proverbs” (*Postproverbials* 76). These definitions of the subject matter are nothing but authoritative yardsticks for measuring and determining proverbial transformation that could be accounted as postproverbial. They tell us that for any proverbial transformation P_2 to be accounted as postproverbial, it has to be an alternative creation that is derived from and stands against an existing proverb P_1 . What is more, it has to be a modernist recreation. He further establishes four main types of Yoruba postproverbials; the “simple,” the “complex,” the “parallel,” and the “phrase in signal clause.” He also highlights what he considers the sub-forms of the postproverbial text thus; the “keyword,” the “pun,” and the “additive” (*Classifying* 146-155). In addition to these aforementioned typologies, he also recognises another unique type of verbal act which he labelled as “eponymous postproverbials” (*Playful* 73-86). This type of postproverbials, “is usually attributed or ascribed to particular producers including politicians, entertainers, orators, artists, poets, and even fictional characters created by authors. These sets of postproverbials with identifiable authors are referred to as “eponymous postproverbials” (Aleksa Varga and Raji-Oyelade 273).

With this exposition of what postproverbial is and its typologies, as identified above, at the back of our mind, we shall, hereby, espouse some of Baba Suwe’s proverbial transformation attempts with the aim of seeing, by analysing the linguistic and semantic changes that occur, whether they qualify as postproverbials. By so doing, we shall diagnose Baba Suwe’s blasphemous proverbs in other to see how they play themselves into being and, where possible, show why we should recognise the transformations of the traditional proverbs he worked on, into postproverbial statements. After that, we shall critically interrogate them to espouse the wisdom that is thereby embedded. Beforehand, let us take a brief moment to look into the background of the comic Nollywood actor.

3. A Background of Baba Suwe

Born in 1958, Babatunde Omidina was a Nigerian movie actor and comedian of Yoruba origin, popularly known as Baba Suwe. He began his movie acting career in 1971 but he remained unknown until he featured in a movie produced by Obalende, titled *Omolasan*, and became more popular in 1997 after he featured in a tragic movie produced by Olaiya Igwe, titled *Ìrù Eṣin*. Before he died in 2021, he had featured in more than 200 Yoruba movies. However, the ones he produced by himself are *Oluwari Magboojo*, *Ba o ku*, *Oju Oloju*, *Baba Londoner*, *Ko Tan Si'Be*, *Aso Ibora*, *Obelomo*, *Elebolo*, and *Larinloodu*. Baba Suwe came into the movie industry when using the adjective “Baba” or “Iya” was the order of the day. Hence, we had, Baba Sala, Baba Wande, Iya N’iwe, Iya Rainbow, Iya Awero, Madam Saje, and, of course, Baba Suwe. He was the first known Yoruba comic actor who would use his real-life wife, stage-named Moladun Kenkelewu, as the object of comics in movies and his wife always featured in movies he featured. This suggests a causal connection between the demise of his wife and a stop in his movie career until his death makes it a final one. His mode of dressing and his body painting also gave him a room; a funny appearance that would, unavoidably, arouse laughter at first sight. His deliberately corrupt English word pronunciation is, definitely, his imaginative creation. It is worthy of note that as funny as he tries to display, he never tolerates cursing in any of his features without a counter-reaction or rebuttal of the same with immediate effect. More so, his character never died in any movie. Of unique importance, among other characters he displayed, is his humorous twisting of Yoruba proverbs that stands him out among the equals in the industry. Although, he might not be the pioneer of this intellectual creativity in the Yoruba movie industry as Baba Sala, among others, might have engaged in such an act before him, his dedicated contributions in the field of proverbial transformation arguably outweigh the contribution of any other actor in the industry. His proverbial transformations, particularly, the ones that were dedicatedly done in a movie titled *Baba Oja*, shall be exposed and analysed in the subsequent sections.

4. An Exposition of Postproverbials in Baba Suwe's Movies

The Yoruba culture favours deep philosophising, in which wisdom is based on the acquisition and display of traditional and indigenous proverbs which are usually used as a strategy of communication (Aleksa Varga and Raji-Oyelade 277). In our contemporary society, proverbial expressions have mostly been recorded and gathered in collections and dictionaries so that traditions can be protected. Traditionally, they were preserved over time and transmitted orally. Among the Yorubas, the earliest collections of proverbs started with Samuel Ajayi Crowder's *A Vocabulary of the Yoruba Language* in 1843, to the most comprehensive compilation of Owomoyela's *Yoruba Proverbs* in 2005. They have been strictly based on the documentation of both the traditional and the contemporary examples of proverbs.

Not all Yoruba proverbial expressions are humorous and likewise, not all of them pass as a verbal joke. Meanwhile, Baba Suwe's proverbs are, deliberately, humorous. Humorous proverbs are also verbal jokes containing much wit sayings. Thus, one utterance can simultaneously amuse and instruct. Just like Baba Suwe, masters of the Yoruba language are often prone to demonstrate their competence in communicating in Yoruba by including a sense of humour in creating an infinite number of proverbs by playing upon any situation around them that they can imagine or remember. Let us look at these three anonymous Yoruba speakers in a humorous conversation. Let us label the original proverb as P_1 and how it is transformed into others labelled as P_2 and P_3 .

- P_1 : *K'árìn k'ápò, yíyẹ ní yẹ'ni.*
walking together in large numbers is befitting.
- P_2 : *...sùgbón bí t'òná òrun kó o.*
...but not like that of a journey to the hereafter.
- P_3 : *Ó yẹ àwọ̀n ẹ̀ran lléyá sá o.*
It befits the Ed-Kabir sacrificial rams.

In the above quotation, the first speaker invoked a Yoruba proverb that promotes communalism which is a laudable custom. The sec-

ond speaker's response is laughable because it provides an instance where going in multitude could not be glorified apart from the obsolete practice of 'A-boba-ku' in the Old Oyo Empire where there was a mythological justification for burying a living with the dead in Yoruba land as a bid to accompany the dead to the hereafter. According to Fagunwa, D. J., one Yoruba humorous writer also played upon this situation whereby the existing law was cancelled. However, to counter the laughable comment by the second speaker, the third speaker thought that the communal journey of the numerous Ileya (Ed-El-Kabir) sacrificial rams fits the rams because at least, they are not going on the journey alone, since numerous rams will be slaughtered on the festival day. This comment is laughable because it seems that the third speaker is making fun of the Rams who have no mind of their own to complain or escape their mass slaughter. The above exposition shows how the semantic, rather than structure, of a traditional proverb has changed from a Yoruba philosophy that promotes communality to a counter instance, which might be laughable though, but also a semantically reasonable statement. The third statement could be considered as a shared sense of making jest on the unfortunate condition that meets the Rams as a result of a massive killing.

Baba Suwe is known for the use of his humorous replies to proverbs in his movies. He ensures that the main proverbs and the humour added coexist while he draws out various shades of meaning in the language by creating appropriate humorous proverbs to enrich his script in his movies. Twisting of Yoruba proverbs takes a significant genre in Baba Suwe's movie life so much that no proverb would, hardly, escape twisting when invoked to his hearing in the movies. Due to the limited scope of this work, we cannot present all the proverbial transformations in Baba Suwe's works. Rather, we shall narrow our searchlight to the four proverbial transformations retrievable from a movie titled *Ogbà Wèrè*. Although every other attempt he made is also important, this movie is most relevant here because he dedicatedly meant it here as he was deliberately engaged, by an interlocutor, in proverb twisting via questioning unlike in the other

movies where he only twists proverbs when the opportunity comes. To this end, proverbs in the *Ogbà Wèrè* shall be espoused as well as Baba Suwe's humorous proverbial creativities.

In a movie titled *Ogba Were*, Baba Suwe boldly proclaimed himself as *The Chief Atuwe of Nigeria Limited*, although he proclaimed himself, with one variance of this name or the other, in some other movies too. In *Ogba Were*, two interlocutors, among whom one was his character's son, came to him as students who were given an assignment from their institute of learning to complete some Yoruba proverbs. In each moment, he was supplied with initial dependent clauses of some traditional Yoruba proverbs to fill in the complementary clause gab. Here, we shall look at them one after the other to analyse the alteration in the proverb. Here, the traditional proverbs shall be labelled P_1 while Baba Suwe versions shall be labelled P_2 . Raji-Oyelade (*Postproverbials* 78-80) highlights three conditions, which are independently necessary and collectively sufficient for postproverbials to be considered to have taken place. The form of the first half, which shall be labelled as P_1 , is totally sacrosanct and culturally given. They are the primary arrangement whose locus is derived from the episteme of the folktales, legends, and myths of traditional societies. The form P_2 , which is culturally dynamic and not expressly rigid, is the second condition. The third condition is neo-competence, which connotes; the overriding characteristic of superimposition and dissemination. In other words, the interconnections between the original and the new form must be readily recognisable. It has to displace and disseminate the complete cause in such a way that the new verbal genre has a relatively polysemic quality (*Postproverbials* 78-79). We shall show how Baba Suwe was able to display his oratory wisdom by reacting to the sacrosanct traditional Yoruba's wealth of wisdom as displayed in the traditional proverbs and replacing them with his own, imaginative but also logical, conclusive part.

In the first instance, he was supplied with the first half of the following Yoruba Proverb so that he could complete the remaining clause as we have it in P_1 . Kindly note that the clause that is bolded

in P_1 is the given clause while the portion that is bolded in P_2 is Baba Suwe's response. The first one goes thus:

P_1 : ***Ilé ọba t'ójó***, ẹwà l'ó bù síí.

A king's palace that sets ablaze, adds more to the palace's beautification.

P_2 : *Ilé ọba t'ójó*, ***gbèsè l'ókó bá ará ilú***. (Kehinde 51:16)

A king's palace that sets ablaze, puts the villagers into debt.

In the above, the first half of P_1 is a dependent clause, which is culturally given. If its original complement is added as above, it alludes to the fact that, when a king's palace burns, many wealthy people would, competitively, contribute to the rebuilding agenda and more so that the palace would enjoy the opportunity of being rebuilt with the latest materials which would beautify it more than it was. The supposed complement was suspended and replaced by an alternative complement, which superimposed on the original one, as it is evidenced in P_2 . Although it does not necessarily dispute the fact that it might be more beautiful than it was, it, rather, supplies another causal possibility of the scenario; that it would put the financial burden on the villagers.

In the same scene, Baba Suwe was asked to supply the complement of the Yoruba proverb that says thus:

P_1 : ***B'ólóde ò kú***, ọjúde ẹ kò ní hu gbégi.

If the owner of the house does not die, his frontage will never be bushy.

P_2 : *B'ólóde ò kú*, ***a máa pín ogún ẹ ni***. (Kehinde 51:53)

If the owner of the house does not die, we will share the man's property.

As we can see, there is a change in the poetic meaning of P_1 , which, with its traditional complement, is a metaphorical way of calling attention to somebody's need to take full responsibility and care for their belongings. Contrarily, Baba Suwe's complementary substitute has displaced the intended traditional meaning to mean that 'When

a man dies, his property should be shared before the house gets filled up with weed.' From this, we can observe a deliberate alteration in the structure of an existing semantic unit with another meaning that has a superimposition potential.

Also, in the same scene, he was asked to supply the complementary part of the wellerism that goes thus:

P₁: *'Bá mi na ọmọ mi', kò dé inú ọlọmọ.*

'Help me flog my child', does not come wholeheartedly from the parent.

P₂: *'Bá mi na ọmọ mi', apá rẹ̀ kò káa ni.* (Kehinde 52:42)

'Help me flog my child', solicits out of her incapability to beat the child.

In P₁, we see a culturally given dependent clause, which, together with its traditional complement, carries a metaphoric message of warning someone to always appeal to common sense, whenever he/she is employed by another party to execute a judgment on his/her household, because it might not be too funny for him/her to be blamed for acting accordingly. Contrarily, the alternative creation in P₂ superimposes and disregards the warning, stating that the fellow should not hesitate to act accordingly because the person who solicits the help, actually means it.

In this same scene, Baba Suwe's character son asks the interlocutor to proceed to the next question of which the interlocutor says that, that was so simple as he presented it, which is the original version, yet, another wellerism, thus:

P₁: *'Şebí ọ ti mọ', eléwà Şàpón.*

'Do not do more than your capacity', an appellation of the Şàpón Beans-Seller.

P₂: *'Şebí ọ ti mọ', eléwà Ẹhín-ìgbèti...* (Kehinde 53:05)

'Do not do more than your capacity', an appellation of the Ẹhín-ìgbèti Beans-Seller.

P₁ presents a culturally given dependent clause of a Yoruba proverb, which, with its traditional complement, alludes to the story of a bean seller that, once upon a time, existed at Şàpõn, one popular area in Abeokuta, Ogun State, Nigeria. The traditional meaning that is sent by this proverb is to warn someone against helping people beyond his/her sustainable capacity, which, at the same time, serves as a reminder of a historical trajectory that birthed it. In P₂, Baba Suwe undermines the necessity of always referring to the historical trajectory that birthed it. Rather, the name of the place could be simply substituted with any other famous area in the place in question. This is why he suggests Èhín-Ìgbèti for Lagos, Ìdí-Arẹ̀rẹ̀ for Ibadan and Cotonou for the Republic of Benin *ad infinitum*.

From the above analysis, we can see that all the transformational proverbial attempts presented by Baba Suwe in his *Baba Oja*, qualify as typical postproverbials named eponymous postproverbials for, as Raji-Oyelade (*Playful Blasphemies* 73-86) classifies, they are all formed from existing proverbs and carry the stamp of their creator together with them. In other words, all these postproverbials are identifiable with the artist that produced them. Hence, we say, Baba Suwe's proverb. Having established that Baba Suwe's proverbial creativities qualify as postproverbials, in the subsequent section, we shall look into the wisdom in Baba Suwe's witty postproverbials.

5. *The Wisdom in Postproverbial Creativities of Baba Suwe in Movies*

Philosophy, literally speaking, is love for wisdom. Recourse to its historical origin shows that it was a love for wisdom not for any practical use but for wisdom's sake. This was the sense in which Pythagoras was the first man to proclaim himself as a philosopher. Interestingly, Socrates came on board to change the status quo of philosophy by returning philosophy to the earth. However, to what extent was he able to rid philosophy of this ailment? According to misogyny, he fell into a well while he was gazing at the sky on his way going so much

that the maid that accompanied him laughed his jaw out. Among his quotable words is the seemingly contradictory maxim that “the only thing I know is that I know nothing.” From this, we can come up with something like “*the Wisdom in Knowing Nothing*.” No wonder that the image that being “a core philosopher” readily brings into imagination is that of a man who lacks a sense of humour, so detached from worldly things including marriage, et cetera.

Is this to say that this rigour is a necessary condition for philosophising? If this is answered in the affirmative, nothing philosophical could be expected to be embedded in Baba Suwe’s assertions. As an English proverb says; All works without play makes Jack a dull boy. Taking it to its extreme opposite end, Baba Suwe engages himself in playfulness so much that the playfulness turns out to be his work. Amidst that, there embedded wisdom in his playfulness only that the rigour, which has been erroneously considered as a necessary condition of wisdom-making, is lacking. This is so because the man is a comic actor with the main motive of creating humour to make his audiences laugh. Teaching wisdom is only secondary to his task. However, only fools cannot infer wisdom from the sayings of the wise. If a wise could be humble enough to assess the assertions of the fools, he can extract wisdom from them. Put differently, there is a “sense” in every “nonsense.” A realisation of this fact might have informed Raji-Oyelade to have titled a section of his ground-breaking book on postproverbials “The Logic of the Illogicality” (*Playful* 79). Interestingly, Charles Taylor submits that; “philosophy involves a great articulation of what has not been articulated.” This being said, we shall articulate some of Baba Suwe’s postproverbial assertions which doing so, following from Taylor, is tantamount to doing philosophy. The primary aim here is to unleash the wisdom that is (sub) consciously embedded in them.

A particular period of Baba Suwe’s active movie life was decidedly sold to twisting of Yoruba popular assertions including *ofò* (incantations) and *òwe* (proverbs). It got to the extent that people, humorously, would say, when someone invokes a proverb, “You better not

say this proverb before Baba Suwe, otherwise, he would twist it up for you.” In one of his movies, another comic actor of the same era, known as Opebe, sought Baba Suwe’s blessing and hence invoked an *ofò* (incarnation) that “*Bí ewúré bá jẹ lọ, yóò padà wá’lé, bí àgùntàn bá jẹ lọ, yóò padà wá’lé,*” meaning “if a goat wanders out, it will come back successfully, if a sheep roams out, it would come back successfully.” On hearing this, Baba Suwe came up with a counterexample thus; there was a goat that roamed around the street to eat leaves, and suddenly, a motorbike hit it and kicked it in the direction of a car that also hit it. Hence, the goat did not come back home but died (Kehinde 19:24).

Although Baba Suwe always does this in a witty way that usually arouses laughter, there is always wisdom in his reinterpretation of proverbs which should be an intellectual concern. He always tries to be critical rather than being dogmatic which conservatism might call for. The original version of the first Yoruba proverb in the scene was; “*ilé ọba t’ójó, ẹwà l’ó bù sí,*” meaning, “a King’s palace that is set ablaze, adds more to the palace’s beautification.” This is true on the ground that it creates an opportunity to rebuild the palace in the latest version. To achieve the rebuilding, many wealthy people would, competitively, be invited to contribute to the rebuilding exercise. This happened more than once during the life of the late Alaafin of Oyo, Oba Lamidi Adeyemi. Whenever a portion of his palace caught fire, many rich people would rise enormously to renovate the palace with the latest lucrative materials. The wisdom in this original version is that; what could be an unfortunate occurrence to many people may turn out to be a fortunate matter to a selected few.

Contrary to the original one, Baba Suwe created his version thus: “*ilé ọba t’ójó, gbèsè l’ó kó bá ará ilú*” (Kehinde 51:16), meaning “a King’s palace that caught fire, causes debt to the villagers.” While the formal original version of the proverb is true, it only tells half of the story. Baba Suwe hence, simply, comes in to supply the other side of the story, which is that the people who would contribute financially to the rebuild or renovation of this palace, would, as a result, be

placed on huge, unprecedented expenses that would not have been the case consider that the palace did not catch fire. This other part of the story informed Baba Suwe's witty reinterpretation of the proverb. Another moral lesson in it is that it cautions people from being parasitic or predatory, as much as humanly possible, in their actions and inactions. Rather, people should always try, as much as humanly possible, to be commensally or mutual, in their interactions and interrelationships with other people.

The original version of the second proverb is: "*B'ólóde ò kú, ojúde è kò ní hu gbégi,*" meaning, "if the owner of a house does not die, his frontage will never be bushy." The wisdom in this version is that the owner of a property would have the strongest concern for the property, knowing fully all he/she must have passed through in the name of acquiring the property. While this is also true to a very large extent, Baba Suwe's version also should not be considered nonsense on the ground that there is wisdom embedded in it. When he was asked to supply the complement of the Yoruba proverb that says: "*B'ólóde ò kú...*," the compliment is "*... a máa pín ogún è ní*" (Kehinde 51:53), meaning "if the owner of the house is dead, we will share the man's property." In this case, Baba Suwe thought that the care does not necessarily come to a terminal end at the death of the owner of the property especially if proactive measures are taken. One of these solutions is that when a man dies, his property should be shared before the house gets bushy. Another solution is that if the house is sold or handed over to a care agent, the care could still be as persistent and perpetual as ever before.

The third original proverb is "*bá mi na ọmọ mi, kò dé inú ọlọ-mo,*" meaning "help me flog my child' does not come wholeheartedly from the parent." The wisdom in this is that parents, especially the mothers, in most cases, would not be able to withstand seeing another person severely beating or punishing their child in their presence. This is naturally valid to a very large extent. Still, a parent may utter such a statement out of frustration even that his/her child should be killed when the fact remains that the parent did not

mean it or at least, it does not come from the deep of her heart but out of a frustration, which might be temporal, anyway. If one takes the injunction seriously, what might come aftermath from the parent might, in most cases, turn otherwise. So, it is taken that a parent who solicits the help of another person to punish his child is not serious about it. A parent cannot comfortably stand to watch his child being beaten even if it is at the parent's request. This sends a message that a person should be wise even in discharging any injunction because it might turn otherwise. The proverb is generally used to present a situation where an outsider is invited into the affairs of a family group or association to pronounce and execute judgment in respect of apparent wrongdoing that could be amicably settled within the family or group. On the other hand, the Yoruba uses the proverb to let the invited outsider take caution in the method he/she uses to settle matters, being mindful of the fact that he may end up bearing the blame for the situation, even for acting just accordingly, if care is not taken.

Despite this fact, there are always exceptional cases in every situation. This exceptional situation must have informed Baba Suwe's postproverbial attempt here. He was asked to supply the complementary clause of this welleristic proverb; "*Bá mi na ọmọ mi'...*," and he simply said; "*...apá rẹ̀ kò káa ní*" (Kehinde 52:42), literally meaning "help me flog my child' implies incapacity to discipline the child." In other words, it is still a logical possibility that the parent might mean, from the deep of his/her heart, the appeal to punish his/her child amidst the natural disinclination to mean so.

Another original proverb is "*Ṣebí ọ̀ timọ̀, ẹ̀léwà Ṣàpón*," which is also another wellerism that means "do according to your capacity' (an allusion to) the Ṣàpón Beans-Seller." The particular proverb is said to be adapted from a story. Once upon a time, at Ṣàpón, in the city of Abeokuta, there lived a woman who did sell well-cooked beans. Her beans were well appreciated by many especially people at work. The woman did sell the beans and made good sales on a daily basis. People ate and asked for more on credit when they couldn't afford the payment. It got to the point that the bean seller could not

handle the credits anymore due to her bankruptcy resulting from too many credit sales. As she could not cook in large quantities as before, she devised a new strategy of preventing people from buying on credit. Whenever they came to her, she asked for money, if it was, say, ten naira the persons had on them, she would sell ten naira worth of beans to them. If they beg for more on credit, she did tell them, “*Şebí ọ timọ*,” meaning “do only as you are capable” which roughly parallels the saying “cut your coat according to your cloth.” With time, people got used to her new strategy. Before they asked for more, they knew the response she would give. As a result, she was nicknamed; “*Şebí ọ timọ, Èléwà-Şàpón*.” The moral wisdom this proverb teaches is that; one should cut one’s coats according to one’s size to always keep one’s head above trouble.

As a way of challenging the sacrosanct status of the tradition, Baba Suwe’s submission was that the location could be different. According to him, the fact that Şàpón is where the proverb was first coined amounts to nothing but a matter of coincidence. This does not mean that the proverb cannot be relevant in another location and that it has to be used with the name of the new location. Hence, he suggests flexibility rather than rigid status. To set examples, Baba Suwe simply replaced the name of the place mentioned in the traditional version of the proverb “Şàpón” with “Cotonou,” for the Republic of Benin, “Èhín-Ìgbètì” for Lagos or “Ìdí-Arẹrẹ” for Ibadan and proposed that the gap could be filled with the name of a famous place in any city of reference *ad infinitum* (Kehinde 53:05).

Baba Suwe, in his movies, has brought about various comedies like scenes in Yoruba movies, that has left the audience glued to their seat. Apparently, all the proverbial transformations of Baba Suwe might be humorous. This is not detrimental to the presentation because, as a comic actor, he, first of all, gives priority to his primary aim in any movie, which is to create an atmosphere for fun. Nevertheless, there are gems of wisdom embedded in them only if they can be unearthed and interrogated.

6. *Conclusion*

This paper started by making a case for the need for African philosophers to be concerned more with an exposition, analysis, articulation, interrogation, and, where needed, updating of the handed down traditional African philosophies that exist in fragments as contained in folklores, fables, mythological narrations, and, of course, proverbs, among others. It also proceeded to examine the nature of proverbs and debunked the assumed rigidity status of proverbs as if they were ever cast in unbendable irons. Hence, the paper presented some instances of transformation that have occurred to Yoruba proverbs in history even without many people being conscious of them. Then, it took a step further to examine the conditions that proverbial creativity must satisfy before it can be qualified as a postproverbial. This was achieved by an allusion to the Raji-Oyelade's texts on postproverbials. Having done that, the paper, then, arrived at its core concerns, which are two: a subjection of Baba Suwe's creativities into Raji-Oyelade's postproverbial diagnosis and a philosophical interrogation of Baba Suwe's proverbial transformation.

The paper, therefore, concludes that the proverb is a son of culture; a grandson for that matter of which language is his direct father. Like his grandfather, proverb would, unavoidably, inherit the flexibility from his father and this is, arguably, just the case in post-proverbiality. The rigid claim of Yoruba proverbs cannot be absolutely real at any time than a mere apparent and matter of frequency at which it occurs and it needs not to be real because it will lead to a cultural stagnancy which is uncalled for. On the other hand, post-proverbial attempts also need to be done with great care so as not to erode the good culture. In between the excesses and the deficiencies lies the mean. On a final note, the paper remarks that Baba Suwe's creations do not only qualify as eponymous postproverbials but also contain a jewel of wisdom.

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HAUWA MOHAMMED SANI

STYLO-SEMANTIC ANALYSES OF HUMOROUS POLITICAL POSTPROVERBIALS IN HAUSA SPEECH COMMUNITIES IN NORTHERN NIGERIA

Abstract: This study investigates the political character of humorous post-proverbials found in the lexicon of Hausa speech communities in Northern Nigeria. The Hausa are counted among the three most prominent ethnic groups in Nigeria, occupying parts of the Middle Belt and the northern parts of the country. Like other ethnic groups, the Hausa people have a rich culture and unique traditions; hence, they have these neo-proverbs drawn from the rich experiences of their daily lives. Postproverbials in this paper are described as neo-proverbials of the post-colonial era that have elements of contemporaneity and flexibility. They also contain idiomatic and some aspects of narrative qualities. This study undertook a semantic appraisal of the themes embedded in the chosen postproverbials. Twenty-three proverbs were painstakingly selected via interviews and critically analyzed according to their contents. The study adopted Halliday's(2004) metafunctions theory and Adegbija's (1987) layers of meaning as its theoretical and analytical framework. The postproverbials examined in this article are politically driven and appear on the surface to have been created for humoristic purposes. However, the study establishes that aside from serving as tools for entertainment, these neo-proverbs are also used to subtly sensitize the people on what is going on in their political contexts.

Keywords: Humorous, Postproverbials, Neo-proverbials Hausa, Northern Nigeria.

1. Introduction

Nuggets of wisdom exist in many Nigerian languages; the Hausa language is no exception. These words of wisdom, often termed proverbs, idioms, and wits, are used to emphasize, validate, evaluate, and analyze some given contexts. Proverbs are sayings found in every

human language, and humorous proverbs deliver wisdom with a healthy dose of humor. They are funny and wise, making listeners laugh, think and learn.

Postproverbials challenge traditional proverbs, which are playful alterations that draw upon previous proverbs. This study argues that this definition can include modern creations, known as neo-proverbs, rooted in postmodernity. This aligns with Afolayan's (2022) perspective, which views postproverbial as a space-clearing gesture, allowing a fresh and alternative understanding of African proverbs and modernity. This study, therefore, defines postproverbial as new proverbs that are not necessarily deconstructions of traditional proverbs, either structurally or semantically, but as newly created and radicalized proverbs that reflect the socio-political situations of a given society. These neo-proverbs are flexible and relevant to the contemporary world. This article is based on this premise.

It is said that the Hausas or Nigerians, in general, are humorous beings; they joke about almost everything. When they are happy, they philosophically throw jokes. When they are sad, they do likewise; when in affluence and hardship, it will all be reflected in their jokes and philosophies. Moreover, there is always a connection between philosophy and the natural world through these humorous neo-proverbial utterances, often considered intelligent, wise, pondering, puzzling, or rich. In other words, this situation and the habits of the Hausas gave birth to these neo-proverbs, which are analyzed in this paper. This study is a stylistic and semantic analysis of selected humorous Postproverbials (also often termed neo-proverbials in this article) within the Hausa speech communities.

In this context, we will showcase postproverbial/neo-proverbials as humorous modern linguistic creativity that is politically inclined within particular political situations and times. This also entails that the postproverbials examined in this paper have a time frame and a life cycle. They also have elements of contemporaneity and flexibility and contain idiomatic and some aspects of narrative qualities. This paper focuses on the versatility and creativity of these neo-proverbs

to show how they contribute vital knowledge by providing scholars, linguists and folklorists with excavator material for lots of research.

The paper also identifies and describes the unique style embedded in these postproverbials on the one hand and discusses the nuances of meaning predominant in the selected postproverbials on the other hand, through the deployment of Halliday's (2004) meta-functions theory and Adegbija's (1987) layers of meaning as the theoretical and analytical framework. This is to situate these postproverbials properly in the continuum of emergent post-modernism from the Northern part of the country. Adopting the selected linguistic frameworks will equally showcase their relevance and appropriateness to analyzing the neo-proverbs of this nature and further enrich the literature on linguistics and postproverbials. This paper also reiterates the hypothesis that the socio-political structure of society guides our thinking as well as our use of language.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Stylo-Semantic Framework

This study's conceptual framework is stylo-semantics, combining two linguistic apparatuses: stylistics and semantics. In the first instance, according to McIntyre & Busse (2010), stylistics is the study of style in language and how this results from intra-linguistic features of a text about non-linguistic factors, such as author, genre, historical period, and so on. It is also about making meaning inferences based on the linguistic framework of the text.

The primary concern of stylistics is the consistent use of specific structures, items, and elements in language, whether in speech or written text. Leech and Short (1981:69) explain stylistics as "the relationship between the significance of a text and the linguistic characteristics in which they are manifest." This definition captures the relationship between the meanings of a text and the linguistic choices a writer makes to express the meaning. Crystal (1999: 323) explains it more succinctly when he says, "Stylistics studies any distinctive sit-

uational use of language and choice made by individuals... in their usage in all linguistic domains”.

Semantics, on the other hand, is the science of meaning. According to Ogbulogo (2005: 4), “Semantics is that branch of linguistics in which the meaning of words and sentences of language is studied.” Some philosophers believe that words/sentences may not have any direct link. They opine that whatever connection exists between a word/sentence and meaning is through a concept formed in the minds of other language users (Reference). Saeed (2009:3) summarises it: “Semantics is the study of meaning communicated through language.” Meaning can be thematic when it derives from the organization of the message presented in a conceptual language; when it is not, it is affected by the context or emotional overtones in communication.

Meaning can also be associative when the context, the time, and the background of speakers or hearers influence it. This position of importance aligns with Odebumi’s (2001: 1) assertion, which notes that “context is the spine of meaning.” However, meaning can be practical when it relates to the speaker’s feelings and attitudes toward the subject or the audience. A stylo-semantic analysis, therefore, considers the style of a text viz-a-viz the meaning derived from the writer’s choice of words and sentences. In other words, stylo-semantics studies all structural meaning-making resources (e.g., morphemes, words, phrases, sentences, and expressions) in any given language), which produce a style. The speaker’s choice of words or registers, sentences, figures of speech, colloquialisms, and connotations are all within the purview of stylo-semantics to unravel the meaning of a text.

2.2. *Proverbs as a Linguistic Concept*

Etymologically, the term proverb is derived from the Latin word “Proverbium” with the prefix ‘Pro’ meaning ‘for’ and the stem ‘verbum’ meaning “words”, respectively. Thus, proverbs are well-loaded

but concise “words” used as substitutes “for” what could otherwise be expressed in simple words, phrases, clauses, sentences, or discourses.

The conceptual definitions of the proverb could be more precise. According to Basgoz (1990), these difficulties emanate more from the characteristics of definitions than research. This is because meanings are arbitrary, changeable at will, neither true nor false, but applicable conventions, etc. Basgoz (1990) further identifies seven categories folklorists adopt in defining proverbs. They are context, discourse, transmission, diffusion in time and space, origin, form, and function. Context refers to the circumstances surrounding using a proverb in a given event or linguistic environment. Discourse relates to the communicative impact of using proverbs in such an event. Transmission reflects the processes of preserving and inculcating proverbs from generation to generation. Diffusion relates to how proverbs are spread from one geographical area to another and from a particular period of use to subsequent usages. Origin has to do with the birthplace of a particular proverb, the specific society, or the geographical area in which a proverb was coined. Form relates the features of a proverb or what constitutes a proverb and what does not qualify to be seen as a proverb; function has to do with the purposes of proverbs, that is, the uses of proverbs.

In support of Basgoz’s view, Osani (2008), cited in Adeyi (2013), asserts that it is not easy to define a proverb satisfactorily. This is because proverbs share certain features with forms like idioms, maxims, aphorisms, epigrams, and wit. Despite these postulations, many linguists and philosophers still attempt to define the term “proverb” as they deem fit to the best of their knowledge.

Onyemelukwe (2004) gives an apt description of what a proverb is. To her, a proverb is an expression that succinctly conveys truth and wisdom with a view to teaching, praising, commending, advising, correcting, indicting, warning, rebuking or castigating a person, denouncing, reprimanding or condemning an undesirable act or behavior or a vice. This definition ascribes a multi-purpose attribute

to a proverb. Proverbs' purposes, functions, or features cannot be transported in a single definition. However, Onyemelukwe's definition makes notable remarks on some of the functions of proverbs to a given people or society.

2.3. *Hausa Language and Proverbs*

The Hausa language belongs to the Afro-Asiatic family. According to Bunza (2022), out of the world's seven thousand six hundred languages, Hausa is ranked number eleven. It is an essential language in Africa. Bunza further posits that it is also the second language spoken in Africa after Swahili if we consider something other than Arabic. It is difficult to say how many Hausa speakers there are because estimates vary significantly from source to source. Spectator index asserts that Hausa speakers are between 40 and 150 million. Hausa is an official language in Nigeria and Niger and is spoken in numerous countries around the West African region. The main Hausa-speaking population is concentrated in the Northern states of Nigeria, southern Niger, and Northern Ghana, where Hausa is the primary language of communication. Still, it is also an important language of international communication and trade beyond the Hausa states. Hausa is also spoken in Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Central Africa Republic, Chad, Congo, Eritrea, Sudan, and Togo. Hausa people have a rich culture and unique traditions; hence, they have wise sayings and proverbs drawn from their daily lives and rich experiences. In the words of Bichi (1995: 76): "Proverbs are the most important fields of Hausa verbal lore; they are used as vital communication among the Hausa and several African groups."

Almajir (2012: 1), quoting Sehuba (2002), posits that "proverbs are regarded as a noble genre of African oral tradition that enjoys the prestige of a custodian of the people's wisdom and philosophy of life." When people use proverbs, there is always some relationship between two situations being compared: the proverb statement and its referent in the social context. This association between the human experience and another gives the proverbs their relevance.

Usman (2014) believes that proverbs are described as short pit, minor, or useful sayings that have been accepted into everyday speech and writing, expressing either moral truth, embodying precepts, or practical moral or didactic lessons. Proverbs have also served as a medium for expressing commonly accepted views. According to her, the Hausa term for proverb is "*Karin Magana*," one of the oldest and most essential folklore genres, which forms part and parcel of Hausa culture. These wise sayings include an essential aspect of the ways of life of the people who use them. Depending on how the speakers and listeners understand them, they can have various meanings. The effect of proverbs on the populace depends on the aptness with which they are employed in a given situation and on the themes, styles, and forms of words with which they are dressed. The same proverb can also be used under different conditions. Thus, two or more similar proverbs can be used for the same position at any given time or place. Her study annotated a set of parallel Hausa proverbs and analyzed their meanings in context and the situation in which they are applicable or used.

Sani (2020) analyses Hausa proverbs derived from the mannerisms and the nature of disabilities and establishes a linguistic relationship between the disabled and the physically fit members of society. Her study shows the social use of language, demonstrating that these proverbs emanate from the reservoir of the people's collective knowledge and ideologies of their empirical observations of their physical and social environments. It is concerned with the way conditions of language use derive from social norms and situations. In other words, it involves the study of both the form and functions of language in the given social settings; as an aspect of sociolinguistic competence, socio-pragmatic competence borders on the ability to use language appropriately and politely to convey messages while observing the social and cultural conventions guiding such use in a particular speech community. Sani's study questions the validity of this aspect of sociolinguistic competency in using proverbs derived from disability proverbs, as some of the proverbs are not favorable

or polite to people with disabilities. It also challenges the authenticity of Westermarck's (2000) definition of proverbs, in which he denotes the universality of "adoption and acceptance" as crucial elements in his description of proverbs. Her study using proverbs derived from a disability also establishes that these proverbs are neither accepted nor adopted by people with disabilities, who occupy a percentage of the Hausa society. In other words, acceptability and adaptability as yardsticks for defining proverbs have limitations.

Zajac's (2021) study on the functions of Hausa proverbs in political discourse contends that Karin Magana is a form of traditional cultural expression with the status of a genre in Hausa oral literature. It is equivalent to a proverb. His research presents examples of Hausa proverb usage in political discourse. Data were extracted from press articles published during the Nigerian general elections (2019). His study focuses on the discursive features of Karin Magana and aspects of its contextual understanding and translation; his study establishes that in contemporary Hausa discourses, proverbs perform textual and pragmatic functions. Each function in which a proverb is used changes its interpretations (representational meanings).

Proverbs are part of contemporary Hausa popular culture and are commonly appreciated by poets, writers, singers, and politicians. Moreover, proverbs used in literature are a canonical part of the Hausa literary tradition. It is an indicator of its value. Therefore, the Hausa proverbs as a sociolinguistic phenomenon are crucial for discussion among linguists, folklorists, and other scholars.

2.4. Studies on Proverbs, Postproverbials, and Anti proverbs

Degener (2022), in her article "Family Relationships in Proverbs from Northern Pakistan," argues that proverbs reflect notions about society and human behavior; they express everyday observations, experiences, and normative values. Their status as culturally transmitted and formalized figurative utterances qualify proverbs as indicators of the importance and habits predominant in given societies. It,

therefore, follows that Proverbs are sayings found in every human language.

Scholars have defined postproverbials as postmodern proverbs deconstructing traditional proverbs' structural and semantic characteristics. They are proverbs coined either from existing proverbs as anti-proverbs or those created as new ones. This is the basis for terming the postproverbials examined in this study as neoproverbs.

According to Mieder (1993: 58), "Changing times and situations require forms of expression that traditional proverbs can no longer supply," thus, the postproverbials analyzed here corroborate the view that this modern age needs an innovative, ingenious, and humorous statement of actuality.

Raji-Oyelade and Oyeleye (2019: 232) aptly captured the concept of postproverbials when they contended that "postproverbial agency turns conventional thought over its head. It is the natural voicing of the deconstructive energies of the neo-competent speaker of the African language." In this study, neo-competency development leads to the creation of neo-proverbs.

Fadare (2020) also examines the tenets of postproverbials and postmodernism from data carefully selected from Chiemeziem's Facebook wall, grouped, and critically analyzed according to their contents. He observes that most of the sayings are decorated with sexual imagery, which deconstruct the hitherto held sinful nature of human sex organs featured in African proverbs. He posits that proverbs are created for humouristic purposes and as a tool for building traffic on Chiemeziem's Facebook wall. He further asserts that the selected new proverbs have proven that postproverbials give room for innovation and creativity, which engenders the formation of new proverbs. However, he makes some references to some Yoruba, Nupe, and Hausa postproverbials, which he suggests that they are subjects for further research. This paper will take the aspects of Hausa postproverbials and deliberate on them.

Akinsete (2020) examines the practice of postproverbiality, which resonates during the historical phase that indicates transgressive subversion of alternate creations that run parallel with postmodern temperance. His study establishes the postmodern pulse as a significant component of the aesthetics and values of postproverbiality vibration in contemporary African literary cum cultural space. He foregrounds the theoretical significance of postmodernism as the compelling force of postproverbiality and, in furtherance, articulates the postmodern presence in modern African academic areas. The study critically analyses the socio-cultural content and context of postproverbials and explores the postmodern pulse of selected post-proverbial forms as the prostheses of conventional African proverbs.

Adeyemi's (2012) analysis delves into the utilization of both proverbs and anti-proverbs within Okediji's novel "*Réré Rún.*" In his examination, Adeyemi identifies a dual function for these expressions. Firstly, they serve as literary devices that inject humor, vividness, and aesthetic richness into the narrative. Proverbs, steeped in cultural and linguistic heritage, bring tradition and depth to the text, while anti-proverbs introduce a playful and thought-provoking element. However, Adeyemi goes beyond their literary appeal to uncover a political dimension. He argues that anti-proverbs, with their subversive nature, are strategically employed to awaken critical consciousness in readers. These expressions encourage individuals to question societal norms, promoting a balanced approach to advocating for their rights—one guided by wisdom and discernment. Furthermore, Adeyemi's analysis reveals the transformative potential of language. He suggests that writers like Okediji can create new proverbs by consciously manipulating fixed proverbs, encouraging creative thinking, and uncovering hidden meanings within traditional expressions. This demonstrates the dynamic nature of language and culture, evolving to reflect changing perspectives and societal contexts. It is worth emphasizing that "Anti-proverbs" and "neo-proverbs" represent linguistic and cultural phenomena that contrast traditional proverbs, each serving unique roles in language and culture.

This study defines postproverbial as neo-proverbs that are not only necessarily postmodern deconstructions of traditional proverbs' whether structurally or semantically but as the neo and radicalized proverbs created as a result of the socio-political situations of a given society. These neo-proverbs are flexible and contemporaneous.

2.5. Adebija's Layers of Meaning

Adebija (1987) also proposes the notion of pragmasociolinguistics in analyzing the context of an utterance. He argues that both pragmatic and sociolinguistic contexts constitute the global context of an utterance. Adebija postulates that pragmasociolinguistic competence calls for the historical, personal, environmental, Socio-cultural, and linguistic features of all factors related to the contexts in which a particular conversation occurred. While decoding the meaning of the utterance, "My friend, where is Anini?" uttered by a former Nigerian President, General Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida, to his then Inspector General of Police, Adebija, describes three layers of meaning - primary, secondary, and tertiary. At the primary level, according to him, meaning is assigned to linguistic elements through the device of semantic presupposition. At the secondary layer, meaning, occasioned by metaphors, insinuations, and idioms, to mention a few, yield indirect speech acts. The third level, the master speech act, is where a total or global meaning is postulated using pragmatic presupposition. At the indirect speech act level, interpretation of meaning goes beyond assigning meaning to linguistic elements alone. For example, He beats the hell out of him is an utterance whose interpretation can be sought at the higher level of decoding the meaning of the metaphor "hell" and relating it to "out of him" to yield the meaning he beats him mercilessly. Adebija further submits that, at the tertiary level, interpretation is based on the totality of the contextually relevant pragmatic elements, including the speaker, hearer and their relationship to the speaker, the history and context of the utterance, the socio-cultural and political context of the society and

other assumptions of the utterance. This study uses Adegbija's layers of meaning to analyze the neo-proverbs.

3. Methodology

The data for the study were collected from focused group discussions, observations, and key informant interviews. Furthermore, there is social cum pragmatic dialogic discussion with some Hausa stakeholders and scholars, particularly regarding the translations of the neo-proverbials. Most of them were collected through recordings and non-participant observation. A purposive sampling method was applied to determine the kind of collected proverbs and the number of the sayings. About twenty-three proverbs are painstakingly selected and critically analyzed according to their contents. The study also systematically appraises the themes embedded in the chosen neo-proverbials. The study adopts Halliday's (2004) metafunctions theory and Adegbija's (1987) layers of meaning as its theoretical and analytical framework.

4. Data Presentation and Analysis

The focus of this study is on the examination of humorous proverbs. While it is commonly understood that anti-proverbs often carry a satirical or comedic tone, it is essential to emphasize that the proverbs under scrutiny in this research do not fall under the category of anti-proverbs. Anti-proverbs are typically created to ridicule or challenge traditional proverbs, often utilizing absurd or contradictory content to provoke thought and question conventional wisdom.

Instead, the proverbs analyzed in this study have been classified as "Neoproverbs." These newly coined sayings aim to capture contemporary wisdom or offer commentary on modern life, reflecting the current societal trends and values. Neoproverbs are constructed to convey messages or perspectives more directly relevant to the present context, making them more applicable to today's world than traditional proverbs. Therefore, within the context of this research,

the analyzed post-proverbials are classified as neo-proverbials. Below is the data presentation for subsequent analysis using Halliday's metafunctions and Adegbi's layers of meaning.

1. *Banga ta zama ba Buhari yaga jirgi.* ("The travel bug has bitten me again," Buhari sights an aircraft.) – The Nigerian president is reputed to be one of the most-traveled African leaders.
2. *Banza a banza talaka a APC.* (What a nonentity, a poor man in APC) – Nigeria's ruling party, All Progressives Congress, promised to salvage people experiencing poverty but reputedly made their situation worse
3. *Cin dare daya,samun kudin deleget.* (One day night is the delegate way of spending. Or a delegate's remuneration and once and for all benefit) This neo-proverbial denotes that the delegates always have their field days during the primary elections within the context of Nigerian elections.
4. *Iya majarka iya wahalarka.* (The level of your support for the APC/AC merger is the level of your suffering). This neo-proverbial portrays that those who participate genuinely during the merger suffer the most.
5. *An yi sak an ga cak.*(We voted from top to bottom, and now we are standstill). According to this neo-proverbial, the Nigerians have voted for the ruling party at all levels and are now suffering. (paying the consequences).
6. *Kowar kasa ya tsare sai an kasa tsare shi.*(He who votes and guards his choice will not likely be protected). By this neo-proverbial, the masses have voted and guarded their votes, but nobody is guarding them now; they lack protection from their representatives.
7. *Baba ya tafi Kaka ya dawo,zaben Buhari da Tunubu.* (The voting of Tinubu after Buhari is like a father's existence and a grandfather's return). Already, many Nigerians are complaining about the age of their incumbent APC president, yet the party has selected another older person as their contestant.
8. *Dodar ta tabbata tashin farashi kaya.* (Voting from top to bottom results in the uncontrolled price of goods). This neo-pro-

verbial entails the problematic situation that the masses are encountering concerning inflation, which, according to them, results from all levels voting for the ruling party.

9. Jiya ba yau ba talaka ya tuna da maja. (Yesterday is not today, says the poor when he remembers the merger era.); What a joy the poor man recalled good times in politics. This neo-proverbial connotes a nostalgic recall of the previous political period.

10. Ko ka tara ka kiyayi maja. Be cautious of today's politics, even if you are rich. This is a neo-proverbial of admonishment to the members of society.

11. Gyarar kasar nan sai Allah Dan APC ya Je sayan abinci. Only God can salvage this country; an All People Congress member said when he went to buy food. This neo-proverbial denounces the initial APC members' faithfulness in their president as the condition becomes more critical regarding food inflation. They now believe that God can save the Nigerians, not the president.

12. Yanzu na san an samu canji a mulki in ji Dan bunburutu. (I have just experienced a change in leadership, says a petrol hawker). This neo-proverbial discusses the fuel scarcity that engulfed the country and portrays the delight of the petrol hawkers. (The fuel hawker seller is now sure there is a change in the government).

13. Na yi Allah wadai in ji 'yan APC. (It is miserable, APC members remarked). This is a reprimanding neo-proverbial of regret.

14. Rankatakaf mun fi 'yan adawa yin laushi. Cewar 'yan a mutun Baba. (We are dealt with more than the opposition, said the diehard fans of Baba). This is another neo-proverbial castigation that shows the displeasure of the ruling party members within this particular time and context.

15. Daga yi wa wani sallama sai ya ce min yaya labarin farashin wake! (As I just said hi to someone, he responded by asking me the price of beans). The neo-proverbial entails that A greeting results in inquiries about the cost of beans.

16. Saboda tsabar tsabgar da ake kar'ba, da rana tsaka mutane ke yin raka'a guda su sallame!

(Due to hardship, people no longer have time for prayers).

17. Jar miya ko jar wuya. in ji talaka mai jiran jar miya. (Better soup or trouble, says the one expecting the better soup.) The red soup, which means better soup, is a slogan for affluence, and the red hardship in this context connotes poverty, and the poor man who is expecting a better life ends up in a worsened situation.

18. Tsaron 'kasa sai Allah, Buhari bawan Allah ne. (The country's security is in the hands of God; Buhari is just a servant of God). Before the election, the masses in this context believed that Baba could provide them with maximum security and protection. After the election, they realized and confessed that only God could protect the nation; Buhari was only a servant of God.

19. Duk nagartar shugaba nema masa makusantan arzi'ki. A good leader deserves good advisors. This is a neo-proverbial of admonishment as well as an indictment. Perhaps members of society believe that the president is surrounded by bad advisors, which results in the country's critical condition.

20. Tafiyar da ba ta dole ba ko don 'yan bindiga a bar ta. (An unimportant journey must be stopped for fear of bandits). This neo-proverbial establishes that Unnecessary travel is stopped even because of bandits and insecurity.

21. Ku gyara kanku sai nagari ya mulke ku! (People have to be good if they need good leaders). This neo-proverbial says that change begins with you and me as members of society. That Nigerians have to be right for our Nigeria to be correct.

22. Ku ba mu, mu ba ku. Daliget ya ga 'yan takara. (Our business with you is reciprocal; the delegate tells the contestants.) This neo-proverbial denotes that the relationship between the delegates and the contestants is that of give and take.

23. Kafin a yi za'be 'yan takara sun san garin uban kowa! (Before the election, the contestants know everyone's father's

hometown). In this context, this neo-proverbial portrays that the relationship between the masses and their representatives begins and ends before the elections. The humoristic phrase here is *garin uban Kowa*: everyone's father's hometown.

4.1. Analysis Based on Halliday's Meta Functions

The theoretical framework for this study is a combination of Halliday's meta-functions of language and (Adegbija's 1987) layers of meaning. Human language is essentially functional, such that language is used for various purposes in society. For this reason, (Halliday, 2004) identifies three broad functional language levels.

4.1.2. The Ideational Function

This implies that language serves as an instrument for the members of the Hausa speech community/society to express and articulate their ideas and experience as it relates to the present political and socio-economic structure of the environment internally and externally. Through the above neo proverbs, the members of the society tactfully articulate their feelings; thus, some of the themes embedded in the above Neo-proverbs include politics, hunger and poverty, gullibility, addiction, regret, violence, edutainment, admonishment, indictment, sensitization, lampooning, caricature, and insult. Ideology, humanity, hilarity, creativity, and philosophy are interwoven in the above neo-proverbs. Below are some examples:

Duk nagartar shugaba nema masa makusantan arzi'ki. A good leader deserves good advisors. (Admonishment and indictment).

(i). *Ku gyara kanku sai nagari ya mulke ku!* People have to be good if they need good leaders (*admonishment*)

(ii). *Tsaron 'kasa sai Allah, Buhari bawan Allah ne.* The country's security is in the hands of God; Buhari is just a servant of God. (*ideology and reawakening*).

(iii). *Na yi Allah wadai in ji 'yan APC.* It is miserable, APC members remarked (*regret*)

(iv). *Tafiya da ba ta dole ba ko don 'yan bindiga a bar ta*. An unimportant journey must be stopped for fear of bandits (*sensitization and edutainment*).

Edutainment combines education and entertainment, two crucial features of every human society. It discusses purposefully designing and implementing a message or activity to entertain and educate to increase audience members' knowledge about an issue, create favorable attitudes, and build social norms and behavior of individual models or communities McKee, Bertrand, and Becker-Benton, (2012). Creativity has always been the hallmark of successful edutainment, which, as the word implies, refers to content designed to educate and entertain, like the above neo-proverb.

(i). *Banza a banza talaka a APC*. What a nonentity, poor man in APC) (*insult*).

(ii). *Banga ta zama ba Buhari yaga jirgi*. "The travel bug has bitten me again," as soon as Buhari sights an aircraft (*lampooning*).

4.1.3. *The Interpersonal Function*

The interpersonal function helps to establish and sustain social relations. Through a hilarious tone, these neo-proverbs develop a relationship between the politicians and the members of society. However, to an extent, the relationship may not be favorable to both parties. The communication is verbal and is expressed vertically or via upward communication. Upward communication refers to communication that flows from bottom to top. The masses in this context use the neo-proverbs to pass on messages of castigations to their leaders in the form of lampooning and caricature. For instance:

(i). *Na yi Allah wadai in ji 'yan APC*. It is miserable, APC members remarked. (upward communication).

(ii). *Kafin a Yi za'be 'yan takara sun san garin uban kowa*. Before the election, the contestants know everyone's father's hometown (upward communication).

In vertical communication, the communication flows between the members of the society.

For example:

(i). *Daga yi wa wani sallama sai ya ce min yaya labarin farashin wake!* (As I just said hi to someone, he responded by asking me the price of beans).

(ii). *Tafiyar da ba ta dole ba ko don ‘yan bindiga a bar ta.* (An unimportant journey must be stopped for fear of bandits).

4.1.4. *The Textual Function*

The textual function of language implies the availability of an internal structure that makes it possible for the members of the society to construct these neo-proverbs that are not only coherent but also situationally appropriate. In this context, community members, through neo-proverbs, have built coherent and cohesive utterances suitable for depicting the country’s socio-economic and political situation. For example, *An yi sak an ga cak.* (We voted from top to bottom, and now we are standstill). According to this neo-proverbial, the Nigerians have voted for the ruling party at all levels and are now suffering. (paying the consequences).

4.2. *Analysis Based on Adegbija’s Layer of Meanings*

Also, Adegbija (1987) identifies three layers of meanings, namely primary, secondary, and tertiary layers. According to Adegbija (1987), the primary layer is concerned with “sense” as distinct from “reference,” and it is intra-linguistic; the secondary layer handles the indirect speech act level that transcends the literal level of meaning. This layer handles the symbolic or connotative aspect of meaning; in other words, the primary layer is concerned with surface-level representation, while the secondary layer takes care of the underlying representation. The tertiary layer handles several aspects of an utterance’s socio-cultural milieu, often holding additional clues to meaning.

4.2.1. Primary Layer of Meaning

The primary layer of meaning refers to the most basic, literal interpretation of words or phrases within the proverbs. For instance, “*Jar miya ko jar wuya*,” in the neo-proverb 17 *Jar miya ko jar wuya. in ji talaka mai jiran jar miya*. (Better soup or trouble, says the one expecting the better soup. the primary layer would only provide the literal meaning of “*Jar miya*” as “red soup stew” and “*Jar wu ya*” as “red hardship.” This primary interpretation offers a straightforward understanding of the words used in the proverb without considering their deeper connotations or metaphoric implications. In decoding the above postproverbials, one has to go beyond the primary layer into the secondary and tertiary layers of the meaning.

Another instance is in neo proverb 16, “*Saboda tsabar tsabgar da ake kar’ba, da rana tsaka mutane ke yin raka’a guda su sallame!*” the primary meaning of “*Tsabga*” is “cane.” However, the secondary and tertiary layers reveal that “*Tsabga*” metaphorically signifies hardship. The proverb suggests that people no longer have time for prayers due to hardships. This deeper layer of meaning reflects the socio-cultural context of the proverb within a society undergoing challenges and changes.

Application to Specific Contexts: The analysis of “*Cin dare daya*” in the neo proverb 3 exemplifies how the primary layer of meaning alone may not capture the whole essence of the proverb. The primary interpretation suggests “one-night eating.” However, the secondary and tertiary layers reveal that this phrase symbolizes a delegate’s remuneration or benefit, particularly in Nigerian elections. It reflects how delegates often capitalize on opportunities during primary elections to secure financial gain.

4.2.2. Secondary Layer of Meaning

Moving beyond the primary layer, the secondary layer of meaning involves understanding the metaphorical or symbolic significance of the words or phrases. In the example, “*Jar miya ko jar wuya*” means “Better soup or trouble, says the one expecting the better soup.” Here,

the primary meanings of “*Jar miya*” and “*Jar wuya*” are symbolic of desirable outcomes (“better soup”) and challenges (“trouble”) that people may encounter in life. This secondary layer adds depth to the proverb by considering the figurative meanings behind the words.

To thoroughly understand neo-proverbs, one must explore their secondary and tertiary layers of meaning that go beyond their literal definitions and encompass their figurative and contextual implications. This comprehensive analysis provides valuable insights into cultural values, metaphoric language, and societal concerns. By adopting this nuanced approach, we can deepen our understanding and appreciate the significance of these linguistic expressions within their cultural and social contexts.

4.2.3. *Tertiary Layer of Meaning*

A further examination of the tertiary layer reveals that it is customary for the Hausa speakers to express their feelings, experiences, ideologies, and criticisms through humoristic expressions loaded with hidden meanings and pearls of wisdom. Such utterances are politically inclined within particular situations and times. They are highly philosophical, malleable, and capped with fundamental values.

This also entails that the postproverbials examined in this paper have an element of contemporaneity, a timespan, duration, and life cycle. Moreover, specific conditions or problems gave rise to these humorous political postproverbials. In other words, Necessity is the mother of invention. Moreover, in the next coming period, the conditions behind the creation of such proverbs will change, and they may fade away. In such instances, terming these postproverbials as chronolect or temporal dialects may be suitable. In linguistics, chronolect refers to a specific speech variety whose characteristics are determined by time-related factors, just as the above neo-proverbials. Temporal dialect is the language variation a specific social group uses at a particular time. For example, the above neo-proverbs denote that language variation can be seen in the constructions of the proverbs as a result of the political transitions, settings, and conditions.

The social contexts and the period during which these neo-proverbs were created hold the key to the entire proverbs. The period is a political period depicted by hardship and inflation, which the society deems fit to portray their feelings through linguistic creativity.

As seen in the themes, the neo-proverbs are politically driven. The lexical items that keep it in the foreground of the political discourse in the form of lexical collocates of politics include *APC*, delegate, (delegate) *zabe*, (election) *Takara*: (contest) *siyasa*: (politics) *Mulki*, (power), *shugaba* (leader), *sak* (a political slogan for voting one party at all levels election), *dodar* (additional four years), *jar miya* (affluence), etc.

Also, the above neo-proverbs challenge fixed meanings through the constant movement of meaning in the provided text, generating multiple layers of meanings. We may call it verbal diarrhea, and from the surface, they may look nonsensical and crazily skeptical, but they contain hidden meanings and open castigations.

4.3. Styles

Several styles and rhetorical devices convey messages and add aesthetic value to the neo-proverbs. Here is an itemization of the styles contained in the text:

1. Parallelism: Parallelism is a rhetorical device where words or phrases are repeated to enhance the effectiveness of the message without causing boredom. Examples of parallelism in the text include:

- “*Banza a banza*”
- “*Kasa tsare kasa tsare*”

2. Alliteration: Alliteration is a literary device involving the repetition of consonant sounds in two or nearby words. It adds rhythm and musicality to the phrases. Examples of alliteration in the text include:

- “*Jar miya ko jar wuya*”
- “*Banza a banza talaka a APC*”

- *“Dodar ta tabbata tashin”*

- *“An yi sak an ga cak”*

3. Classical Rhetorics: The text mentions the use of classical rhetorics in crafting neo-proverbs. Classical rhetorics encompass various rhetorical techniques and strategies to persuade, inform, or entertain an audience.

4. Aesthetic Values: Aesthetic values refer to language and expression's artistic and creative aspects. In this context, it involves making the proverbs more engaging and memorable through parallelism and alliteration.

5. Proficiency in Construction: The text highlights the high proficiency of the speakers in constructing these neo-proverbs, indicating a skillful use of language and rhetoric.

6. Effective Message Conveyance: The use of classical rhetorics and rhetorical devices effectively conveys messages to the audience while enhancing the aesthetic appeal of the expressions.

7. Linguistic Creativity: The text mentions the linguistic creativity of the speakers in crafting these neo-proverbs, showing how language can be used as an art form.

8. Rhythmic and Musical Quality: Alliteration creates a rhythmic and musical quality in the proverbs, making them more engaging and impactful.

In summary, the text contains styles such as parallelism and alliteration, which enhance the expressiveness and aesthetic appeal of neo-proverbs. These rhetorical devices convey messages effectively while showcasing the linguistic creativity and proficiency of the speakers.

5. Conclusion

This study focuses on the versatility and creativity of the neo-proverbs/pp and establishes how they make vital contributions to knowledge. It identifies and describes the unique style embedded in these postproverbials, on the one hand, discusses the nuances of meaning

predominant in the selected postproverbials, and provides scholars, linguists, and folklorists with excavator material for lots of research. The study showcases postproverbials as humorous modern linguistic creativity that is politically inclined within particular political situations and times. These humorous neo-proverbials deliver wisdom with a healthy dose of humor through edutainment. They are funny and wise, making listeners laugh, think and learn. It also establishes that postproverbials examined in this paper have a time frame and a life cycle and portrays postproverbials as Temporal dialects. They also have elements of contemporaneity and flexibility and contain idiomatic and some aspects of narrative qualities that are contextually bound. In other words, they are inventions of necessity. Ultimately, this study reiterates that our society's socio-political structure guides our thinking and language use.

6. Implications

The conclusion of this study on neo-proverbs and postproverbials yields two significant implications. Firstly, it highlights the dynamic nature of language, showcasing how creativity and versatility are inherent in linguistic evolution. Neo-proverbs and postproverbials exemplify language's capacity to adapt to changing societal contexts with their blend of humor, wisdom, and political commentary. This observation encourages scholars to explore the richness of language and its role in reflecting and shaping culture.

Secondly, the study underscores the deep interconnection between language and society, emphasizing that the prevailing socio-political structures influence language usage. Neo-proverbs serve as linguistic markers of specific historical moments, embodying the spirit of their times. This insight encourages researchers to consider the broader socio-political context when analyzing language, shedding light on the intricate relationship between language, culture, and politics. Ultimately, these implications advance our understanding of language's evolution and its profound impact on human expression and societal dynamics.

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UCHE OBOKO - TIMOTHY EKELEDIRICHUKWU ONYEJELEM

IDENTITY CONSTRUCTIONS, SOCIAL
CORRECTION AND REPRESENTATIONAL
DYNAMICS OF RECONSTRUCTING
IGBO PROVERBS AMONG DIGITAL NATIVES:
A SOCIO-PRAGMEMIC ANALYSIS

Abstract: Proverbs are taken to be the compass through which the people navigate through words. These proverbs, sometimes, serve as established principles for explaining, understanding and predicting outcomes of actions, events and prospects among the people. However, today, these age-long proverbs are being reconstructed by the younger generation in order to meet with evolving trends in their technology-driven world. Often times, the meanings of the proverbs are distorted in the new forms and tilting towards humour. The present paper seeks to find out the extent to which these proverbs have been reconstructed in some Igbo proverbs, and if the reconstructed proverbs still have the potential of achieving the supposed pragmatic acts. Adopting Jacob Mey's (2001) theory of pragmeme and Serge Moscovici's (1984) social representation theory, the study investigates the pragmatic acts in some Igbo proverbs used in social correction. Being a qualitative study, the work employed both primary and secondary data collection. A total of forty proverbs and their postproverbial forms were collected and analysed along five pragmatic acts of correcting, warning, advising, instructing and informing. Findings from the study reveal how the digital natives reconstruct the traditional proverbs in order to blend with the evolving trends in their digital world. The paper establishes that through the renegotiated proverbial forms, the world view of the younger generation and the circumstances that surround their existence are expressed and understood.

Keywords: Proverbs, pragmemic, social correction, identity construction and representational dynamics

1. Introduction

Proverbs are expressions with which words are ornamented. Igbo proverbs like the proverbs used in other cultures are used to embellish and support one's positions during conversations. These rhetorical devices do not only bring out the import of one's messages during conversations but gives nuances to the speech. Hence, the ability to deploy and understand their semantic imports effectively in contexts is seen as a great oratory skill. Hence, the saying, "*onye aturu ilu, ma kowara ya, ego e jiri lu nne ya lara n'iyi.*" (If a proverb is given and interpreted for a man, then, the bride paid on his mother is a waste.) This is taken from the standpoint that proverbs are used in an 'indirect manner' which leaves the understanding, interpretation and conclusion at the hearer's discretion (Mieder, 1994:214). In African culture, as in Igbo culture, proverbs perform various roles. They are often used to convey messages that are often seen as difficult or weighty in ordinary expressions; give deeper meanings to expressions; tune down the offensiveness of expressions; as well as, add colour to a discourse. All these make the use of proverbs sacrosanct in Igbo culture.

Through proverbs, the belief system, philosophy, opinions, moral consciousness, world view and the identities of the people are expressed and handed down from generation to generation. This is made explicit in the definition given by Mieder (1985:119), when he defines proverbs as 'a short, generally known sentence of the folk which contains wisdom, truth, morals and traditional views in a metaphorical fixed and memorable form which is handed down from generation to generation.' Proverbs in most cultures are seen not only as a veritable tool for cultural transmission and preservation but also as a correctional tool. In line with this role of proverbs, views proverbs are further defined as: "a popular expression which succinctly conveys truth and wisdom with a view to teach, praise, recommend, advise, correct, indict, warn, rebuke, castigate, denounce, reprimand or condemn an undesirable act or behaviour or a vice" (Onyemelukwe 2004 as cited in Fadumiye, 2015: 33). Scholars

like Oboko (2020), Sule et al. (2019) and Gabriel et al. (2019) have also affirmed the didactic role of proverbs in African societies.

As already established, the usefulness, significance and values of proverbs in African society remains unmatched and undiluted. This is what Finnegan (1970) describes as 'sacrosanct and unmalleable'. In fact, she refers to it as 'relative fixity' (cited in Raji-Oyelade, 1999:74). Conversely, despite the all-important functions of proverbs, they have often been reconstructed, recrafted and represented among the digital natives—young generation. Raji-Oyelade acknowledges that although these proverbs are expected to be used in their original traditional forms; yet, there is a 'radical overturning' of the forms of the traditional proverbs (Raji-Oyelade, 1999:74). He further observes that although the traditional proverbs are supposed to have the relative fixity or rigidity, there is an assumed quality of stasis in the traditional proverb as conventional verbal genre; situated in the dynamic space of informal speech and modern African culture that relative fixity of proverbs dissolves and ultimately, they are deconstructed as postproverbials. He further considers postproverbials as 'playful blasphemies' used in place of the original traditional forms which are expressed through playful rendition (Raji-Oyelade, 1999:74). He further contends that the postproverbials lack the philosophical, didactic and ingenuity associated with the original traditional proverbs but are merely concerned with the 'aesthetic verbal play' (Raji-Oyelade, 1999:81). Hence, he considers the new incursion of the youth into the traditional proverbial realm as perversion and subversion of the traditional proverbial forms and this is what is called *postproverbial*. Challenging the position, Daniel (2016) argues that postproverbials should not be seen as the subversion of the traditional proverbial forms. Rather, they should be viewed as the deconstructing and reconstructing of the wisdom that is reserved for the aged. Hence, she sees postproverbials as the bending and twisting of the traditional proverbials to newer forms that suit the ideals of the younger generation and their world view.

Although one may argue that the new twists brought in by the younger generation give the traditional proverbs new perspectives, it is also arguable that by deconstructing and reconstructing the traditional proverbs, 'the wisdom embedded in them, the cultural values, morals, ethics and world view with which they are known for are blasphemed, trivialized and rendered playfully, devoid of seriousness and meaning in their postproverbial renditions' (Lemoha et al., 2019:332).

Despite the arguments above, the current paper holds that the reconstruction and representation of Igbo proverbs among the younger generation does not affect their identity constructions as Igbo people. In addition, the paper holds that although scholars like Raji-Oyelade (1999) have argued that postproverbial forms trivialize issues, most Igbo postproverbials still have wit and wisdom embedded in them and shares a common boundary with the traditional proverbs in their ideological perspective. The paper emphasizes that not all postproverbials in Igbo proverbs are rendered in a playful manner as some are carefully deconstructed to convey latent truth.

The specific objective of the study is to show that Igbo proverbs can be restructured to reflect the world view of the younger generation and these dynamisms can still be used to achieve some pragmatic acts. In addition, the study holds that deconstruction and recontextualization of Igbo proverbs is to create room for continuity in the use of proverbs. Therefore, the study tries to find answers to the following questions:

1. Are postproverbials just trivialized versions of traditional proverbs without elements of wits and value?
2. Are there connections between traditional proverbs and postproverbials in Igbo proverbs?
3. How are the Igbo proverbs reconstructed to achieve pragmatic acts?

2. Identity Negotiation: Postmodern and Postproverbiality

Identity negotiation has to do with how a group of people bound by common variables negotiate their sociocultural and in-group membership. The members of the group first identify their common interests, goals, behavioural tactics and all that help them to identify who they are individually and collectively. Such self-discoveries aid the members of a linguistic community to strike a balance “between achieving their interactional goals and satisfying their identity-related goals” (Swann and Bosson, 2008:448). With this, the people conform to certain expected principles of identity negotiation which help to promote cordial interpersonal and intrapersonal harmony in a social environment. Since identity negotiation guides people’s behaviour in every linguistic community, postproverbial paves way for such negotiation with long held tradition and beliefs (Oboko and Umezina, 2019:363). Postmodernism being the driving force in postproverbiality accounts for the renegotiation and reconstruction of the primordial age-long proverbial expressions. Hence, postproverbials are seen as radical departure from the original traditional proverbs to a modernized proverbial form which subvert the sense of reason and logic in an elusive manner. The ‘twists’, transgressions and transformations of the original traditional proverbial forms do not only affect their forms but also their functions and meanings. Explaining fully what postproverbial is and by extension, its role in the identity creation of the people, Raji-Oyelade (2022: n.p) avers:

It is understood as a radical alternate or parallel saying derived from the convention, content, and sense of the traditional proverbs. The nature of the postproverbial agency indicates a specific dynamic order, to be precise, an iconoclastic practice that brings the cultural philosophy of the original proverbial text to question, play, or blasphemy. Thus, postproverbiality is the evidence of inscription of urbanization and signs of (post) modernity in African societies. The postproverbial text is all about decomposition, dismantling, suturing and (re)composition in radical paremiology.

Conversely, while Raji-Oyelade (2022) sees postproverbials as an alteration of traditional proverbs, Mieder (1997:416) contends that “people do not necessarily consider proverbs to be sacrosanct, and the ‘fun’ of parodying, manipulating, and perverting them has become quite widespread. While such parodies might be quite humorous, they also often express serious socio-political satire in the slogans and graffiti.” While it is not deniable that the postmodern reconstructed proverbial forms deploy humour, parody and discursive strategy of mockery of the original proverbial forms, such creativity, ingenuity, imaginative and manipulative ability of the digital natives is viewed as an attempt to fit into the emerging trends that captures their world view and identity. Apparently, the newly reconstructed proverbial forms enable the younger generation to experience the world around them, express themselves fully and cope with the complexities of the modern world.

3. Previous Studies on Igbo Postproverbials and Identification of Research Gap

Several studies have been carried out on the circumvention of the traditional proverbials. However, the concept of postproverbials was brought to limelight by Raji-Oyelade (1999, 2012). Since then, many scholars have delved into the unique area of study. More so, scholars like Lemoha et al. (2019), Egbara, (2019), Oboko and Umezina (2019) have also interrogated postproverbials in Igbo proverbs. For Instance, Lemoha et al. (2019) subjected twenty-one pairs of Igbo proverbs made of the traditional proverbs and their post proverbial forms to critical analysis. The findings reveal that Igbo postproverbial is a reaction to culture diffusion occasioned by human interaction and the accompanying changes in values, morals and worldviews.

Similarly, Egbara, (2019) interrogates postproverbial (re)constructions in selected Igbo Proverbs The work shows that there are noticeable changes in the rendering of the selected proverbs. The study further reveals that the changes occur either due to lack of an

in-depth knowledge in the usage of the traditional proverbs or disconnection with the custodians /sources of the Igbo proverbs among other factors. The paper urges the Igbo language speakers to avoid the near-overbearing influence of proverbials on the autochthonous, symbolic, semantic, and philosophical essence of Igbo traditional proverbials. More so, Oboko and Umezinwa (2019) examine the Igbo postproverbials from the point of identity negotiation and signification. The work selected twelve Igbo proverbs that cut across the five Igbo speaking states of eastern Nigeria. Findings from the study reveal that Igbo proverbs are essentially custodians of the Igbo cultural identity and orientalism and that most proverbs have been moderated to fit the emerging trends in the identity of the Igbo ancestry. Finally, Abana and Eke (2019) who collected their data from ten Igbo elders conclude in their work that postproverbiality is situated in the dynamic space of informal speech of younger and adventurous generation. Beyond the Igbo proverbs, Fadare (2019) investigates Asia Chiemeziem's new media proverbs where references were made to proverbs in other tribes like Yoruba, Nupe and Hausa. The study concludes that the emerging facts about post proverbials are indications that they are viable and will endure the test of time. Lastly, Akewula (2019) interrogates the exposure to postproverbiality in Arabic among the students of Arabic language in the University of Ibadan. Findings of the study show that the students employ their knowledge of Arabic language and Yoruba cultural background to re-create a number of postproverbial texts within the context of Arabic culture.

There is no doubt that the previous studies cited above provided the platform on which the present paper is hinged. However, the current paper takes a sharp departure from the aforementioned works because they fail to show how these proverbial transgressions mostly laden with humour can be used in the pragmatic acts of correcting warning, advising, instructing and informing among the digital natives. The selected pragmatic acts are considered to be within the spectrum of social correction.

4. Pragmatic Act Theory and Social Representation Theory

Mey's (2001) pragmatic act theory states that there are no speech acts but only situated speech acts or instantiated pragmatic acts. In pragmatic acts, attention is focused on characterizing a general situational prototype which Mey (2001) calls a pragmeme. According to him, the Pragmeme refers to generalized pragmatic acts which is realized through practs in situational use. Reiterating the position, Kecskes (2010) espouses that pragmeme represents situational prototypes to which there may be several pragmatic access routes (practs). The study explores how 'digital natives', who are socialized in digital platforms, construct and reconstruct their identities through the use of Igbo proverbs. Through the lens of the pragmatic acts of advising, correcting, warning, instructing and informing used in the construction and representation of identity in digital settings, the present study interrogates how today's youth make sense of their world view by reconstructing these age-long Igbo proverbs among themselves.

According to Mey's pragmatic act theory, the relationship between language and representation, suggests that language use reflects and shapes social reality. The current study therefore applies this perspective to explore the representational dynamics of reconstructing Igbo proverbs among digital natives. The investigation includes how these proverbs reflect identity, power, and social norms in digitally-mediated conversations, and how the social contexts of digital platforms impact on the interpretation of reconstructed Igbo proverbs.

Pragmatic act theory asserts that language can be used to perform social corrections, which are acts that aim to correct or modify the actions or beliefs of others (Oishi, 2016). In the context of the study, social correction could be observed in how digital natives use Igbo proverbs to reprimand or correct others in online discussions, forums or social media platforms. Moreover, one can examine the role of digital platforms in facilitating the social function of correct-

ing and how the meaning of reconstructed Igbo proverbs changes in such contexts.

Since constructed meanings in proverbs and postproverbials are interpreted based on situations and contexts defined within the ambit of the culture of the people, it means therefore, that culture plays a role in accessing pragmeme. Kecskes (2010) captures it more aptly when he comments that “a pragmatic act is an instance of adapting oneself to a context, as well as adapting the context to oneself.” From this claim, it is clear that postproverbials are created based on contexts and which both the speaker and hearer share a common knowledge in the interpretation. The affordances determine how what is said is interpreted in a particular context.

Moscovici’s social representation theory highlights the role of communication in shaping social representations. In the paper, youths’ reconstruction and interpretation of Igbo proverbs within their social context can be seen as a form of communication and social interaction, which can both reinforce and challenge existing social representations of the proverbs and the culture they represent. Since identity is always constructed based on social context, representation and reconstruction of Igbo proverbs among the youth depict a form of social representation that serve their interests.

Explaining the theory further, Markova (2008:483) comments that the social representation theory is a “theory of shared knowledge” specifically concerned with how individuals, groups, and communities collectively make sense of socially relevant or problematic issues, ideas, and practices. Furthermore, Rochira et al. (2020) aver that social representation theory suggests that these shared meanings and understandings are dynamic and can change over time, as members of a group negotiate and revise their understanding.

Within the context of the study, the re-construction and re-interpretation of Igbo proverbs by the digital natives (the youth) reveal the changes in the social representations of the proverbs and their meanings. This is where the theory is relevant to the present study.

The reconstruction of Igbo proverbs by young people today is influenced by their social context, interactions and experiences and which is also subject to change.

5. Methodology

Being a qualitative study, the work employed both primary and secondary data collection. For the primary data, the researchers sought proverbs from five elderly persons from the five states that make up the south-east geopolitical zone in Nigeria. The states were chosen because they are the major Igbo speaking states in Nigeria. The eight elders who were interviewed could only provide the original traditional proverbial forms and opined that they are not conversant with the subversions, twists and alterations of the old proverbial forms noticed among the youth. The interview period lasted for a period of three months (April to June). A book on collection of Igbo proverbs provided the major source for secondary data collection. Thereafter, two middle-aged men who work in private radio stations in the south-east, and who present their programmes in the Igbo language, were contacted to provide most of the postproverbial forms through their phone-in programmes. The proverbs retrieved from the elderly people and books were used during the phone-in programme and the youth were indirectly asked to provide the postproverbial forms and interpretations after the presenter cited some examples. The collection of the proverbs was done for a period of three months (July to September). A total of forty proverbs and their postproverbial forms were selected and analysed under the pragmatic acts of advising, correcting, warning, instructing and informing. The selected proverbs and their postproverbial forms were translated from the Igbo language to the English language and consequently, an interpretative textual analysis method was used in its analysis.

6. Data Presentation and Analysis

For ease of analyses, the traditional proverbial forms are labelled Pi while the postproverbial forms are labelled Pii.

6.1. Pragmatic Act of Advising

1. Pi. Oke adight eri ihe onye mu anya.

Translation: A rat cannot eat what you have in your hand while you are awake.

Pii. Onye lahu ura, eburu egbe ya.

Translation: If you sleep at your duty post, your gun will be taken away from you.

Contextual Meaning: Both Pi and Pii advise their different generations on the need to be vigilant and diligent.

From the perspective of the postproverbial form (Pii), the proverb mirrors the traditional sense of vigilance and diligence in terms of smartness and cleverness in whatever the younger generation sets out to do including cheating and other dubious acts. So, while (Pi) advocates for vigilance and diligence in earning an honest living, (Pii) seeks vigilance and diligence in honest and dishonest ways of life as long as one earns a living.

2. Pi. Nwata kwocha aka o soro eze rie nri.

Translation: When a child washes his hands, he dines with the kings.

Pii. Nwata kpata ego, okenye ejegbuo onweya na ozi.

Translation: When a child is wealthy, even the elders will run errands for the child.

Contextual Meaning: (Pi) counsels that youth should work hard and do things that are honourable which will attract respect, honour and recognition to them. In the renegotiated form, the digital natives in (Pii), express their lack of belief in hard work but in wealth irrespective of how it is gotten. (Pii) expresses the certainty among the digital natives that wealth commands respect and honour, and makes the impossibility possible. Hence, the quest for get-rich quick syndrome.

3. Pi. Ife okenye no ala hu, nwata rigoro osisi oji, ogaghi ahu ya.

Translation: What an elder sees while sitting down, even if a child climbs on top of an iroko tree he/she will not see it.

Pii Ife okenye no ala hu, nwata nwere ike I hu ya ma o rigoro osisi eletrik.

Translation: What an elder sees while sitting down, a child may see it if he/she climbs on top of an electric pole.

Contextual Meaning: (Pi) presents wisdom from the angle of age. In that case, elders have more wisdom and wit far more than the younger generation. Hence, the call to always listen to elders. In (Pii), the modern term, 'electric pole' is used in comparison to the iroko tree. This brings in side by side contrast of wisdom that comes with age and wisdom that comes as a result of exposure. (Pii) brings to the forefront the ideology that age does not have much to do with wisdom, rather, exposure gives more wisdom than age.

4. Pi. Onu Okenye nwee ike enweghi eze mana obughi maka okwu amamife.

Translation: An elder's mouth may lack teeth but not words of wisdom.

Pii. Onye njenje ka isi awo amamife.

Translation: A traveller has more wisdom than a man with gray hair.

Contextual Meaning: In Igbo land, gray hair is associated with old age which is connected to wisdom. Similar to proverbs in No. 3 above, Pi holds that elders are naturally endowed with wisdom which will be beneficial to the younger generation if they listen. In Pii, the proverb is reconstructed to advise that the younger generation should try to be well exposed as wisdom comes with exposure and not merely with age. For the digital natives, some acclaimed wise sayings of the elders are seen as obsolete and stale which may not yield positive results in a generation driven by technology.

5. Pi. Nwata bunie nna ya elu, ogodo a wuchie ya anya.

Translation: If a child raises his father up, the father's loins will blind him.

Pii. Nwata bunie nna ya elu, ngwongwo na ngwo-ngwo a wuchie ya anya.

Translation: If a child raises his father up, unexpected items from his father's loins will blind him.

Contextual Meaning: The proverbs call for caution on the part of the younger generation. Pi advises that a child must never disrespect the elders as it is an abominable act in Igboland. In Pii, humour is deployed in reconstructing the traditional proverbial form. The use of *ngwongwona ngwo-ngwo* to denote an old man's reproductive organ which will blind the child if he/she raises the father up, metaphorically, represents the repercussion of acts of disregard to the elders.

6. Pi. Nwata na enweghi nne na nna ga adu ya odu, na ewere ndumodu mgbe ndi nwere nne na nna na ekweghi anu ihe a na adu ha n'odu.

Translation: A child who has no parents to advise him takes advice when people who have parents and who have refused to listen to their parent's advice are being advised.

Pii. Nwata nwere otu akwa adighi eso ndi ozo asa ahu na mmiri.

Translation: A child who has one cloth does not bathe with others in the stream.

Contextual Meaning: Pi is advice to the youth not to wait until they become victims. Rather, they should learn from other people's experience. In Pii, the proverb is reconstructed to mean that anyone who does not have anybody to advise him/her should advise himself or herself. Invariably, the twist in the proverb is an indication that the younger generation appears to be on the fast lane and does not wait until they are advised but encourages the use of one's initiatives and ideas. The reconstructed proverb substantiates their popular saying that ideas rule the world.

7. Pi. Ejighi ututu anu iyi mmimi.

Translation: The morning hours are too precious to be spent on frivolous oath-taking concerning pepper fruit (Onwudufor 2013:71).

Pii. Ejighi ututu ama njo ahia.

Translation: The poor sales in the morning hours cannot be used to judge a day as a day of unsuccessful sales.

Contextual Meaning: The traditional proverb in Pi, advises that one does not waste one's time and energy on frivolities and further calls for early start and diligence in whatever one sets out to do. In Pii, the transgression and proverbial twist advises that one should not lose faith in one's ability as time is never a measure of success. The late starters could overtake the early achievers. The stance of the digital generation is further reflected in a similar postproverbial saying: (*Overtaking is allowed maka adighi akwu na line akpata ego*, i.e. Overtaking is allowed because people do not have to queue up to make money). This proverbial form alludes to the desire of the younger generation for quick wealth.

8. Pi. Onweghi onodu na adigide.

Translation: There is no condition that is permanent/ No condition lasts forever.

Pii. Onweghi onodu na adigide abughi maka onye otu ukwu.

Translation: No condition is permanent is not applicable to a man whose one leg has been amputated because his condition is permanent.

Contextual Meaning: In Pi, the traditional proverb is used to give advice, hope and encouragement to people in difficult situations. In Pii, the younger generation in their reconstruction of the proverb dashes such hope as they believe that some situations can never be reversed. As such, there is no point giving hope in a hopeless situation. For them, a bad situation is a bad one and there is no point raising hope. By extension, the traditional proverbial forms have room for virtues such as hope which appears to be absent among the digital natives.

6.2. Pragmatic Act of Warning

9. Pi. O te la anyi hukwara Hausa na uta.

Translation: It has been a long time since the Hausa (a major tribe in Nigeria) has been using bows.

Pii. O bughi tata ka ike nwere nke wa.

Translation: The partings in the buttocks did not start today.

Contextual Meaning: In Pi, the traditional proverb is used to mean that the person using the proverb cannot be threatened by any situation as he/she has seen even worse situations. In Pii, the digital native reconstructed the proverbs to mean that whatever good or bad that is happening in their generation started long ago. Therefore, they cannot be threatened.

10. Pi. Aka aja aja na ebute onu mmanu mmanu.

Translation: A struggling man will never go hungry.

Pii. A gbaka m mbo bu ego nri.

Translation: Struggling to be rich will only earn one just his daily bread.

Contextual Meaning: Pi warns against slothfulness and laziness in order to avoid poverty. It upholds the ideology of hard work. In the renegotiated form (Pii), the younger generation makes a deviation. For them, working hard does not avert poverty but working smart. The mentality has helped to encourage all manner of smart moves (genuine and dubious) among the youth all in a bid to get wealth.

11. Pi. Nwata si na nne ya agaghi ehi ura, agaghi ehi kwa nke ya .

Translation: A child who says his mother will not sleep will not sleep also.

Pii. Nwata si na nne ya agaghi ehi ura, achoghi i nwe obere nwanne.

Translation: A child who says his mother will not sleep does not want to have a younger sibling.

Contextual Meaning: In Pi, the traditional proverbs warns against deliberate act of causing trouble as such a person would also have a fair share of the trouble when it erupts. In Pii, the digital generation recrafted the proverbs to mean that anyone who causes trouble deliberately will not only have a reasonable share of the trouble but stands to lose more.

12. Pi. O bu nwanyi na ahubeghi nsogbu na agba oso e jide ara ya aka.

Translation: In a critical situation, a woman would run for safety without holding her breast.

Pii. O bu onye ahubeghi nsogbu ji oyibo ekpe ekpere.

Translation: It is only a person who has never experienced serious challenges in life that still prays in English.

Contextual Meaning: In Pi, the proverb presages that when a problem becomes severe, no other thing matters except the problem. The transgression and twist in Pii, expresses a similar idea among the youth. For them, the severity of a problem determines the attention it gets.

13. Pi. O chu nwa okuko nwe ada.

Translation: He who chases a little chick will fall.

Pii. O chu nwa okuko nwe ada; nwa okuko nwe nwo nwo oso.

Translation: He who chases little chicken will fall and the little chicken will always run away.

Contextual Meaning: In Pi, the traditional proverb expresses that he who tries to victimize an innocent person will fail eventually. In Pii, the digital natives renegotiated the proverb and added that the innocent person will not only have victory in the face of victimization but the oppressor will be put to shame ultimately.

14. Pi. Nwata erughi eru ju ba ihe gburu nna ya, ihe gburu nna ya egbu ya.

Translation: An under-aged child who seeks to know what killed his father will be killed by what killed his father.

Pii. Nwata n' agba egwu Surugede mara kwa na Surugede bu egwu ndi muo.

Translation: The child who dances to Surugede music should know that Surugede is the dance for the gods.

Contextual Meaning: The proverb in Pi warns that life comes in stages. As such, one should not attempt to put the cart before the horse.

By extension, it will be improper to do what one is supposed to do at a later age at a very young age. Similarly, the same idea is expressed in Pii using a particular kind of dance style (*Surugede*)— (a dance that is meant for the dignified elderly group and strong hearted).

15. Pi. Okoro erughi eru wara ogodo, ikuku e buru ya no ogodo ya.

Translation: A young man who cannot wait to get to the ripe age of handling a certain task will definitely fail.

Pii. Iyi ara ka mma na okorobia.

Translation: Madness is better at a young age.

Contextual Meaning: In Pi, the traditional proverb warns against rushing in life because life comes in stages. It encourages patience in life. In Pii, the youth twisted the proverb to imply that the earlier anything is done the better. There is no point waiting until a certain age.

16. Pi. A gba chi onye isi nkiti o richa azu di na ofe.

Translation: If a blind man is not cautioned he finishes the fish in the soup.

Pii. Agbachi ego nkiti o na ezu ezu.

Translation: If one does not make excessive money more than what one needed; money will continue to embarrass the person.

Contextual Meaning: The proverb in Pi holds that it is better to discuss issues to avoid reoccurrences. In its reconstructed form in Pii, the digital natives hold that it is better to make money by all means. Their position is against the back drop that money can solve all the problems. Hence, their inordinate desires for riches.

6.3. Pragmatic Act of Correcting

17. Pi. Ejighi ihe eji agba nti agba na anya.

Translation: You cannot use the cotton bud meant for the ear to clean the eye, else, it goes blind.

Pii. Anaghi agha oka na ebe ana ele mmanu eji akwo ugbo ala.

Translation: You cannot roast corn in the filling station.

Contextual Meaning: In Pi, the proverbs corrects/advises on putting things in their proper perspective. In Pii, the proverb is reconstructed to express the same idea from a different perspective. It is used to express that one does not do a thing that will consume the individual deliberately. By implication, the right thing must be done at the right place.

18. Pi. Onye butere chi ya uzo o gbagbue onwe ya na oso.

Translation: If a man runs before his personal god, he will get tired of running.

Pii. Onye mee ka o ma ihe nnukwu, anyi ahu n' ala.

Translation: If a man claims he is the strongest of men, let him show it in fighting.

Contextual Meaning: The traditional proverb in Pi corrects that people should be patient in life and not live ahead of their time. In the recrafted form Pii, the digital natives use the proverb to express that there is point bragging about one's strength. For them, one's achievement is what matters and not much talks.

19. Pi. Onye o bula tara ukpa, taa oji ga ejizi aka ya kwu nke ka uto.

Translation: It is the person who has eaten both walnut and kola nut that is the right person to tell the difference in taste (Onwudufor 2018: 62).

Pii. Onye bu o mmiri na mmaya o mara nke ka alo.

Translation: It is the person who has carried both water and palm wine that is in a position to say which one is heavier.

Contextual Meaning: Both proverbs are used to compare two opposing and similar situations. However, in Pi, the user amplifies the similarities in the taste of two different edible nuts (walnut and kolanuts) and makes a case for the variations in their tastes to be determined by the eater. This shows that no matter how closely related two similar situations may be, it lies on hands of the person who have experienced them to tell exactly what the actual situation is all about. In reconstructing the proverb in Pii, emphasis is being laid on the

weight of water against that of the palm wine. By implication, it is when one is faced with two similar difficult situations, that he or she can say which one is more difficult than the other. Hence, no two situations are the same.

20. Pi. Oke mmanwu no karia n' ilo umuokpu ekenye ya utu.

Translation: When a great masquerade overstays in the village square, the womenfolk may ask him to pay them royalty (On-wudufor 2018: 26).

Pii. Onye biara mme mme noro a la a la ga eso ndi o biara ebe ha sacha efere.

Translation: If a guest refuses to leave after an occasion, he/she would join in the washing of the plates used during the occasion.

Contextual Meaning: Pi calls for moderation in doing things. The proverb is used to correct the attitude of over emphasis in every matter. So, whatever you do, there is always a timeline. Pi is a call for proper time management in whatever one is doing, otherwise, one may receive insults and loss of reputation.

The same idea is expressed in its renegotiated form

Pii. to re-enact that “a stitch in time saves nine”. However, in the proverb, emphasis is on self-respect as it relates visiting a friend or people. In every circumstance, one is expected to be snappy and work with time so as to avert disrespect from their hosts.

21. Pi. Aka mmadu ji sacha ike ya, otu aka ahu ka o ji eri nri.

Translation: The same hand with which one uses to clean his anus is the same hand with which he/she uses to eat.

Pii. Akwa mmiri mmadu jiri hichaa ike ya nwere ike i bu ebe ahu ka oga eji hicha iru ya echi.

Translation: ‘The side of the towel with which one uses to clean his anus may be the side he/she may use to clean his face tomorrow.

Contextual Meaning: The proverb in Pi is a call for good work. It amplifies the usefulness of the hands in cleaning of the anus and the face. What this means is that the same hand we use to clean our anus is the same hand that we use to put food in our mouths. It means therefore, that we all have bad as well as good attitudes in life. This is because the same hand that we use in doing evil is also the hands that we use in doing good. In Pii, today's generation reconstructs the proverb to represent the consequences of an action, which reveals that in life occasions will arise where one might fall back on a person whom he or she once despised for survival. So, Pii calls for caution in how one treats or maltreats others for no condition is permanent.

22. Pi. Mmanwu gbakaria na ogbo, umuaka awu ya aja.

Translation: If a masquerade over stays on stage, children will throw sand at it.

Pii. Okenye mee onwe ya ka osikapa, umuazi ada ya ubu.

Translation: If an elder presents himself like rice, children will scamper after him.

Contextual Meaning: Pi is a call on celebrity management as the masquerade in the proverb represents persons of prominence in society. It appeals to prominent personalities to always use their time judiciously especially, in matters of public gathering. Overstaying in an occasion may bring disrespect. Similarly, Pii calls for self-respect on the side of the elders or seniors. Anyone who deserves respect from others should carry themselves with dignity. This means that if one is expecting some degree of respect from his or her subordinates, one should first and foremost respect oneself. If an elder fails to behave respectfully, then, he or she invites insults from the children.

23. Pi. O bu ihe mere ede o ji be whim.

Translation: It is something that made the cocoyam to make the sound of 'whim'.

Pii. O bu onodu mere isha jiri gba goo.

Translation: It is condition that made crayfish to be bent.

Contextual Meaning: In Pi, the proverb expresses that things do not just happen. They happen for a reason. In Pii, the proverb is twisted by the digital natives to imply that there are remote causes for every action whether good or bad.

24. Pi. Onye chi ya tiri aki, a chikwara ndi ozo ochi.

Translation: Those who have their palm kernel cracked for them by a benevolent spirit should not laugh at the misfortune of others.

Pii. O me were, ma chi ekweghi, onye uta a takwara ya.

Translation: He who has done his best but his god (chi) failed to support him should not be mocked.

Contextual Meaning: Both Pi and Pii attempt to correct their different generations on the need not to laugh at the misfortunes and failures of others. From the perspective of the postproverbial form, the proverb in Pii reflects the traditional nous of destiny as the basis for success in life. So, when one has tried all possible ways to succeed but could not, such a person should not be blamed or termed a failure.

6.4. Pragmatic Act of Informing

25. Pi. Amamihe a bughi nani maka isi awo.

Translation: Wisdom is not only the prerogative of the elderly with grey hair.

Pii. Isi awo Methusela enweghi ihe obula n'ebe amamihe Solomon di.

Translation: The grey hair of Methusela has nothing to do with the wisdom of Solomon.

Contextual Meaning: Both proverbs in Pi and Pii are concerned with wisdom as a product of experience and age. Comparatively, Pi connotes that wisdom does not only come from old age as a child may be full of wisdom without acquiring grey hairs.

In like terms, Pii concurs that the longevity of the biblical Methusela is nothing to be compared to the wisdom of the legendry King

Solomon. By implication, the traditional belief that wisdom comes from experience as a result of old age is reconstructed to suit today's generation who hold a different viewpoint that wisdom does not only come from grey hairs.

26. Pi. Nnunu eji n' aka kari ri ogu no n'ime ohia.

Translation: A bird at hand is worth millions in the bush.

Pii. Nnunu eji n' aka o buru na e jighi ya mee ofe mmiri oku e were ya mee anu a ga ata ata.

Translation: If a bird at hand is not used as chicken pepper soup; it will be used as barbecue.

Contextual Meaning: Pi enthrones the need to make good use of any opportunity at hand as there may be no other one if such chances are lost. Traditionally, what you have at present is worth millions that are not readily available. In Pii, the proverb is reconstructed to mean that any opportunity is opportunity and it is easier to plan with what one has in hand. Thus, "a bird at hand, if you don't use it for pepper soup, you use it for barbecue"

27. Pi. Eburu ozu onye ozo, o di ka ebu ukwu nku.

Translation: When the corpse of an unknown person is being carried, it looks like a tied piece of firewood.

Pii. Beta anu, beta anu bu na aru ehi.

Translation: Give me more meat, give more meat, the meat is being removed from the body of a cow.

Contextual Meaning: Pi presents a case of nonchalant attitude of many when the issues concerning others are being discussed. The proverb informs that when the death of a person that is not closely related to you is being discussed, it will appear as if it is not a serious matter.

In Pii, the proverb is presented to reflect that when people are not the one spending the money, they tend to make huge requests. Similarly, "to bring more or to demand for more meat, all the demands for more meat are being made from the body of the cow"

28. Pi. Agaghi m agwa agadi nwanyi zie imi n'ih i na o bughi m ga ata isi ya ma o nwuo.

Translation: I may not wish to ask an old woman to clear her nose, since I am not going to eat her head when she dies (Onwudufor 2013:107).

Pii. Agaghi m asi agadi Kpuchie ukwu yan'ih i na oweghi onye ma ebe osi eku ume.

Translation: I cannot tell an old woman to close her legs because nobody knows where she is breathing from.

Contextual Meaning: The traditional proverb Pi is used to show that people should not poke nose into a matter that is not their concern. In its renegotiated form in Pii, the proverb is used to show that one cannot offer useful advice if one does not understand all the facts as people know why they do what they do.

29. Pi. Na agbanyeghi ka osisi aku bekee toro ogo rue o gaghi eru elu igwe.

Translation: No matter how tall the coconut tree grows, it will never get to heaven.

Pii. Na agbanyeghi ka ike si aga osiso, o ga anoriri na azu.

Translation: No matter how fast the buttocks moves, it must always be at the back.

Contextual Meaning: The proverbs in Pi and Pii evoke the natural law of motion, certainty, position and status. In Pi, some positions are sacrosanct that no matter how one struggles in life, he or she will not get to it. It is a call on people to accept that God is supreme in all circumstances. Hence, "No matter how tall the coconut tree grows, it will never get to heaven" In Pii, it is naturally understood that the position of the buttocks is backward. Even if the world turns around, the buttocks will still be at the back. This age long proverb is reconstructed to indicate that no matter the speed at which certain thing move in life, nature has its toll.

30. Pi. Ukwu onye ji bia ka o ga eji laa.

Translation: The leg with which a guest came to a public function will be the same leg that he will go with.

Pii. Ukwu onye ji bia ka o ga eji laa mana nke o ji la ga aka mma.

Translation: The leg with which a guest came to a public function will be the same leg that he will go with, but, the leg he will go with will be better than what he came with.

Contextual Meaning: Both proverbs pray for journey mercies of guests to a public function. However, Pi is specific on the reciprocity of the gesture meted on the host. In essence, Pi is saying that the good deeds of the guest will follow them in return proportionately.

Pii is reconstructed to mean that the goodwill of the guests to a public function will follow them back, however, their good deeds will follow them back, but with good measures.

31. Pi. Ogbara nkiti kwere ekwe.

Translation: He who is silent agrees to what others have said.

Pii. Ogbara nkiti ka kwa kwuo okwu.

Translation: He who is silent has spoken more.

Contextual Meaning: Pi informs that silence is a form of communication. It emphasizes that he who keeps silence over an issue has indirectly agreed with what others have said. In the context of popular opinion, he who keeps silence has agreed to what is being said.

In Pii, the younger generations reconstructed the proverb to suit the realities of their time by saying that he who keeps silence, speaks volume. It expresses their lack of confidence in long speeches as there is wisdom in silence.

32. Pi. Adighi a no otu ebe atotu ngiga.

Translation: One who wants to bring down a basket hanging on the fire place cannot afford to stand in one position (Onwudufor 2018: 154).

Pii. Adighi a no otu ebe ekiri mmawu.

Translation: One cannot watch the masquerade well standing in a fixed position.

Contextual Meaning: Both Pi and Pii agree that to succeed in life, there is need for diversification in whatever one is doing. The basket and the masquerade in the two proverbs are imagery of statuses. For the status in Pi, the proverb informs that for one to bring down a 'basket' from its position, one must move round it, as it becomes very difficult to pull 'a basket hanging on the fire place' without moving round the fire.

Similarly, in Igbo social-cultural society, the masquerade does not stay in one particular place while performing. So, those who want to enjoy watching the masquerade as it performs are expected to move around with it. In this context, the youths of nowadays believe that it is worthless to stay in a particular place, job, trade or career for so long. For them, success is achieved by moving round the world. This is one of the philosophies behind the increased search for greener pastures overseas.

6.5. Pragmatic Act of Instructing

33. Pi. Etu o soro nwoke ya ha mkpumkpu, ihe ojiri buru nwoke agaghi emetu ala.

Translation: No matter how short a man is, his testicles will never touch the ground.

Pii. Etu o soro aguba ya tuwa nko, o ga ghi awa nku.

Translation: No matter how sharp a razor blade is, it will never be used to break firewood.

Contextual Meaning: Pi presents gender from the angle of superiority of the man. In that case, men are seen to be more powerful than women. The proverb is saying that no matter how lowly, poor, or short, a man may be, it will not make him to lose his position as a man. The proverb places the man in a position of superiority. In the postproverbial form, razor (*aguba*) is used in comparison to shared responsibilities based on strength. The razor blade is considered to be a very sharp object, but not useful in cutting every object. Here, Pii is saying that in as much as the razor blade may be sharp, it can-

not be used to break firewood. This goes to demonstrate that there is division of labour based on strength. The razor blade can be used to cut hairs but not firewood. Similarly, the axe is sharp and strong for cutting or breaking firewood but cannot be used for cutting the hair.

34. Pi. Site na ikwocha aka, ka esi a mara onye ma ubu nri.

Translation: It is from the washing of hand that one can ascertain who knows how to eat food fast.

Pii. Site na ukwu mmadu turu ka eji amara udi egwu o ga gba.

Translation: It is from the dancing steps shown that one will understand the kind of dance a dancer wants to showcase.

Contextual Meaning: In Pi, one can know a person's capacity through his entry behaviour. Thus, the proverb in Pi instructs that we identify a person's capacity from his initial action. This means that we may not need to conduct so much tests in order to ascertain the veracity or otherwise of a person's claims once we have come in contact with them. That is, we can ascertain what a person has to offer based on his preliminary actions.

Similarly, Pii presents the situation in like manner. It instructs that we can assess a person's performance based on the first steps taken by that person. The postproverbial form, aligns with the principle of primacy effects theory which says that "first impression matters."

35. Pi. Ngana kpuchie ute aguu ekpughe ya.

Translation: He who refuses to work will go hungry.

Pii. Ngana kpuchie ute aguu ekpughe ya abughi maka onye nne ya na ere nri.

Translation: He who refuses to work will go hungry is not for someone whose mother sells food.

Contextual Meaning: Both proverbs are particular about laziness as the major cause of hunger. Pi emphasizes that when one refuses to work, he faces hunger, which invariably forces him out to work. So, if one does not work because of laziness, he will be forced to work when hunger strikes. In the postproverbial form, the youths recon-

structed the proverb to accommodate the place of those born with silver spoons in their mouth by introducing the clause that hunger is not meant for those whose mother sells food. This goes to tell that most people who are lazy today, do so because they believe in the wealth and provision of their parents.

36. Pi. Ohia na ewete aka nlahu na ya.

Translation: It is the way a forest is will determine if people will sleep in it.

Pii. Aka onye wetalu, ewelu so be ya.

Translation: The way a person presents himself is the way people will relate with him/her.

Contextual Meaning: Pi presents situational school of thought at work. The proverb instructs that people are being treated exactly the way and manner in which they present themselves. The proverb opines that people feel relaxed in a particular place based on the degree of hospitality they received from their host. So, if people are treated well in a place, they feel very much at home in that place. In Pii, the philosophy of 'tit for tat' is being re-enacted. It calls for a retaliation or an action that is equivalent to the one a person receives in return. The proverb in Pii is emphatic on the measure you give as a measure that you will receive in return.

37. Pi. Ofeke amaghi mgbe ekere nku ukwa.

Translation: A foolish person does not know when he/she is deceived.

Pii. Onye a kpala; a kpala ya.

Translation: He that has been scammed has been scammed.

Contextual Meaning: The proverbs in Pi and Pii harmer on the need for wisdom in whatever one does. In Pi, the proverb instructs that intelligence/vigilance is required in all circumstances as a person with low intelligence does not usually know when he or she is swindled. Today's generation reconstructed the proverb in Pii to mean that once a person has been defrauded, there is no remedy. Similarly, the

postproverbial form suggests that if a person has been scammed, he has already been scammed.

38. Pi. Ubochi odudu bere na akpa amu nwoke ka o ga amara na onwere ka esi egbu odudu bere na njo.

Translation: The day a tse-tse fly perches on a man's testicles is the day he will learn the tactics to kill an insect that perches on a delicate spot.

Pii. E nwere uzo di iche iche esi egbu oke.

Translation: There are many ways to kill a rat.

Contextual Meaning: Both proverbs instruct on critical approach to solving critical problems. In the context of Pi, it is when a problem seems intractable that people begin to learn the special tactics of dealing with such critical situation. Since the man's testicles is a very delicate part of the body, it demands that care should be taken in an attempt to kill any tse-tse fly that perches therein.

In the postproverbial form, there are many ways to kill a rat here means that there are many ways of solving problems. The proverb instructs that there are various ways of solving problems. In some cases, there is need to adopt a multi-problem-solving approach where on technique seems to fail.

39. Pi. Onye na-ejeghi ahia n' oge na-azu ihe ahia juru aju.

Translation: One who did not go to market early enough usually buys rejected commodities (Onwudufor 2013:69).

Pii. Onye kwete ihe Otu kwuru o laa na oge.

Translation: If one agrees to the prices in the market and avoids much haggling, she comes back early from the market.

Contextual Meaning: Pi is particular about punctuality. It amplifies the age long cliché that punctuality is the soul of business as "he who did not go to market on time usually buys rejected commodities". It calls for people to go to work or market on time if they want to achieve best results. Pii emphasizes that money is the soul of business as lack of money leads to much haggling in the marketplace. In

reconstructing the proverb, today's youths place premium on money, since it is said that if one agrees to the prices of commodities in the market, it will make him or her to avoid much bargaining, which will make him or her conclude his or her transactions on time and possibly come back home on time.

40. Pi. Agu na agba oso n'ehihie, o buru na onweghi ihe o na achu, o nwere ihe na achu ya.

Translation: A lion that is running in the afternoon is either pursuing something or that something is pursuing it.

Pii. O bughu mmadu nile na aga si ike nwere ebe ha na aga ufo-du bu ndi afo na asa.

Translation: It is not everybody who is walking fast that has an appointment; some have runny stomach.

Contextual Meaning: The proverb in Pi is an exposition on the causes and effects of different actions which people exhibit. In the case of a running lion, if it is not pursuing something, then, something that is pursuing it. This goes to show that there is a reason for any action and nothing happens for nothing. Pii tells us that not every action is being motivated by good cause. In some cases, some people do certain things in life which are not based on genuine purpose but to satisfy their personal interests.

7. Discussion on Findings

The study investigates the identity construction, social correction, and representational dynamics involved in the reconstruction of Igbo proverbs among digital natives using a pragmatic analysis approach. The research is guided by Mey's pragmatic act theory and Moscovici's theory of social representation which provided the theoretical framework for understanding the social and linguistic processes involved in the reconstruction of Igbo proverbs. Mey's pragmatic act theory posits that language is a tool for communication and interaction that enables individuals to construct meaning and take actions. The study reveals that the digital natives reconstruct

Igbo proverbs as a way of connecting their experiences and knowledge to their social and cultural identity. This means that the youngsters consider the Igbo proverbs important to their identity and see proverbs as means of social corrections that can be used to correct or modify the actions or beliefs of others and as a way transmitting cultural and linguistic knowledge across generations.

On the other hand, Moscovici's theory of social representation emphasizes that representations are not static but constantly changing due to social changes and cultural adaptations. The study found that digital natives reconstruct the traditional Igbo proverbs by creating new interpretations to suit their experiences and identity and these are also subject to changes over time.

In general, the study discovers that digital natives reconstruct Igbo proverbs differently based on their experiences, social environments, and backgrounds. This phenomenon points to the fact that identity construction inherently accommodates multiple representations due to cultural diversity. From the study, it is observed that the recrafted forms are not just mere twists. They have connections with the traditional proverbial forms. Although most of the post-proverbial forms have some kind of comic effects, they still show connections with the traditional proverbs in terms of the ideas, wits, wisdom and knowledge they project in Igbo proverbs. And, where there are mild disparities, the contrasts do not deviate completely from the original ideas of the traditional proverbs.

8. Conclusion

The paper holds that dynamism is a characteristic of every living language. The dynamism and twists witnessed in the traditional proverbial forms is to accommodate changes, growth and expansion in the language. From the study it is observed that the proverbs are not totally banal expressions even though they subvert or alter the sacredness of the traditional proverbs to give new meanings. Most of them are still meaningful and relevant and can be used to achieve specif-

ic purposes. Besides, the changes in the postproverbials forms help the younger generation to express their worldview and the realities of the 21st century without losing their identity as the Igbo people. Although the identified proverbs are couched in humour, they still have the potential of achieving the supposed pragmatic acts. To this end, the current paper argues that it is not enough to conclude that postproverbials are twists used by the younger generation to catch fun, their renegotiated forms of the proverbs have connections with the traditional proverbial forms and can be used to achieve pragmatic acts as exemplified in the paper. Finally, the present study holds that the reconstruction of Igbo proverbs among digital natives is a complex linguistic and social process and an integral part of identity and representation dynamics.

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KIKELOMO OLUSOLA ADENIYI -
OLATUNDE ADEYEMI OJERINDE

NIGERIAN PIDGIN POSTPROVERBIALS: A SOCIOLINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF SOCIAL REALITIES IN SELECTED NP POSTPROVERBIALS

Abstract: This study explores two disruptive linguistic phenomena. On the one hand, Nigerian Pidgin (NP) is a hybrid of English and Nigerian languages which has become a Creole with some children acquiring it as their mother tongue (MT). Postproverbials, on the other hand, are a genre of linguistic modernism combining syntactic fragments of existing proverbs with new thought process to yield disruptive new meanings. NP and Postproverbials have disruptive etymologies that signal newness and creative energies driven by purpose. As a result of expanding usage of NP, there is now a wide range of NP postproverbials in use. This paper examines societal realities expressed in NP postproverbials using sociolinguistics analysis of twenty selected NP postproverbial expression to identify the influence of societal realities on their usages. Data for this research were obtained from Nigerian Facebook platforms especially used by young people and adults. The collected data were analyzed through content analysis and interpretation, using sociolinguistic as theoretical framework. Key findings from the study revealed that NP postproverbials are powerful vehicles for conveying cultural values, beliefs, and norms. NP postproverbials, are constructed as humour and are widely used to admonish, transmit users' worldview, communicate complex ideas in a memorable manner while they, primarily, convey social realities of the country. NP postproverbials also serve as a creative means of communication that reflects prevailing social problems, such as poverty, corruption, and social inequality. It is suggested that linguists need to do more to research on the creative potential impulse of NP postproverbials.

Keywords: Nigerian Pidgin, Proverbs, Sociolinguistics, Social Realities, Facebook.

1. Introduction

Chinua Achebe famously beatified proverbs when he described them as “the palm-oil with which words are eaten” (Achebe (nd.) quoted in Chiangong, 2015. p. 90). The traditional roles of proverbs in Nigerian societies are sacrosanct and the wisdom in any communicative context is easily measured by the proverbial content, notwithstanding which of the numerous languages is used. However, the dynamics of human societies continue to drive changes in forms of structural and social constructs of human interactions. Language remains at the root of these changes stemming from forced changes through adaptations to new realities and impelled adjustment through purposive necessities. Thus, the Nigerian Pidgin (NP) was evolved as a response to communicative necessities in contexts of diverse cultural confluence that defined the era of slave trade up until precolonial, colonial and postcolonial eras. The dynamics extended to the social construction of proverbs in use which continues to reflect diverse phenomena in linguistic and thought processes.

1.1. Literature Review: NP's Rise to Prominence

Nigeria is a multilingual nation with over 400 languages spoken by her citizens. However, out of these languages, the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria recognizes the use of three major ones as national languages--Hausa, predominantly used in the North, Yoruba, predominantly used in the South-West, and Igbo, predominantly used in the Eastern part of the country (Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria). The recognition of three out of over 400 has not been without much debates on the appropriateness of singling out three which appeared to suggest that others are less important.

In addition to these three, Hausa Igbo and Yoruba, the constitution recognized English language. Beyond constitutional recognition, there are vital social functions that English is able to perform conspicuously better than any other language in Nigeria. English plays major roles in the country as the dominant language of instruc-

tion across all levels of education, language of mass media, a lingua franca, language of international deliberations, language of social media etc. (Adeniyi, 2006 and Ibrahim, 2016). This often present a linguistics conundrum for every Nigerian considering the fact that the most prominent language is alien to the nation.

However, in the midst of that language debates, the NP which essentially started as a language of contact between Nigerians and European traders and was later formed as a hybrid of English and Nigerian languages, emerged. In contrast with English, which appears elitist, and other Nigerian languages which have regional colourations, NP is able to cut across the diverse class of people and culture. NP is arguably the most widely spoken language across all the classes, sections and states of the federation. Emenajo (1985) opined that NP has become so popular that it is now recognized as one of the four widely spoken Nigerian languages while it competes with Hausa, Yoruba, and Igbo as the country's national languages.

Given this background, the rise to prominence of NP can be linked to communicative necessities compelled by the heterogeneity that defines Nigeria as a nation. Thus, NP also reflect all linguistic characteristics of Nigerian languages including wide use of proverbs and proverbial expressions. Interestingly as a corollary to that, the transitioning of proverbs to anti-proverbs and postproverbials is a phenomenon observable in NP.

1.2. Postproverbial in Nigerian Pidgin

Postproverbials have a solid root in proverbs which are defined as "social modes of communication which have a dominant role in most African societies" (Finnegan (1970) cited in Ademowo & Balogun 2015: 10). Proverbs are not just modes of communication; they are integral elements of social interaction. Thus, as the society evolves, transitioning one social phenomenon to another at a unique pace peculiar to each society's dynamics, proverbs, as social products, are equally evolving and transitioning at a similar pace. In other words,

the phenomenon of postproverbials is symptomatic of postmodernism which has transcended traditional approach and experience of conservationists. Hence, postproverbials are expressions with certain features in addition to their proverbial properties.

The term postproverbials describes Europeans' use of anti-proverb (Raji-Oyelade 2022). Postproverbials are evidence of creativity and volatile dynamism of language use. They do not invalidate nor negate the basic existence of proverbs; rather, they have constituted a distinct linguistic force to project the disruptive creativity of modern and postmodern society. According to Raji-Oyelade (2022):

...conventional proverbs have never been dismissed as jaded, outworn or clichés in spite of their ubiquitous and repetitive use. Yet, the human penchant for creativity, modernist and iconoclastic energies, coupled with a critical detachment from the heritage of traditional wisdom, have questioned the sacrosanct status of the proverbial text in culture. (p. 228)

In other words, the emergence of postproverbials does not insinuate that proverbs may have lost their proverbial identity which retains their core attributes as “very powerful and effective instruments for the transmission of culture philosophy, values [and as] models of compressed or forceful language” (Ademowo & Balogun, 2015, p. 10). Rather, postproverbials are the most recent realities of proverbs reflecting real meaning construction and functional use of language in a postmodern age. Thus, postproverbials have sustained relevance and benefits to both traditions, through semantic connection to proverbs, and modernism, through creative manipulation of semantic stems and syntactic fragmentation to construct postproverbial expressions.

In addition, postproverbials are as ubiquitous as proverbs. They are found in diverse communicative texts from artistic texts to sermonic texts and quotidian texts. Although they are considered “a dynamic act of the cultural deviant, the prodigal text which always attempts to overwrite its own source, perhaps the traditional wisdom”

(Ademowo & Balogun 2015: 10), postproverbials are widely used with, particularly with humour in NP.

However, the texture of disruption in NP is not usually as direct as in other Nigerian languages; perhaps simply not much of a distinctive disruption at all. This could be linked with the fact that, NP itself is a disruptive phenomenon. For example, the usual syntactic fragmentation that formed the three levels of operational meaning identified by Ademowo and Balogun (2015) may not be observed in NP postproverbials. In a Yoruba postproverbial construct, the original proverb “aye loja, orun nile” (the world is a market place; heaven is home) reconstructed as a post proverb “aiye loja, e fimi le s’oja” (the world is a market place; leave me in the market), the syntactic fragment “aye loja” is retained in the postproverbial form. Such syntactic fragment is not a constant in every NP postproverbial because the roots are relatively recent compared to English or other Nigerians languages. The distinction is however conspicuous at the level of philosophical meaning. Ademowo and Balogun (2015), identified three levels of operational meaning for proverbs (ditto postproverbials: (i) the text (literal meaning), (ii) intended morals and principles (philosophical meaning), and (iii) interactional situation (contextual meaning).

1.3. Studies on Nigerian Pidgin Proverbs

Several studies have been conducted on NP proverbs in the Nigerian but in different contexts marked by the indigenous element of the pidginization process. Okolo and Ugwuanyi (2013) investigated the significance of Nigerian Pidgin proverbs in Igbo culture. The study is marked by Igbo context and the findings indicated that NP proverbs are used in Igbo culture to convey traditional wisdom, values and moral lessons. In another study, Olayiwola (2014) examined the use of Nigerian Pidgin proverbs in Nigerian popular music. Unlike Okolo and Ugwuanyi (2013), this study did not limit the context of NP to a particular region or culture within Nigeria; rather, it analysed NP proverbs used in musical lyrics. Olayiwola (2014) found that NP prov-

erbs are frequently used in Nigerian popular music to convey a range of messages, including social political criticism over time.

In a separate study with focus on NP creative products, Afolayan (2017) investigated the use of NP proverbs in Nigerian literature. The study found that NP proverbs are used in Nigerian literature to project moral lessons, highlight cultural identity and engage in social critique. Oyebade (2014) focused on motion pictures and investigated the use of NP proverbs in the Nigerian movie industry. The study discovered that Nigerian Pidgin proverbs are used in Nollywood movies to provide comic relief, convey cultural identity, and offer moral lessons. Adeyemi and Adewunmi (2020) also investigated the use of NP proverbs in Nigerian social media platforms, particularly Twitter. The study identified the fact that NP proverbs are widely used on Twitter to express humor, convey cultural identity, and critique social and political issues.

In general, these studies revealed that NP proverbs play different important roles in Nigerian culture, literature, social life and music. However, they also highlighted the need for further research to explore the various other use of NP proverbs, as well as the potential challenges of using NP proverbs in different contexts. Consequently, this present study examines the use of NP postproverbials with the aim of identifying the Nigerian social realities and infusion of wisdom projected through them.

2. Data Collection and Methodology

Data collected for this study emanated essentially from online usages of NP postproverbials by Nigerians. Twenty purposively selected proverbs were sourced from Facebook platforms (Pidgin English Proverbs, 2023) where Nigerian users freely used several NP proverbs. The twenty relevant NP proverbs were pre-analysed to reduce selection to those with relevant subject of discourse. Several factors contributed to the choice of Facebook as the source of data for this study. First, Facebook provides a diverse range of data collection

with the existence of people from different locations, social backgrounds, ages and gender; hence, it allows for variations in types of proverbs from which the relevant ones were chosen. Second, since our aim is to make use of proverbs that convey Nigerian social realities, Facebook being a platform for sustained conversation provides creditable data. Lastly, Facebook provides a large number of people that discuss concurrently on a single topic thereby providing a large size from which our data were obtained and thereby increasing the external validity of our research outcome. It is also important to note that it was through Facebook platform that the beauty in NP proverbs was first appreciated by the researchers of this paper.

Sociolinguistic approach was used in analyzing our data because of the relevance to the topic. Sociolinguistic is a field of study that has to do with the relationship between language and society that is how language is used to reflect and shape social dynamics (Wardlaugh & Fuller, 2021). Hence, we believe that sociolinguistics will assist in identifying NP proverbs as reflectors of Nigerian culture and society, thereby assisting us to gain insight of the values, practice and belief. More importantly, since Sociolinguistics identifies the role of language for social change, it will aid better appreciation of the role of NP for social change.

The sociolinguistic theory adopted is the theory of linguistic relativity, also known as the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis. This theory posits that language shapes our perception of reality, and that different languages can lead to different ways of thinking and understanding the world (Sapir, 1930 & Whorf, 1940). The theory of linguistic relativity has been widely discussed and debated in the field of linguistics and anthropology. The seminal work on this theory was done by Edward Sapir and Benjamin Lee Whorf in the early 20th century. Their work suggested that language can influence the way people think and perceive the world around them. This idea has been expanded upon in subsequent studies which have explored the relationship between language, culture, and cognition.

In the context of this study, the theory of linguistic relativity can be used to explore how the use of proverbs expressed in NP reflect and reinforce certain social and cultural norms and values. By examining the linguistic structures and semantic meanings of selected NP proverbs, the study can identify how these proverbs reflect and reinforce certain cultural and social practices and attitudes. The use of proverbs in NP is a social and linguistic phenomenon that reflects the realities and experiences of Nigerians. In this study, we gave an English translation and interpretation of each of these proverbs, as well as did a content analysis of each of the proverbs to highlight succinct social realities exuded by each of them.

3. Data Analysis

Proverb 1: Na person wey never see problem dey use English dey pray.

English Translation (ET): The one with humongous problems does not pray in English.

Nigeria is a multilingual nation and the people are conscious of the relationship between people's expressions and the language of choice. The dichotomy in situational usage of language is revealed in different forms. On the one hand there is the belief that English is used mainly in formal situations, in the academics for instance. The use of English is also associated with social status and prestige which also implicate formality. On the other hand, NP and other Mother Tongues (MTs) are mainly associated with informal contexts which include religious and ceremonial gatherings.

Prayer is one of such activities often performed informally. It is a form of communion or interaction between humans and a supernatural being, God in this case. As such, prayer and praying are closely linked to people's emotions - sadness, despondency, frustration, happiness. Majority of Nigerians believe strongly in prayers and its efficacy. This belief is evidence in the many religious edifices and the regular attendees that frequent prayer sessions. It can be argued

that the conspicuous lack of social welfare and other social-economic issues in the country manifesting in various forms of insecurity as in kidnapping, armed robbery, unemployment, corruption are responsible for the citizens' habitual resort to prayer. Although prayer is said in almost every situation including beginning and closing of a meeting, birthday celebrations, requiem and so on, the most passionate prayers are seemingly reserved for situations that indicate difficulties as in period of sickness, loss of families/friends, lack of money to pay fees, and others not commonly associated with well-being.

Therefore, the proverb is a reflection of social construction of the function of prayer. It revealed that prayer, even though is said at all occasions, is mainly associated with negative circumstances thereby reiterating the notion that poverty is the main reason prayer and praying is common among Nigerians. In other words, the luxury of social status suggests that the need for prayer is less, if not absent; while social problems compel passionate prayer and praying. This entails on the one hand that, English, being a language associated with formal situation and social status is not used in a prayer session that is not associated with social problems. On the other hand, a situation, or person, with a humongous problem will most likely use NP or other Nigerian MTs, as languages associated with informality and lower social status.

“Na person wey never see problem dey use English dey pray” literally means ***“the one with humongous problems does not pray in English”***. This is an NP proverb constructed with underlying social realities of the people and whose meaning is explainable in terms of people's reality. It is always easier to communicate passionately in a language that one is highly knowledgeable in. Praying in English poses restrictions and expressive difficulty for people in difficult situations. This witty saying is humorous and factual in its meaning expression of the act of praying and implications of language choice in prayer.

Proverb 2: Book wey no gree enter head go enta exam hall.

ET: An academic material too difficult to be understood will not be too difficult to be smuggled into the examination hall.

This proverb is a product of students' interaction and it reflects a peculiar perception about academic activities and evaluation in terms of test and examination. Precisely, it is an expression of desperation by peculiar type of students who do not consider themselves adequately prepared for an evaluation due to their lack of understanding of required academic content/materials needed to pass a subject/course. For such student, in their desperation, smuggling the materials into the examination hall, apparently to engage in malpractice, is considered a necessary alternative to gaining understanding of the material and competence to respond to examination questions.

There are different factors, or reasons, students may not have sufficient understanding of academic materials. While not being serious can be one of the reasons, other social and psychological factors can be responsible. However, there is no justification for any student to take 'expos' (NP for materials discretely taken into examination hall) into examination halls. Such intent is merely born out of desperation.

In addition to the desperation of the students deducible, this proverb also reflects the fact that the society venerates paper qualification which fuels the desperation of the students. In an effort to curb examination malpractices, the government has legislated against examination malpractices with harsh penalties including a fine as much as one hundred thousand naira or imprisonment for a period up to two years or both (Examination Malpractice Act of 2004). Meanwhile, it is important to note that this expression is often used humorously amongst students preparing for examination without real intent to engage in examination malpractice.

Proverb 3: Na determination dey make Okada overtake trailer for road.

ET: It is determination that makes a motorcycle overtake a trailer on the highway.

This proverb project a very common scenario on Nigerians roads. The two means of transportation mentioned in the proverb are on two extremes of road users: the first, Okada, being too dangerous because of its small size and the other being a very huge iron compartment usually conveyed by articulated vehicles. Basically, a trailer tied to an articulated vehicle moves faster than a motorcycle on a highway and the humongous size of the trailer makes other vehicles to move some distance away from it.

However, some daredevil motorcyclists tend to move without caution around trailers and in spite of the conspicuous risk are determined to speed so fast as to overtake a trailer even while other motorists are always cautious of trailer drivers who are known for their reckless driving and intimidation of other road users.

The basic message in this proverb is the emphasis on rare ability of anyone to achieve a difficult feat through determination. This is a form of admonition aside revealing the social realities of road transport in Nigeria, it is also revelation of the fact that Nigerians are highly determined people as they would do all in their capacity (called 'hustling' in NP) to excel.

Proverb 4: This one good, this one good na em mad man take dey gather plenty load.

ET: That all trash seems good is the reason a madman carries so many trashes.

This proverb reveals the experience of psychiatric patients in societal construct in many towns and cities in Nigeria. Many people suffering from mental health issues are not adequately cared for by their close relatives and government agencies. Hence, they are considered free-range mad person because they roam around with no protection or

restriction due to improper welfare. It is therefore common for mad people to habitually pick trash in their endless wandering around places with no discrimination and as such are easily identified, in addition to their dirty appearance, by the size of needless garbage they move around with. It is important to also note that the use of *madman* in the proverb equally berates gender sensitivity which reflects the societal demeanor towards gender balance.

The proverb is used to caution people about needless accumulation of irrelevant materials. This proverb tells of the need to desist from keeping items that should be disposed. It is therefore a form of admonition with a strong imagery of a mad person intended to de-emphasize the habit of needless accumulation of material belongings. The strong image of the psychiatric patient and the stigma associated with will also aid immediate acceptance of the admonition.

Proverb 5: Pikin wey go strong go strong.... No be say until dem name am Samson.

ET: A child does not have to be named Samson before he can be strong.

This proverb has a biblical reference to a biblical character named Samson whose story can be found in Judges chapter 13 of the Bible. The proverb is constructed out of people's culture of child naming which emphasizes meaning. It is also a depiction of the fact that names are given to babies in many Nigerian families with a strong belief that the individual person is able to attract earthly fortune or attribute based on the meaning and interpretation of the name given to it. This explains the reason Nigerians do not name children as Jezebel and or a Judas.

However, there is no absolute truism in this cultural belief that connects a child's name to his/her earthly fortune or attribute. This proverb particularly highlights that point. Hence the subtle negation of the seeming connection between the name Samson and a child so named. The proverb humorously conveys a message that strength is

not limited to Samson as a name and it foretells two probable negations of the belief: first, it connotes that a child may bear any other name, other than Samson, and yet be strong; second, it connotes that a child may bear Samson and perhaps still not be strong. Therefore, it plays down the need to name a child Samson, or other than Samson, just so as to attract earthly fortune or attributes to such a child. The imports of this proverb include manifest influence of religion, Christianity in this case, in the society. Notwithstanding that, it is also a subtle discouragement of superstition in child naming.

Proverb 6: Na over confidence make February no complete.

ET: It is overconfidence that made February incomplete.

February is the second month of the Gregorian calendar and it has the fewest number of days among the 12 months in a year. February has 28 days, or 29 days in a leap year, while other months have 30 or 31 days each. However, users of NP in this proverb have alluded the fewer days to February's overconfidence. This proverb personified February with a human feature of arrogance or overconfidence. The reason alluded for the month's fewer days are basically not empirical. While that reason is farfetched, the message in the proverb is clear. It simply conveys a message against overconfidence. The proverb suggests that being proud and overconfident will make one achieve less than others. This proverb exemplifies a manner of admonition through subtle humour.

Proverb 7: Do you know who I am? Do you know who I am? Naso hold up take dey start.

ET: Needless road brag often begins traffic jam.

Traffic jams are regular features of Nigerian cities like Lagos, Kano, and Ibadan, among others. So, in NP conversational vocabulary, there are many allusions to people's travel experiences on the roads. This proverb is one of such societal conversational constructs about traffic experiences on Nigerian urban roads. The difficult traffic situations are usually caused by myriads of factors including bad roads,

frequent road incidents and accidents, excessive vehicular movement, narrow road width. It is also common for traffic jams to be caused by sheer inappropriate behavior of road users which may include negligence, disobedience and, sometimes, argument between and among drivers.

Precisely, this proverb highlights road brag as one of the major causes of traffic jam. In several instances, the cause of traffic jams is never obvious to road users. However, road brag involving heated arguments and self-worth peddling between drivers is one of the inappropriate behaviours drivers do exhibit on the road which sometimes causes traffic jam. Road brag can be a precursor to serious road rages as alluded to in a popular Nigerian Juju music by Ebenezer Obey Fabiyi. There are other musical lyrics around road brag and traffic jam; Tony Tetula's hit song "You don hit my car, oyinbo repete" is a perfect example.

Proverb 8: Head wey no wan think go carry load.

ET: The one that fails to use his/her head to think will bear loads on it.

This proverb creates a dichotomy in what people can do with their heads. The proverb expresses, on the one hand, the societal perception of the human intellect in a way that confers superiority on intellectual people which connotes everyone that are in the skilled labour bracket. On the other hand, people who fail to use their intellect are considered to be of lower social status often restricted to unskilled labour bracket. Therefore, a person's status in the society is directly a function of how the person uses his head. The expression maintains two extremes with no probability in-between.

Basically, the proverb depicts two extremes and shows clearly which side of the two is preferred. Hence, it is used in an advisory context to goad people to develop and utilize their intellectual capacity as against using their head for hard labour especially as a human ferry in market places. This proverb reveals that indeed Nigerians prefer skilled jobs to labour intensive work. This proverb may be ad-

opted by parents, teachers, friends, elderly ones to admonish recalcitrant or insolent children and youths.

Proverb 9: Forget Trust, If trust dey, Water no for boil Fish.

ET: If trust were a worthy thing, water will not cook fish.

This proverb undermines trust in human relationship using the imagery of water and fish to project a vivid closeness that defies trust. In this proverb, the message being conveyed compels one to be wary of trusting others notwithstanding the affinity. Naturally, fish and water ought to be such best friends that should not hurt each other on account of their closeness—one being a home to the other. However, the fact that water is home to fish does not prevent water from being used in other capacity which includes cooking food, fish inclusive. Therefore, one should be wary of absolute reliance on any close ally.

This proverb is basically another admonition drawn from human observations of natural phenomena, human events and happenings. It reveals the social reality in every society that people have obligations to more than one person and these multiple obligations may become conflicting at some point that will impel actions that may not be perceived as fair to some others. In as much as water has been the home of fish, water must yet serve human in other capacity which conflicts with its homely function for the fish. The core message in the proverb is caution as an extension of such other NP proverbs like “shine your eyes”, “wake up, don’t sleep” (the two meaning be vigilant).

Proverb 10: E de clear pimple, e de clear pimple na so bleaching de start.

ET: Facial pimples cleansing is the precursor to body bleaching.

This proverb is drawn from people’s experience with usage and abuse of cosmetics. While it is generally an acceptable body care practice to apply special cosmetic products to remove or reduce facial pimples, it is relatively an abuse of one’s natural skin to use bleaching cream and the society has a condescending perception towards those that

bleach their skin. Hence, those involved in bleaching are not proud of their action and tend to shy away from acknowledging it publicly that they are using bleaching cosmetics.

Therefore, the pretext of cleansing pimples from the face is used to deflect criticism against bleaching. The proverb is thus constructed on the assumption that many people that claim to use cosmetics for pimples removal are probably intending to bleach. Therefore, the use of anti-pimples cosmetics is a precursor to actual bleaching. The proverb is a metaphor warning people that indulgence in minor infraction could be a pretext or precursor to greater crime.

Proverb 11: It's a small world!! No mean say you fit trek from Naija go London.

ET: That it is a small world does not imply one may walk from Nigeria to London.

This is a jocular way of presenting the fact that idiomatic expressions have basic meanings in context and should therefore not be exaggerated or misappropriated in a wrong context. This proverb is constructed on people's tendencies to misuse the aphorism, "it is a small world". While it is actually true in certain context that "it is [indeed] a small world", the idea of "small" is not always true, particularly in terms in natural distance. The proverb specially chose the work "trek" to exclude other means of covering distance that may include travel by air which would have reduced the implication of distance between Nigeria to London. The message is simply a warning that one should not take anything on the surface. It is a form of admonition that meaning cannot be divorced from context. The choice of London in this proverb reveals the long-term relationship between Nigeria and the United Kingdom and the public perception of London as a choice destination for many Nigerians.

Proverb 12: I sabi chop beans, I sabi chop beans na so Papa Nkiru take scatter on top bed with shit.

ET: It is the obsession with beans that made Nkiru's father to defecate on bed.

The proverb is centred on feeding experience. Beans is one of the staple foods in Nigeria. It is perhaps the commonest source of protein affordable for many. One of the popular attributes of beans and the manner of its preparation is its tendency to cause lax bowel leading to frequent visit to the toilet especially when taken in large quantity. This movement of the bowel can sometimes be uncontrollable as in the case of diarrhoea. The proverb depicts Papa Nkiru (an expression of filial relation among Igbo people from Eastern part of Nigeria) as a typical Nigerian who takes beans in large quantity. Although there was no specific reason given for his obsession with beans, it can be speculated that his obsession is related to easy access to beans as a cheap food item that is also easy to prepare. Therefore, his obsession with consumption of beans, accentuated with a repetitive structure in "I sabi chop beans, I sabi chop beans", led to his total loss of control of his bowel.

The proverb is a caution against excesses. It communicates a message, frantically expressed without euphemism, that one shouldn't overuse or over consume anything even if such a thing is available in excess. Indeed, moderation is key to getting the best out of life.

Proverb 13: Shit no get bone but when you match am u must jump.

ET: Faeces are boneless but none marches them without limping.

This proverb reveals challenges surrounding waste disposal in Nigeria. It is another proverb constructed out of societal experience that stems from improper disposal of waste and evidence of open defecation practices which result in littered streets and pathways. These practices enable unpleasant experience that includes stepping on faeces, accidentally. The immediate reaction to accidental stepping on faeces in the open is for the individual to quickly raise his/her leg and avoid stamping the affected foot on other places; hence,

the limping posture immediately after such accidental contact with faeces. Whereas, stepping on a bone may cause someone to limp because of the resultant pain therefrom, stepping on faeces equally results in limping for a different reason other than pain. In fact, there is no pain resulting from marching a jelly-like or fluid substance as faeces.

This proverb juxtaposes two items, bone and faeces, of polar features to depict similar consequential experience. This proverb expresses caution on people's expectation when dealing with dissimilar situation. It portrays the possibility that a less dangerous situation or person, may be equally harmful. In other words, appearance may be deceitful. So, one has to be careful by looking before one leaps. This proverb also show that NP speaker usually dispenses with euphemism when speaking in proverb.

Proverb 14: Make I chop this guy money, Make I Chop this guy money. Na so ashawo take start oh.

ET: Dating men for monetary benefits usually ushers in sex trade.

This is a rather gender insensitive proverb that reflect the predominance of gender discrimination among Nigerians. The proverb is constructed out of societal assumption that women are not independent in sex discourse and are stigmatized on the basis of their sexuality. Basically, the proverb is a negative projection of women in societal gender discourse that assumes women have a tendency to date men for monetary benefits. It went further to warn women with such mind set of dating for monetary benefit. Meanwhile, there is a degree of truth in the claim that Nigerian women believe men must spend money on them while men that spend have a reward expectation in form of sexual pleasure. This belief also stems from the general societal construct of gender relation that depict men as the main earner and spender.

It is therefore on these bases that the proverb forewarns women that the practice of dating for monetary benefits is a precursor to trading sexual pleasure. 'Ashewo' is a Yoruba word that is used to

shame sex trade and practitioners. This proverb is a caution targeted at women against what is perceived as a lesser shameful act of dating men for monetary gains, and it forewarns the greater misconduct of sex trade. It is an admonition with emphasis on moral values in the society. Generally, the proverb warns against gradual descension into worse behaviours or crime through greed that can lead to destruction.

Proverb 15: You no need spoon and cutlery to chop slap.

ET: Taking a slap does not require cutlery.

There is a play on the word ‘chop’ which in English may be interpreted to mean ‘eat’. In the pidgin context here, chop means to receive. Since the word “chop” is used in NP to mean receive, spoon and cutlery are also used to complete the dining register in the proverb. These combine to give a sense of humour making a slap seem like a meal. The proverb also reflects societal disposition to assault or corporal punishment in Nigeria.

Proverb 16: Jollof rice wey dey for bottom of pot today go dey for top of cooler tomorrow.

ET: The jollof rice at the base of a cooking pot will soon be at the top in a food flask.

This proverb is constructed around the cooking experience of the people. Jollof Rice is a popular delicacy cherished in Nigerian and other West African countries and it is the commonest food served during celebrations and parties. This proverb depicts jollof rice in two containers: first the cooking pot and second the food flask used to keep it warm. The simple fact stated in the proverb is the turning of the rice from the pot to the flask in which case the portion at the base of the pot is turned last into the flask and thus stays at the top.

The message in the proverb is conveyed by the change in the position of the particular portion of the rice from base to top. This underlines importance of change and how quick change can happen. This proverb is an admonition emphasizing that human conditions are not permanent.

Proverb 17: The patient dog... nah hungry go kill am.**ET: The patient dog will die of hunger.**

This proverb is a humour formed to negate the message of the popular saying ‘the patient dog eats the fattest bone’. The proverb begins with the English phrase “the patient dog” to structurally maintain a link to the original maxim whose message the NP proverb negates. While the original English maxim urges patience, the NP proverb raises an alarm against patience. Although the meaning of the proverb did not directly call for impatience, its mockery of patience is an indication of its rejection of what patience means. This proverb is a reflection of changing societal experience and the proclivity of people to act fast and smart to control events instead of waiting patiently for events to unfold. It reveals the tendency of an aggressive mentality of go-getters, and sometimes cheats, wanting to act faster than others notwithstanding the risk of social harm as in skipping orderly rows or queue at events in a way that could cause disputes or upheaval.

The proverb is used as an admonition as well as a caution. It is used to admonish people not to be too passive about their goals in life instead of taking action towards achieving their goals. It is a caution against laybacks who sometimes allude to patience as a pretext for their inaction. Therefore, context is particularly crucial to the meaning and message of this proverb.

Proverb 18: Na I go do am later na e make fowl no fly like other birds.**ET: It is procrastination that robs a chicken of the flight ability of other birds.**

This proverb is an admonition against the habit of procrastination. It depicts the inability of a chicken to fly, as a domestic bird, against wild birds that can fly around. The ability to fly is portrayed as a valuable skill, and as such it is considered a weakness for a chicken not to have such ability. In addition to that, the proverb considered the

chicken blameworthy for lacking flight ability then assert the cause to be procrastination.

The proverb simply urges people to make best use of time so as to achieve greater heights and successes in life and particularly so as not to fall behind their contemporaries. This proverb is constructed from people's experience and observation of nature around them and it is easy to relate with the message in a similar way people appreciate folktales.

Proverb 19: No food for lazy man no be for pesin wey em mama get restaurant.

ET: "There is no food for a lazy man" exempts a person whose mother owns a restaurant.

This proverb is a humour that emphasizes the fact of exceptions in every generalized situation. It is constructed around a popular Nigerian English maxim "no food for a lazy man" which is a caution against insolence. The gender exclusion of female in the maxim stemmed from the broader societal perception of the role of males and females in the society. It is considered a man's responsibility to work and feed his family while failure to do so result in hunger, especially for him. Thus, a lazy man, meaning a lazy person, suffers hunger.

This particular NP proverb makes a mockery of that maxim by tailing an exemption clause to the end of it. While the original maxim is not interpreted on the surface, the NP takes it at a surface level then added the exemption of "a person whose mother owns a restaurant". Therefore, suggesting that a man can afford to be lazy and not suffer hunger if his mother owns a restaurant. This can as well be interpreted to mean that some people can afford to be lazy and not suffer hunger if they have wealthy parents. This connotes the relationship some parents have established with their children that may be consider a show of love or an indulgence of a bad behaviour. Either could manifest in similar form as in a situation an adult child continues to live in his/her parent's house at the expense of her parents as

well. The meaning of the message in the proverb optional depending on context, and can therefore be a form of a jibe or rebuke.

Proverb 20: Who dey hold landlord rentage no dey fry stew way curry dey.

ET: A defaulting tenant cannot cook stew with curry.

This proverb juxtaposes two dissimilar actions (defaulting on tenement and coking a stew) as though the latter must not happen when the former is ongoing. Although both do not have causal effect on each other, the notion of forbiddance created by the juxtaposition raises the stake of implications the former action. This proverb is constructed on the Nigerian societal experience of landlord and tenant relation where it is common for some tenants to default on rent, sometimes arbitrarily. Therefore, it is perceived as a wrong doing for a tenant who has yet to pay his rent to be cooking sumptuous delicacies that will attract the attention of the landlord. Such action, of cooking sumptuous delicacies, is considered an affront on the landlord who is merely tolerating a defaulting tenant and could force the landlord to take action against the tenant. Basically, the message the proverb communicates is that people should be wary of their actions in relation to their circumstances.

4. Findings

The analysis of the 20 selected NP proverbs revealed that postproverbials are still expressions constructed out of societal experience, people's observation of nature, people's sermonic tendencies and their linguistic creativity with a tinge of humour. Most of the NP post proverbs are either expressing caution or admonishing. They are valuable resources for communicating complex ideas in a concise and memorable way that reflect the values and social realities in Nigeria while they play important role in socialization and shaping Nigerian society.

The analysis also revealed that NP postproverbials are subtle humour. NP postproverbials can express complex ideas and thought

using humour as a device in the stead of euphemism. Unlike English language for instance that make use of euphemism to achieve lightness of mood in serious discourse, the NP uses humour instead. Meanwhile, the analysis also showed that NP proverbs express ideas without the use of euphemism. Words, like “shit”, “ashawo”, “kill”, “bleaching” and “slap” are used without any attempt to substitute them for subtler alternatives. What NP lacks in euphemism; it has in abundant humour.

In addition to the use of humour, the study found that NP postproverbials make use of repetition and semantic inversion. Repetitions are sometimes in form of words repetition, or phrasal or clausal repetition which are used as devices to create emphasis. Alongside repetitions, NP also use semantic inversion which is a form of play on known expressions, particularly from English language, that inverts or subverts popular interpretation for a new meaning.

5. Conclusion

This study which focuses on NP postproverbials and how they reflect the social realities of the Nigerian society delves into the sociolinguistic dynamics of NP postproverbials and investigates how they are used to convey societal values and beliefs in different contexts. It was discovered that NP postproverbials serve as significant tools which provide understanding of the experiences of Nigerian people. They also give guidance in form of admonition for daily living in addition to creative glamour and humour to quotidian discourse to make conversations interesting and memorable. The study argues that the use of postproverbials in NP reflects the complex social and cultural dynamics of Nigerian society, including its history, traditions, values, and beliefs. Overall, the research study provides insights into the role and importance of NP proverbs in the Nigerian society. The study highlights the significance of language in understanding culture and societal realities, and the way in which NP postproverbial can be used as a tool for social change and transformation.

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OLAYOMBO RAJI-OYELADE

TEXTILE IS THE HORSE OF BEAUTY AND IDENTITY: READING YORUBA FASHION PROVERBS AND POSTPROVERBIALS

Abstract: This paper discusses Yoruba fashion proverbs as both aesthetics and artistry beyond beauty and appearance. It explores the connection between fashion as non-verbal art and postproverbials as verbal art. Whereas change and new patterns are implicit characteristics of fashion as a materialist mode of expression, transformation and difference are also noted as present in the usage of the Yoruba proverb medium as a linguistic sign of identity especially among the youth. Using ten Yoruba fashion proverbs, I point out the nature and significance of alternate imagination which create Yoruba fashion postproverbials. The activity of refashioning is inherent in the reaction, reproduction and revision of proverbs by contemporary Yoruba speakers.

Keywords: fashion, textiles, beauty, Yoruba proverbs, postproverbial imagination

1. Introduction

Within disparate and specific contexts of time, space and culture, fashion is perhaps one of the most visual forms of (self) expressions. Fashion as a branch of visual art is not limited to clothing but encompasses elements of body art, hairstyles, cosmetology, and jewelry, all of which contribute to an overall individual or group's aesthetic. Like in other cultures, fashion in Yoruba culture plays a significant role in expressing identity, cultural heritage, social status and ultimately, the beliefs and values of the people. In Yoruba culture, components of beadwork (*ilẹ̀kẹ̀*), headgears (*gẹ̀lẹ̀*), textiles (*àdìrẹ̀, aṣọ òkè*), clothing (*agbádá, iró and búbá*), all reflect and connote the symbolism of wealth, status, and other cultural significance. The performative act of “dressing up” animates the material aesthetics and expresses philosophical notions that are contingent to Yoruba culture.

Dressing is an integral element of Yoruba culture, and its conceptualization is attached to the *Omoluabi* philosophy which espouses that a Yoruba person must always dress well and have moral standards. Simplistically, clothing refers to the garment worn on the body with the intention to cover and beautify. The aesthetics of dressing carries more significance than mere physical coverage and can be considered a form of material agency because it involves the manipulation of materials and textiles to express identities, locations, and cultural meanings. Textile as material agency of fashion becomes one of the most non-verbal expressive modes of telling the tale of the Yoruba identity and upon which the human personality is anchored. The dynamic relationship between culture, self and clothing of which the beauty of the Yoruba identity is fashioned in propels a textual dialogue of clothing as non-verbal art and proverbs as verbal art.

2. Fashion and Proverbs

Joanne Entwistle in her book *The Fashioned Body: Fashion, Dress, and Modern Social Theory* explores the relationship between fashion, dress, and the body from a sociological perspective. She defines fashion as “a system of dress characterised by an internal logic of regular and systematic change” and argues that fashion is a material practice that allows for individual and collective identities to be constructed (45). Fashion is about invention, adaptation, and innovation; it is a non-linguistic mode of expression which involves designs and patterns that tangibly represent an individual or group identity or consciousness. Although proverbs are non-materialist objects of culture, they are as well imbued with the mutable characteristic of material objects of fashion in culture. In the words of the historian, Laurier Turgeon:

Objects like cultures are not immutable [...] they change as they move through time and space. Instead of viewing objects simply as products of established social and cultural worlds, recent theories of material culture have demonstrated that

the object participates actively in the construction and transformation of these worlds. As objects cross cultural boundaries, they are integrated into new repertoires, adapted to new contexts, and modified by those who use them. (86)

The concept of virtue and good behavior, otherwise known as *omoluabi*, is heavily steeped in Yoruba consciousness and identity to describe a morally upright person. The *Omoluabi* concept is the moral compass of personal conduct and communal interaction that manifests through socio-cultural cues such as dressing, character, respectability, hard work and diligence. All of these reflect and contribute to a morally upright Yoruba society. In fact, Abimbola (2006: 99) alludes that the *Omoluabi* philosophy is hinged on 'good character' (99). He notes that "iwa rere is the most valuable thing amongst all other things in Yoruba culture". Therefore, in Yoruba thought and worldview, the dictum "iwà l'ẹwà" which means "character is beauty" suggests that moral character and the aesthetics of beauty are inextricably linked.

3. Yoruba Fashion and Postproverbials

Like the *Omoluabi* philosophy is indoctrinated in the Yoruba person to teach morals and values, Yoruba postproverbials are a way of fashioning a hybrid and twisted language that not only jests but teaches, guides, and imbues morals into people in a playful manner. With this at the center of my argument, the "postproverbial" ideal breaks away from a fixated structure to a more fluid and playful practice of witty sayings. Oyekan Owomoyela (2005) describes Yoruba proverbs (*òwe*) "as a speech form that likens, or compares, one thing or situation to another, highlighting the essential similarities that the two share" (2005: 3). Aderemi Raji-Oyelade notes in "Postproverbials in Yoruba Culture: A Playful Blasphemy" that his conception of postproverbials is "to record the development of a normative rupture in the production of this traditional verbal genre and by extension establish the presence of "new" proverbs with new forms, new meanings, and, perhaps, new values. Thus, the analytic focus is on the nature

of transformation—the shift in construction—that has been visited upon the conventional formulaic pattern of the typical Yoruba proverb among a younger generation of its users (1999: 75)". By extension of this, contemporary Yoruba fashion focuses on the transformation of existing textiles into new patterns and designs of cosmopolitan styles. The title of this paper is postproverbial within itself, as it is a way of troping on the original meta proverb "òwe l'ẹ̀ṣin ọ̀rọ̀, tí ọ̀rọ̀ bá sọ̀nù, òwe la fín ńwa" which loosely translates to "proverb is the horse of words, if the word is missing, proverb is meant to hunt for it". Thus, the idea of textile being "the horse of beauty and identity" suggests that clothing and the concept of dressing are the vehicles of the aesthetics of beauty and the formation of identities.

As Raji-Oyelade espouses postproverbial to be a form of playful blasphemy, it is safe to note that that the radical shift or the newly derived "supplemental clause" does not strip the proverb of its intended didactic motif but rather educates the newer generation who are cosmopolitans and fluid with creativity intimately in their own language or consciousness. In praxis, contemporary fashion on the other hand also performs a radical blasphemous act through the alternate creations "derived from and which stand against traditional proverbs (materials)" (1999: 75). Due to the exposure that globalization and exchange of ideas brought about, traditional clothing have been "refashioned" into newer cosmopolitan styles that cater to the younger generation. I view Yoruba fashion proverbs as both aesthetic and artistry beyond beauty and appearance. They communicate the story of a place, people, culture, and identity. Through the playful intimations derived from ten traditional Yoruba fashion proverbs, I point out the significance of alternate creations enabled by the radical speech act of the postproverbial imagination. The postproverbial other, closely related to "fashion and dressing" are transgressive recreations both in theory and praxis when compared to the original and "rigidity" of the traditional proverbs.

For the shift to take place from the traditional "static" proverb to the postproverbial fluid and playful" form, the main clause is usually

retained and the subordinate that will be replaced will experience the change in structure. This exercise of suture in itself is closely related to the reformative act that happens between fashioning and refashioning. For me to achieve this, I retrieved some proverbs from the postproverbial database www.postproverbial.com, a Twitter account (@yorubaproverbs), and a number of entries in Oyekan Owoyela's *Yoruba proverbs* that were related to the concept of dressing.

4. Method of Collection

The process of gathering related data was interactive and subjectively objective because of a large presence of Yoruba-speaking people in the diaspora. I was able to engage with a number of my colleagues who are new or late migrants and I was able to relate their responses to the responses of Yoruba speakers in Nigeria. Therefore, my range of respondents included those who have good competence of Yoruba language and those who have a fair mastery of the language. To each respondent, I served half and incomplete versions of the chosen proverbs and requested them to complete the proverb by supplying the other half.

5. Translating Discussion

I

Proverb: Aṣọ ńlá kọ ni ènìyàn ńlá.

Translation: Wearing expensive clothing does not necessarily make you a big person.

Postproverbial: Aṣọ ńlá ni ènìyàn ńlá.

Translation: Wearing expensive clothing makes you an affluent person.

Comment: Whereas the original proverb negates the connection between the wearing of expensive clothing dressing to the importance of personality, the focus of the deviation in the new proverb statement is the linking of expensive clothing (carriage) to affluence. The

verb “kọ” (not), which is a negation, is silenced in the postproverbial. The postproverbial “Aṣọ ńlá ni ènìyàn ńlá” is a close recalibration of another traditional proverb which says Ìrínisí niṣeni lóǝǝ” (literally, “how you dress is how you will be addressed”). This therefore affirms the postproverbial, “wearing expensive clothing makes you an affluent person”.

II

Proverb: Aṣọ kò bá Ọmọyẹ mọ, Ọmọyẹ ti rin ìhòhò w’ọjà.

Translation: The dress comes late for Ọmọyẹ, Ọmọyẹ has entered the marketplace naked.

Postproverbial: Aṣọ kò bá Ọmọyẹ mọ, kí ló dé tí wọn kò ẹ sáré mú Ọmọyẹ kó tó w’ọjà?

Translation: The dress has come too late to Ọmọyẹ, why was Ọmọyẹ not reached before entering the marketplace?

Comment: The traditional proverb is rendered as Proverb #5217 in Owomoyela’s *Yoruba Proverbs*: Ọmọyẹ-e ti rinhòhò doja; aṣọ ò bá Ọmọyẹ. “Ọmọyẹ has arrived at the market naked; clothes are too late for Ọmọyẹ” (2005: 499). The original proverb turns attention to timeousness and the repercussion of delay in action. The postproverbial questions the lateness and satirizes the repercussion of delay. To effect its transformation, the latter half of the proverbial statement is extended and rendered as a rhetorical question. It does not require an answer but it operates as a proactive retort to an action that could have been averted or controlled if otherwise promptly addressed.

III

Proverb: Àgbàtán làá gbòlẹ, bí a dáṣọ fún un tán, à pa laáró.

Translation: A lazy man should be helped completely; when you buy him a cloth, you must also dye it.

Postproverb: Àgbàtán làá gbòlẹ, bí a dáṣọ fún un tán, à fi bàtá sí.

Translation: A lazy man should be helped completely; when you buy him cloth, you must buy him shoes too.

Comment: An extended form of this traditional proverb is registered as Proverb #3466 in Owomoyela's *Yoruba Proverbs* (2005: 341). This is a proverb formation that includes a main point and its parallel response. The subject of focus here is the lazy man who must be comprehensively supported. However, while the original notes an additional patterning (dye) to his cloth/dress, the postproverbial emphasizes the extra indulgence in the provision of shoes to the lazy man. In this case, the difference is in the material object deployed for the indulgence.

IV

Proverb: Bí ọmọdé bá ní aṣọ bí àgbà, kò le nìí àkísà bí àgbà.

Translation: A child may have numerous clothes as an elder, but he cannot have as much wardrobe of rags like the elder.

Postproverbial: Bí ọmọdé bá ní aṣọ bí àgbà, á tún ní àkísà ju àgbà lọ ní òde òní.

Translation: A child may have numerous clothes as an elder, in these days he/she will have more rags than the elder.

Comment: The conventional proverb is entered as Proverb # 3259 in Owomoyela's *Yoruba Proverbs* (2005: 322). Metaphorically, the conventional proverb infers that the experience of the old one is incomparable to the young child. The "wardrobe of rags" represent the accumulation of experience. In the age of fast fashion, younger people will acquire more rags. An example is "crazy jeans" also referred to by elders as "àkísà" (rag). Crazy jeans is a popular fashion trend that is often frowned upon by the older generation because it does not portray an *ọmọluabi* mode of dressing but instead suggests waywardness. Therefore, considering the explicit modes of dressing amongst the youth (the GenZ) which include avant-gardist rag dressing, the young one is comparably imagined as having more rags than the older person with conventional sense of fashion. The transgressive imagination of the postproverbial suggests that the youth is probably even more exposed than the elder.

V

Proverb: Gèlè kò dùn bíi ká mọ wé é; ká mọ wé é kò dà bíi kó yèni.

Translation: Headgear is of no good if one does not know how to tie it; knowing how to tie is no use if it does not look good on one.

Postproverbial: Gèlè ò dùn bíi ká mọ wé é, owó la maa fí we.

Translation: Headgear is not as sweet if you do not know how to tie it, money is all you need to get it tied beautifully.

Comment: This proverb is entered as Proverb #4227 in *Yoruba Proverbs* (2005: 410). The reference here is to the ornamental art of gèlè (head tie/tying). Where the traditional proverb notes that knowledge of tying the gèlè is not an assurance of beauty, the postproverbial affirms that beauty is in the hands of professional headgear makers (stylists) whose services will ensure the achievement of perfection in the art.

VI

Proverb: Òdùn tó kù lókè tó aṣọ ọ gbẹ.

Translation: The sunset is still good enough to dry the cloth.

Postproverb: Àṣẹṣẹ yọ òdùn ló tó aṣọ ọ gbẹ

Translation: The brighter sun dries the cloth better.

Comment: The traditional proverb suggests that a good result can be achieved by moderate measure (sunset), but the postproverbial privileges full, complete action (brighter sun) in order for a good result to be achieved. The use of a wet cloth in the sun is very graphic, and the difference between the setting sun and the rising sun is also instructive of indirect and direct action. In modern imagination, the sunset may not dry the wet cloth completely; it might still leave it damp but the sun that emits high ultraviolet rays is the one that can dry the cloth completely and quickly.

VII

Proverb: Bí a bá ra aṣọ egbẹ̀fà, tí a sì nà á han eèyàn egbẹ̀fà, aṣọ ọ̀hún ò níyì mọ́.

Translation: If we buy an expensive item of clothing and we show it to tons of people, the cloth no longer commands respect.

Postproverbial: Bí a bá ra aṣọ egbẹ̀fà, tí a sì nà á han eèyàn egbẹ̀fà lóríi Instagram, aṣọ á fi níyì si ni.

Translation: If we buy an expensive item of clothing and we show it to tons of people on Instagram, the cloth will command more respect.

Comment: In the olden days, the cloth that has value is kept from sight until outing, the day of celebration, but with the contemporary youths that tag brands that they wear in order to show off online, showcasing the cloth and its worth to all will command more respect. In other words, in postproverbial thought, advertisement commands attention.

VIII

Proverb: Aláṣọ kan, kìí ṣeré òjò.

Translation: A person who has only one set of clothes does not play in the rain.

Postproverbial: Aláṣọ kan kò rówó raṣọ ni.

Translation: A person who has only one set of clothes has no money to buy more clothes.

Comment: The original proverb is entered as Proverb #183 in *Yoruba Proverbs* (2005: 55). The postproverbial statement here expresses its directness and retort as directly as possible. Having one set of cloth in one's wardrobe is interpreted as a sign of lack and poverty. There is a shift from the philosophical thought of the conventional proverb to the logical calculation of the postproverbial creation.

IX

Proverb: Bí iná kò bá tán láṣọ, ẹjẹ kì í tán lèèékáná.

Translation: If lice are not completely gone from one's clothing, one's nails will not be free of blood.

Postproverbial: Bí iná kò bá tán láṣọ, ẹ gbé aṣọ f'álágbàfọ.

Translation: If lice are not completely gone from one's clothing, give the clothes to the drycleaner.

Comment: Registered as Proverb #2012 in *Yoruba Proverbs* (2005: 205), the philosophical sense of the traditional proverb is that if the cause of one's problems are not removed, the problems will persist. In reaction to that sense, the postproverbial suggests a more radical meaning by stating that if one's problems are not removed, then one must by all means find a way to fix the situation.

X

Proverb: Aṣọ tuntun ní nṣe olúwa-a re tòde-tòde.

Translation: A new dress impels its owner to roam outdoors.

Postproverbial: Aṣọ tuntun, mímọ́ ló nímọ́.

Translation: A new dress is always sparkly neat.

Comment: The traditional proverb is registered as Proverb #3682 in Owomoyela's book (2005: 363). The implication of having a new dress to wear and how it excites the wearer is addressed in the conventional proverb. The owner of dress is always ever eager to show off in his/her new attire. However, in its usually direct and logical pattern, the postproverbial construction refers to the nature of the newly acquired dress. A new dress is usually, by its very newness, expected to be new and neat.

6. Conclusion

Postproverbials have been noted as the inevitable effect of the interplay of orality and literacy, tradition and modernity. They are as well, literally speaking, new, fashionable way of sustaining the her-

itage of the Yoruba proverbial tongue. The representative examples of proverbs in my discussion show that fashion proverbs are “fashionable” in Yoruba imagination, and they are as well susceptible to new patterning, transformative difference and playful radicalization. Through the fashion-related proverbs and the postproverbials derived from them, as received, or deployed mostly by contemporary youths who are “fashioning themselves in the world”, we can recognize the disruption, radicalization, and transformation, precisely the performance of departure of contemporary fashion and postproverbials from the traditionalist conception of fashion and the fixed order of conventional Yoruba proverbs. Indeed, as the word is the horse of speech, so is textile the horse of fashion, with all its paraphernalia.

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PEACE SOROCHI LONGDET

REPRESENTATION OF GENDER IN MWAGHAVUL POSTPROVERBIALS

Abstract: Gender difference has spawned various injustices and gained global interest in the literary landscape. The phenomenon can be seen in a proverb. Research at the global level shows that the representations of women in proverbs are very popular. With viewpoints and different data, the interest of this paper is to examine the representation of women as espoused in several Mwaghavul postproverbials. The objective is to analyse traditional views on the perceptions and roles of women in Mwaghavul society and explore the interrelation between language, gender, and culture. Using a social construction feminism, this paper draws attention to the gendered norms and expectations built into women's sense of self. The study is based on the textual analysis of 20 collated pre-published Mwaghavul proverbs and their supplemented versions (postproverbials) and their users' interpretations. The study argues that the postproverbials adhere to the tenets of Mwaghavul culture and reinforce the patriarchal social structure. The study contends that gendered linguistic expressions also serve as a means to preserve the age-old gender inequalities, which in turn are manipulated and exploited to erect social structures marked by gender imbalance. The study shows that women are portrayed in Mwaghavul postproverbials as constructions of submissiveness, sex objects, and virtue. Based on these findings, the study concludes that Mwaghavul postproverbials tend to present women in particular stereotypical ways, most of which can be interpreted as derogatory, negative, or subservient.

Keywords: Gender identities, Postproverbials, Mwaghavul, Proverbs, Representation, Patriarchy

1. Introduction

Gender matters concerning inequality is a debate that has attracted several scholarly interest, and this debate still lingers on the academic table. In most African communities, it has been viewed as a bane in the wheel of progress and scholars have at different forums

alleged that men in the traditional communities create the oral narrative as a means to subjugate the women. Despite the strong posture in defending this thought, the question of what it means to examine gender representation in postproverbials a more recent creation has not been adequately explored. Research has shown that many people acquire gender awareness through their interrelationship with cultural material and this, forms a gender identity. This article examines how gender is represented in Mwaghavul postproverbials. Aderemi Raji-Oyelade affirms that the study of proverbs provides the premise to capture “the verbal intelligence of the pre-literate or non-literate imagination for contemporary use and interrogation” (Raji-Oyelade, 2012:25). This assertion justifies the choice of the collated Mwaghavul postproverbial expression as the selected data for this study. Raji-Oyelade goes further to explain that postproverbial is a form of “transgressive paremiology, that is the collation, study, and interpretation of alternate proverbs which are radical and parallel compositions instead of conventionally accepted and given proverbs in traditional societies” (Raji-Oyelade, 2012:27).

This shift in content and meaning of the proverbs makes the proverbs a fluid oral art, although a repository of the voice of the ancestors, it finds survivalism in its postproverbial version and hence, becomes of scholarly interest. Proverbs and their disruptive variation of postproverbials are knitted through language and both carry the essence and an important part of the culture, reflecting people’s perspectives and systems of society. The language in essence reflects social activities such as gender roles, sex differentiation, and discrimination. The people absorb stereotypes and old thoughts from sex discrimination proverbs and this thought may be further reflected in the disruptive version (postproverbials) used by the younger generation thereby widening the gap across gender. Such proverbs reinforce the stereotyped images of women revealing a high degree of misogyny. This work focuses on Mwaghavul’s postproverbials to consider how men and women are represented and to assess the function of postproverbials as affirmation or disruption of the patriarchal hegemony.

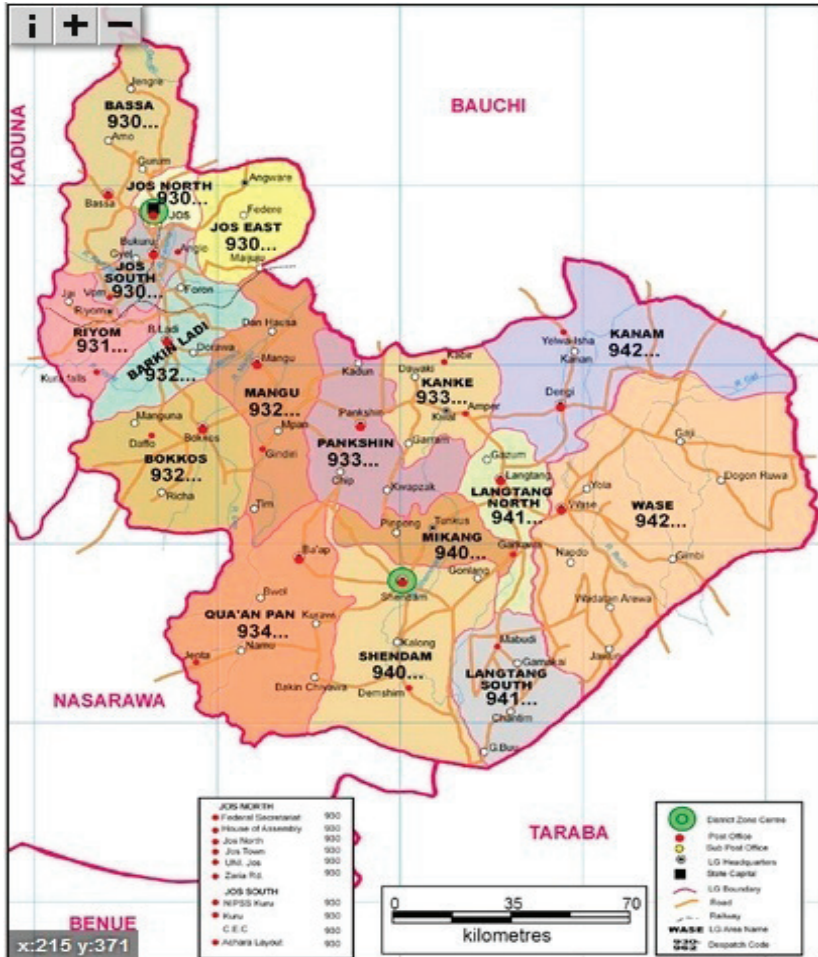
2. *The Mwaghavul People*

The Mwaghavul people constitute a prominent ethnic group domiciled in the Central Zone of the present Plateau State of Nigeria and they are considered one of the larger ethnic groups in the state; other language of groups equal size in Plateau State include Berom, Ngas, and Gomei (Gowon, 20). Historically, the Mwaghavul people were said to be among the former inhabitants of the Lake Chad area before their migration towards the south along with their kin, the Ngas, Tal, Mupun, Goemai, and other Chadic language groups. It is assumed that this migration occurred between 1100 and 1350 A.D. (Nyang, Bess, & Dawum 1). Barnabas M. Barnabas affirms the Lake Chad narration of Nyang, Bess, and Dawum; he adds that there are “a few groups/clans in some villages who claim to be autochthonous to their present settlement” (28). Barnabas explains that while a group of the Mwaghavul people lay claim to affiliation to the Borno Empire, the autochthonous group insists that “they have always lived in their present location from time immemorial and cannot remember coming from any other place other than emerging from some sacred groves in their present locality” (28). This latter claim, Danfulani affirms, is present in their migration myth. The Mwaghavul people also have well-established socio-economic and political structures which were set in place by 1700 A.D. (Ishaku qtd. in Dahip 15).

The Mwaghavul people are found dominantly in Mangu Local Government Area in Plateau State, Nigeria. The headquarters is in Mangu at 9°31'00"N 9°06'00"E. It has an area of 1,653 km². The Mwaghavul people are bordered by Benue-Congo languages to the north and west, notably the Berom and Izere, and to the east and south by the Mupun and Mushere. Map 2 shows these boundaries.

Until very recently, the Mwaghavul people were known as “Sura” and they occupy the following administrative districts: Jipal, Chakfem, Mangun, Ampang West, Kerang, Pushit, Panyam, Kombun, and Mangu. A substantial population of Mwaghavul speakers is found among the Goemai and Kofyar people in Plateau State and in Lafia,

Gwantu, Saminaka, Pambeguwa and Zaria, where they established pockets of farm settlements (Lohor in *Mwaghavul-English Dictionary*, unpublished).



Map 2: Map of Plateau State Showing Mangu L.G.A and Bordering L.G.A.s (: Source <https://www.google.com.ng/search?q=map+of+plateau>)

Fig. 1

3. Reading Meaning into Postproverbials

Postproverbials are described as radical speech acts; they are alternate creations derived from an existing form; they are produced either in jest or ignorance of conventional and generally accepted and anonymous proverbs in a given culture (Raji-Oyelade 2013: 15). In contemporary everyday speech and literary conventions such as poetry, novels, drama, film, music and speeches, postproverbials are found. Raji-Oyelade explains further that postproverbials are translatable in Yoruba as “àṣàkàṣà”, which implies the dynamic act of the cultural deviant, the prodigal text that always attempts to overwrite its source, perhaps the traditional wisdom (Raji-Oyelade 2013: 15). Contributing to the discourse on postproverbial (Ositadinma, Ohwovoriole, and Agugua 2020: 327) affirm that postproverbial is a reaction to culture diffusion occasioned by human interaction and the accompanying changes in values, morals and worldviews. Raji-Oyelade and Oyeleye asserts that “the postproverbials answer to this modern age needs as an innovative, ingenious and oftentimes humorous statement of actuality” (Raji-Oyelade and Oyeleye 2020: 232).

The conversation on postproverbials and its relevance in the academic discourse and everyday human interaction has come to stay. This is because postproverbials are considered to be playful blasphemies inherently supplementary or subversive, a discursive strategy of mimicry, in which received pearls of wisdom are queried, tested, and subjected to textual rupture (Raji-Oyelade 2013:8). The general belief is that postproverbials flourish in the capacity of the speaker’s view on the traditional proverbs or well-rehearsed practice intended to make a mockery of traditional proverbs for the sake of fun or comic relief. On the question of how postproverbials have encroached into the daily vocabularies of the Yoruba people of Nigeria, Raji-Oyelade (2013) opines that postproverbials are “migrant texts in the traditional performance, moving from people to people and getting transformed in the moment of travel; ‘migrant’ in both senses of space and time: moving freely and bifocally between the rural and the urban space, fluid and doubly transitory (Raji-Oyelade 2013: 16). In both creation

and response, the postproverbial is often expressed in the conversation of people in all communities; be it an urban setting or rural setting that share the same cultural identity. Commenting spatial setting of postproverbial expression, Rasaan Atanda Ajadi and Taiwo Olorun-toba-Oju assert that “urbanity and modernity are indeed important factors that motivate the emergence of postproverbials, the dynamic nature of society, its culture, and language, including sociolinguistic fluidity, had always stimulated the production of alternative or new proverbs even in traditional societies. (Ajadi, and Olorun-toba-Oju 2023:2-3). On the whole, scholars have opined that postproverbial, although a disruptive variant of the traditional proverbs, communicates wisdom, therefore deserves scholarly attention. Examples and implications of postproverbials to conventional wisdom communicated by proverbs are as put up by Raji-Oyelade (2013):

Original Proverb: Aye l’oja, orun nile (the world is a marketplace; heaven is home).

Postproverbial: Aye l’oja, amo, e fimii le s’oja (the world is a marketplace; so, leave me in the market (Raji-Oyelade 2013: 18)

Original Proverb: Maalu ti ko ni ru, Oluwa nii ba l’esin (as for the cow that has no tail, God is its repellent against flies).

Postproverbial: Maalu ti ko ni ru, o wa ni sabo (the cow that has no tail is available in Kraal (Raji-Oyelade 2013: 17).

On whatever convention the proverbs or their disruptive form postproverbial is being expressed, there are identifiable levels of meanings; the literal, generalized deducible moral or philosophical, and the contextual meanings. These levels of meaning are determined by the audience. The literal meaning explains or depicts concrete imagery using the symbols of traditional, ancestral, or modern life; the philosophical meaning emphasises the moral truth associated with the proverbs; and the contextual meaning uses the proverb either to reinforce ideas and support a given statement or to evaluate the behaviour of others who are upholding or violating this moral principle

by directing the moral truth toward one or more individuals (Penfield and Duru 1983:121). If we can subject the postproverbs above to further analysis, the revelation will further confirm the precarious effects of the postproverbial construction on the philosophical and contextual meaning of the proverbs.

4. Methodology and Theoretical Framework

To address this concern, I selected ten pre-published proverbs from the compendium of Mwaghavul proverbs *Bighit Po* and through interviews collected the postproverbial versions of the selected proverbs that tackles women's issues. Each of the proverbs selected has a gender connotation, either expressing the quality and character of femaleness or maleness in the Mwaghavul setting. Like every other society, this expressive gender relation depicts the peoples' worldview when it comes to expected social behaviour. Every known society in the world has gone through phases of describing what gender behavioural patterns ought to be and this varies from one culture to the other. Cultures and societies are dynamic and so are the gender behavioural patterns or roles which are linked to the socialisation of the individual. John M. Kobia asserts that:

Socialisation being a process by which individuals learn and accept roles they are assigned by the society, has a lot of impact in defining gender roles. Among the agents of socialisation in the society include home, school, media and oral literature. In Igembe community, song as a genre of oral literature plays a significant role in gender role socialisation. (129)

5. Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (FCDA)

To discuss the place of gender socialization as reflected in the Mwaghavul postproverbial, I will rely on the Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis. Litosseliti (2006), defines CDA as having "an explicit interest in making transparent the "hidden agenda" of discourse, which, for instance, may be responsible for creating and sustaining

gender inequalities” (Litosseliti, 2006: 55–56). Wodak, sees it as a theory that is “interested in not only analysing opaque but also transparent structural relationships of dominance, discrimination, power, and control as manifested in language” (Wodak, 2002:11). Relatedly, Van Dijk defines CDA as a “discourse analytical research that primarily studies the way social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context” (Dijk, 2001:352). CDA consequently appraises social inequalities as revealed in language. In assessing social inequalities then, CDA’s concentration connects with the emancipatory goal of feminism which is called the Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (FCDA). Diabah affirms that FCDA is doing CDA from a feminist viewpoint (Diabah, 2011:71-80).

FCDA’s perspective is that ‘issues of gender, power, and ideology have become increasingly more complex and subtle’ in present times (Lazar, 2007:141). It can be debated that postproverbials, by their nature (a more contemporary version of some proverbs), present more multifarious and indirect interpretations. That is, by their opaque and sometimes ambiguous meanings, proverbs often hide their intended meanings, thereby making their ideological underpinnings subtle, but quite pervasive. Proverbs can therefore serve to sustain (hierarchically) gendered social arrangements, in which the woman is disadvantaged, and these may be presented in very subtle ways. The work of FCDA is to critique such unequal gender relations (Diabah and Amfo, 2015:8).

The central concern of FCDA, therefore, is ‘critiquing discourses which sustain a patriarchal social order: that is, relations of power that systematically privilege men as a social group and disadvantage, exclude and disempower women as a social group’ (Lazar, 2005:5). Accordingly, the overriding aim of FCDA (like CDA) is to develop an analytical resistance to these unequal gender practices. But, in the spirit of postmodern feminism – which argues for the diversity of gender practices and creates room for the reinterpretation and contestation of meaning and different subject positions in different con-

texts. It is in this light that I find FCDA a useful analytical approach for this study. The focus of this study will not only be on critiquing the representations that disadvantaged women, but it will also highlight those that (appear to) work in their favour.

Women have often been described and presented as subservient to others. Tuladhar (1997), as Aderinto (2001) cites, discloses that patriarchy is to blame for women's subjugated roles in African society. The study maintains that patriarchy affords women little or no reproductive rights, and requires that women's roles are restricted to maternal roles. While the men are seen as born leaders and heads of their household. Women are socialised to be second citizens and expected to be controlled by men. Through the study of Mwaghavul postproverbs, I intend to see how this belief system is perpetuated or deconstructed to create the necessary mind change needed for a more fair, just, and equal society.

6. Analysis of the Selected Proverbs

The data for this discussion and analysis are drawn from a printed source, mainly from a book of Mwaghavul proverbs which is complemented by interviews with three Mwaghavul indigenous informants who served as providers of the postproverbial variations. The postproverbs were then put into four (4) categories according to various themes that were found relevant to shed light on the ways women are perceived in Mwaghavul community. These include postproverbs related to (i) the subversion of traditional gender roles, (ii) change from domination to complementarity, (iii) representation of women as commodified objects, and (iv) portrayal of women as stubborn and destructive.

6.1. Subverting Traditional Gender Roles

Some postproverbs reflect the subversion of traditional gender roles. This disruptive representation accentuates the dynamism of culture and contemporary society. In Mwaghavul community, like

most African communities, the power relation presents the man as the breadwinner of the family. But times have changed and some of the traditional roles of the men are being subverted.

1. Original Proverb: A daas ki sak dǎng mat cèt. (It is a man who farms before a woman cooks.)

Postproverbial: Ba mat ki teer kum a ngudaas òyicinsi kas. (A woman no longer waits for a man nowadays.)

2. Original Proverb: A mish ki shee mat. (It is a man who normally proposes to a woman.)

Postproverbial: A wura shang shit òwan. (She was the person who removed my grass.)

The first proverb reveals how men are portrayed as the providers while the woman nurtures that which is provided. Interestingly, the postproverbial disrupts this cultural perception and bequeaths the woman an equal opportunity to also strive to provide for herself and the family as well. According to one informant, women in Mwaghavul community are known to be resilient and hard-working. Some of them own farmlands and the decision to use the proceeds from these farms is exclusively that of the women. Proverb 2 and its postproverbial variant reveal a disruption of power in the relationship. The idea of masculinity or manliness is in tandem with the traditional view of domination, power, and vigorous activity. The gender dynamics depicted by the postproverbial regarding femininity is a switch of roles. The woman here gains agency to determine the future of the relationship between both sexes. There is the demystification of the power accorded to maleness to make a marriage proposal as seen in Proverb 2 and this is euphemistically passed on to the woman in the postproverbial variation. This power change is also confirmed by an informant who says that within the Mwaghavul communities, some of the women are bold enough to approach the man they love without any cultural inhibition.

6.2. *From Domination to Complementarity*

Another ideal feminine characteristic expected of a woman within most traditional societies, particularly in a marriage relationship, is an unconditional submission to the man whose authority cannot be questioned. For most feminists, however, the submission of women also translates into subordination. In other words, when women submit to men, men end up taking advantage of them and dominating them. In the traditional Mwaghavul community, these expectations are enshrined in the proverbs of the people. However, a closer look at the postproverbial shows a more accommodating mindset.

3. Original Proverb: Ba kághán ncii nkáa mo kǐ tóok kas. (The neck cannot compete with the head).

Postproverbial: Ba tóok kǐ weel a káa kas. (The neck cannot be too thin for the head).

4. Original Proverb: Ba kághán ncii ntar mo kǐ puus kas. (The moon cannot compete with the sun).

Postproverbial: A mat a yen kǐ mish. (A woman is the cure for a man)

In Proverbs 3 and 4, the gender identities within them denote the powerful ideology of male superiority. The portrayal of the female on the other hand denotes subserviency. These proverbs are examples of many others where which feature a power struggle between the man and the woman, “the neck cannot compete with the head”. The headship role becomes sacrosanct and demonstrates that the dynamic of male control goes beyond marriage. It provides the philosophical platform for silencing women and compels them to accept male authority as the divine and natural other of things. Looking at the postproverbial variations of proverbs 3 and 4, one sees a paradigm shift in the wisdom these postproverbial encapsulate. Rather than the theory of dominance which most of the feminist theories seek to counter, we see a more accommodative wisdom, ‘The neck cannot be too thin for the head’ and ‘A woman is a cure to a man’. The postproverbial examples used here accentuate the discourse

that culture has never been static but dynamic. Hence, the emphasis moves from dominance to projecting the male and female playing complementary roles, both serving as support systems to each other and not in competition. Although the man is generally powerful, the image of him portrayed in the postproverbials is that of dependency and his completeness is in the woman. Here, the postproverbials deconstruct the stereotyping of the woman as weak and project her as occupying an important space.

6.3. *Women as objects and commodifying the woman's body*

This involves the objectification and commodification of women and the use of obscene proverbs to refer to women's body parts or characters. The general belief is that the female cannot think and act properly: somebody (man) has to guide her and prevent her from self-destruct. She is constructed as being an object on display where the patron has to ensure she is without blemish. She is portrayed as a commodity whose role is to satiate the man's sexual desires. She is seen as a property either belonging to the man or his kith and kin.

5. Original Proverb: A naa mat d'áng a lap, taji a lap ni kyak-pee kas, taji a wet nkoos paa. (Observe a woman before marrying her, so you do not marry a sickly woman, to avoid always going for divination).

6. Postproverbial: Taji a kwar gokkaa kas, ba a man dida'ar kas. (Do not reject a sickly person, for you do not know tomorrow).

7. Original Proverb: Mal a mii ndeng, lwa'a ngween. (A female relative is a relative on the upper part but meat on the lower part.)

Postproverbial: Mal a peewaar, k'at a twaas be a ñyàa long. (A female relative is a forbidden place, when you touch her your fine is an animal).

8. Original Proverb: Mat dī ki ngumbii, ba a kaam ki lap kas. (A wife has an owner, she is not married to the public).

Postproverbial: Ba mat ki mak a ki ngumindong kas. (A wife is not for only one man).

9. Original Proverb: Ba koghorong tam ki waa gwoor kas. (A skillful dancer cannot return home as a bachelor).

Postproverbial: **Dar mbwoon mang reep, met mmun nyem tam** (Onlookers entice women more than we the dancers can).

In proverb 5, the woman is presented as an object where, when the man needs to make his pick, he must ensure his choice is without blemish. The overwhelming impression that one gets from this proverb metaphorically depicts the woman as one whose ailment would prevent her from being chosen as a bride. On the contrary, the postproverbial version disrupts this chauvinist wisdom; however, the vulnerability of the woman is still an undertone. The man is advised not to reject because underlying the health condition may be some usefulness. In proverb 6, the woman is presented as a sex object, and no matter her relationship within the household, she is meant to satisfy the urges of the man. 'A female relative is a relative on the upper part but meat on the lower part'. This means that a man may relate with a female relative according to customs but he can have sex with her when his libido cannot be tamed. By implication, she exists to satisfy him. Interestingly, the postproverbial version seemed to redeem this perverse ideology by rephrasing the proverb to 'a female relative is a forbidden place, when you touch her your fine is an animal'. This means that a man is not permitted to have sex with his female relative, and any contravention of this makes a man liable to a fine for an animal. The postproverbial here gives value to the female by signaling in unequivocal terms that the sexual devaluation of the woman is punishable under customary law. In proverb 7, the woman is depicted as the sole property of one man, only a woman's husband can have an intimate relationship with her. However, the postproverbial variation makes a more disturbing depiction, a wife is useful not

only to her husband but also to others. Here, the term useful is relative in this context and gives room for multiple layers of meanings.

6.4. Portraying women as stubborn and destructive

One of the arguments this study sets out to achieve is to reveal that public or communal arts can be manipulated to perpetuate gender suppression or enact the desired change. A case in point is the philosophical meaning of this postproverbial 9, 'sex with a woman saps a man's energy'. This portrayal brings to mind the character of Segi in Wole Soyinka's *Kongi's Harvest*, who is depicted as a right cannibal of the female species who sucks the vigour and vitality from men, leaving them like sugar cane pulp squeezed and dried. Despite the horse-like energy of the man as seen in the original proverb 'Ba dí mee pee dí mbiring dǎng a naghām daam kas', (There was no chance for the horse but stopped by the mare) the version of the woman here is almost femme fatale, a sapper of energy.

10. Original Proverb: Ba dí mee pee dí mbiring dǎng a naghām daam kas. (There was no chance for the horse but stopped by the mare).

Postproverbial: Mat kǐ kyes bál. (Sex with a woman saps a man's energy).

The depiction of the woman here raises the question of masculine anxiety. The man is called out to beware of this presumed power of the woman and must put on a performance that will nullify any possible infiltration of dominance.

2. Original Proverb: Ba lu kǐ ret ndi mmat kas. (A house cannot be good without a woman).

Postproverbial: A mat kǐ bǎk d̄yemñĩnshak. (It is a woman who tears apart brotherhood).

Postproverbial 10 is another disruptive expression that emphasises the image of a woman as stubborn, destructive, and dangerous: 'A mat kǐ bǎk d̄yemñĩnshak (It is a woman who tears apart brother-

hood)'. This postproverbial implies that, by nature, women are dangerous and ready to harm men and destroy brotherhood; therefore men are warned to be careful.

7. Conclusion

The present study sought to investigate Mwaghavul's postproverbials and gender representation. The study attempted to explore how Mwaghavul women are portrayed in postproverbials and to see whether these postproverbials discriminate against them or not. The findings of this study illustrate both negative and positive attitudes of Mwaghavul people towards women. Despite this fact, the postproverbials of the Mwaghavul are lop-sided in that women are portrayed positively in complementary roles while they are depicted negatively only in a few postproverbials.

Most of the original proverbs indicated that women are evil, dangerous, and intellectually inferior. The implication is that men usually use these stereotypes as grounds to legitimize their authority over women. The postproverbials, however, seemed to disrupt this school of thought and project the women in a more positive light. This simply showed society's deliberate intention to reconstruct the image of women. The original proverbs tend to serve the interests of men as they sustain or reinforce the traditional gender stereotype. For instance, representing a woman as "a breadwinner" because she does not wait anymore and can feed her family, is not a compliment but one way of "luring" women to continue the "good" work – which means men should continue to enjoy such "patriarchal dividends" as being the head of the home.

It is, however, true that in recent times, the social roles of many Mwaghavul women have changed and continue to change; but as Diabah and Amfo (2014) argue, "the changing trends are sometimes hampered by entrenched views that result from "traditional wisdom"- which proverbs are noted for" (Diabah and Amfo, 2014: 22-23). Nevertheless, it is wise to note that any change of attitude and

expectations will require extensive education about the potential of women to counter the delimitations of such entrenched societal views.

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CHARLES TOLULOPE AKINSETE

POSTPROVERBIAL IRONY IN CONTEMPORARY AFRICAN CULTURAL EXPRESSIONS

Abstract: Irony is one of the most common literary techniques applied to the study of world literature, right from Classical times to the present day. Having reflected on proverbial irony as a literary concept, this research argues for the need to construe and critique the phenomenon of postproverbial irony, being featured in contemporary African cultural expressions but yet to be critically engaged. This paper, therefore, attempts to examine the theoretical perception of postproverbial irony as a literary phenomenon, particularly in some African languages such as Yoruba, Shona, Luganda, Kiswahili, and Luo, with applicable tenets of transgression and subversions as postproverbial theoretical model. The aim is to justify the literary presence of postproverbials as a complex but highly advanced cultural expression in postcolonial African societies. Against the backdrop of a lopsided view of only conditioning postproverbials as sheer blasphemous verbal/speech acts, part of the objectives of this paper is to showcase the irrefutable literary strength and depth of postproverbials as a viable literary concept as well as underscore its potential as part of critical research point in contemporary African cultural space.

Keywords: Postproverbial Irony, Transgressive paremiology, Alternate Proverbs and Subversion, African languages, neo-cultural expressions, African Literature

1. The Condition of Irony and Postproverbial

Language forms the basis of human intellect and interpretations of life experiences, be it in oral form, written, verbal & non-verbal, and electronic (Raji-Oyelade and Oyeleye 2019: 229). Irony, as a form of human communication, practically transgresses the use of languages in deriving layer(s) of meaning, mostly suggestive of an opposite connotation from the literal meaning. From Classical beginnings to present modern climes, the use of irony, particularly in relation to

fictional and non-fictional works, has continued to generate literary excitements, innovations and possibilities (Wilson & Sperber 2012). What this means is that irony brings out the unforeseen, given that Literature in itself, as Tavadze (2019: 4) rightly asserts, requires the unexpected. Irony, depicted as one of the most common and perhaps controversial literary techniques, resonates with displacement of meaning, resulting in various interpretations of human experiences, quite several of which have been chronicled in canonical texts across time and space. For instance, the conception and significance of irony play a critical role in the plot structure of Sophocle's *Oedipus Rex* which has remained a classic ever since. Down that history lane of Literature, William Shakespeare's usage of irony in his notable plays during the English Renaissance literary period remains dominant and, perhaps, influenced other significant writers decades and centuries after. Up to the twenty-first century, extensive literary interpretations have been culled out from the extraordinary trajectory of irony, thus foregrounding its significance and import as a global phenomenon in Literature.

The aesthetic value and import of irony cannot be restricted to literary texts alone. As part of divergent human forms of oral expressions, irony can be argued to most likely precede writing, as established in previous scholarly studies detailing the nature of orality and writing (Ong, 1984; van Woerkum, 2007). An attempt at tracing the exact source or beginning of irony is, first unrelated to the core of this study and second, practically an impossible task, given the perception that figurative devices transcend earliest form of human alphabetic writing and most likely date back to primeval times. Perhaps drawn from its innate pristine orality, it is not categorical but quite expedient to allude to verbal irony as one of the earliest forms of irony. On the other hand, the use of irony, as well as its significance, has been succinctly captured in literary texts as situational or dramatic irony. One might as well add that irony remains a vital ingredient in film/movie industry, alluding two a few of such classics, namely *Harry Potter series* and Disney movie, *The Lion King*. However,

what has not been critically appraised is the interface between irony and postproverbials? In the first instance, is (are) there any point(s) of convergence? Does the former share similar or alternate features and characteristics with the latter? Can the theoretical pattern of postproverbials synchronise effectively with the usage of irony? Are there ironical features in postproverbial expressions? If so, can they be appropriately categorized and critically interpreted? Hence, the focal point of the research is an attempt at bridging the uncharted gap between irony, vis-à-vis its significance, and the postproverbial.

To begin with, the condition of both irony and postproverbiality is that the duo draws heavily on human communication. Irony and postproverbials share common ancestry of verbal expression, characterized by the agency of playful transgressiveness and contradictions. Out of several definitions of irony, Glicksberg's (1968: 3) appears fundamental to this discussion. In his essay, entitled "The Ironic Vision in Modern Literature," he states that, "irony announces itself by the explosive laughter of the rebellious hero who laughs at everything the world regards as sacred". With reference to the words 'laughter', 'rebellious', 'sacred', the connotation interpretation of this definition hinges on radical, transgressive, and playful nature of irony in articulating contradiction of an existing phenomenon or utterance that is hitherto considered true or sacred. Similarly, Booth (1974: 36-37) states that irony "undermines clarity and directness". Kittani & Haibi (2015: 199) opines further that irony causes "discord and incongruity". These concepts equally drive the notion of transgression in postproverbials. Hence, the condition of irony appears to run parallel with the subversive nature of postproverbials, construed by Raji-Oyelade (2012: 4) as transgressive paremiology – critical study of alternate proverbs. It can be safe to argue that both irony and postproverbial reveal distinct layers of altercate creations in the (re)generation / (re)interpretation of meaning. The validation of this assertion will be presented later on in this paper.

The final condition that significantly bridges the gap between irony and postproverbiality is the proverb, adorned as the grand narra-

tive of paremiology. Diverse scholars have critiqued different usages, implications and interpretations of irony in proverbs across different languages, particularly in Africa (Don Hauptman, 2003; Imen Nomamen, 2016; Ngabire, Joan, 2020). Since postproverbials are alternate creations derived from proverbs, this paper attempts to construe, examine and critique the phenomenon of postproverbial irony, being featured in contemporary African cultural expressions but yet to be critically engaged. In furtherance, this study aims at highlighting the irrefutable literary strength and depth of postproverbials as a viable literary concept, with the view to underscoring its potential as critical research point in contemporary African cultural space. Before attempting a critique of irony and postproverbials, an attempt will first be made to engage the interconnectivity between proverbs and irony, which would eventually serve as a template in the discourse of postproverbial irony.

1.1. Of Irony and Proverbs: A Critical Appraisal

The study of paremiology has essentially been an open space for scholars across spanning time and space within regions, languages, and cultures of the world. Scholarly writings have thronged this field of literary endeavour, ranging from the study and collections of proverbs to the critical investigation of their numerous forms. There is also the aspect of translation, given the multiplicity and dynamism of cultures and languages. Also inclusive in the discourse of proverbs is critical analysis and exploration of the proverbs across different interpretations and counter-interpretations. Among renowned scholars on proverbs include Wolfgang Mieder, Alan Dundes, William Bascom, Melville J. Herskovits, Ruth Finnegan, Samuel Ajayi, Crowther, Ayo Bamgbose, Isaac Delano, R. S. Ladipo, to mention a few. Raji-Oyelade (2012) catalogues quite a number of their significant and innovative works in his book, *Playful Blasphemies: Proverbials as Archetypes of Modernity in Yoruba Culture*. For emphasis, two of these must be mentioned: Crowther's (1852) "A Vocabulary of the Yoruba Languages" arguably illustrates the first compendium of

Yoruba proverbs, while Bascom's (1964) "Stylistic Features of Proverbs, a Comment" remains one of the earliest critical appraisals of Yoruba proverbs.

In addition, various criticisms have reflected facets of interpretations and counter-interpretations of proverbs, particularly on African proverbs (Raji-Oyelade, 2012). For instance, Gibbs, Strom, and Spivey-Knowlton, (1997) explored the metaphorical nature of proverbs and their significance on mental images of proverbs in people's minds. Odebunmi (2008) and Ayeni (2011) focused on the pragmatic function of proverbs in specific instances of literature from different cultures. There is now an extension on the study of the alternate proverb, which is now referred to as postproverbials. Raji-Oyelade (1999), in his article, "Postproverbials in Yoruba Culture: A Playful Blasphemy," opens the discursive narrative on postproverbials, which was further enunciated by Jegede (2008) in her article, entitled, "Reconstructing Social and Cultural Reality: Proverbs and Postproverbials in Selected Nigerian Literary Works." Akinsete (2019), in his essay, "The Postmodern Pulse of Postproverbials in African Cultural Space," explored the theoretical significance of postmodernism as a compelling forte of postproverbials, thus articulating the postmodern presence in contemporary African literary space.

Despite all these scholarly writings, articles and books available as necessary insights into the study of proverbs, new gaps are being discovered and rediscovered. Therefore, as far as the field of paremiology is concerned, the end is never in sight due to the fact that new discoveries are still being unearthed as a result of discoveries of oral expressions, inundated by modern African cultural expressions. Raji-Oyelade (2012: 1), while quoting Mieder (1997: 3) avers:

Paremiographers have studied the history of the numerous collections which range from small, popular books for the mass market to serious historical, comparative, and annotated compendia. Yet as valuable as this scholarly preoccupation with proverb collections is, other paremiological concerns also continue to occupy proverb scholars.

What this implies is that as long as human communication continues, there are still endless possibilities of the study of proverbs, particularly enhanced by other medium of expressions. With the presence and establishment of new imagination in speech acts in postcolonial African space, new possibilities are yet to be explored. Hussein (2005:18) stresses the argument made, stating that “Africa is a continent known for its rich oral arts and that proverbs are the most widely used in the continent.” He posits that “proverbs do not play any aesthetic role; they serve as the acceptable means of passing or transmitting knowledge and conversation from generation to generation (Hussein, 2005: 19).

One way in which meanings are disseminated in proverbs is through the use of irony. Tavadze (2019:4) buttress on the use of irony as a stylistic endeavour to create a variety of possibilities about the reality of human perception. He argues that, “utterances containing the ironic expression may draw the world indirectly, giving implicit assertions about the reality,” In other words, through the use of irony, there is a creation of a different layer of meaning, enshrouded in enthusiasm and curiosity. Hauptman’s (2003) essay, entitled, “Strike While the Irony is Hot, Humorous Proverbs,” draws attention to other functional ways through which proverbs are (re)interpreted or represented. He references the connection between proverbs and irony, and goes further to register irony as a distinct feature of a humorous proverb, while highlighting other inherent features: Hauptman (2003:163) states:

Proverbs are usually didactic, or at least serious in tone. A humorous proverb or epigram is equally profound, succinct and catchy, but possesses the additional virtues of wit and bite. Its ingredients may include satire, cynicism, irony or paradox.

Hauptman’s (2003) classification may be complex given the argument that humorous proverbs may quite well be used interchangeably with ironical proverbs. More problematic however is that not all instances of humour could be interpreted as irony. Nonetheless, the

argument here is that proverbs and irony have direct relationships in paremiological studies. Ngabire's (2020) scholarly work entitled, "Effects of Irony in Ganda proverbs" showcases continuous research on the relationship between proverbs and irony. Using selected proverbs drawn from Ganda language in Uganda, this scholar's research focused on the examination and critical appraisal of the effectiveness of irony in proverbs with close reference to a few selected Ganda proverbs. Similarly, Nayasiga's (2021) research, "Irony in selected Runtakole proverbs" investigated some selected Ugandan proverbs, while focusing on how irony enriches meaning in these proverbs. From these works, it is evident that nuggets of linguistic features are injected into proverbs through the stylistic use of irony, which alters, defers or transforms meaning. Here are some examples of Kooki proverbs embedded with the use of irony from Uganda:

Example 1:

Ababi okulya, abalungi emilimo. (Kooki proverb)

A crowd is bad for eating, but good for work. (English translation)

Example 2:

Akanyonyi kakozesa byo oya birara okuzimba ekisu kyaako. (Kooki proverb)

When a bird builds its nest, it uses the feathers of other birds. (English translation)

The first example articulates the notion of situational irony with contextual applicability. Here we see both the value and the problem associated with crowd, depending on the context of relationship. In the first part of the proverb, having crowd in a situation whereby benefits are few and far between can be disastrous to one's finance. In the second however, there is a satirical twist, whereby a crowd's usefulness comes in handy when it comes to the dissipation of duty or work. The interpretation given to the lexical structure of a single word 'crowd' in this proverb assumed the structuralist notion of binary opposition. The second example of Kooki proverb also lends

credence to situational irony, in which there is a striking contrast. The building of the nest by a bird signifies the advent of life; the ironical twist, exposing a bitter and harsh reality, resonates again in the second part of the proverb whereby the death of other birds serves as the necessary cushion to birth life. Although far from being humorous, this example can be classified under the paremiological umbrella of proverbial irony. It is also pertinent to note the disparity in different nomenclatures that describe the interface between irony and proverbs. Phrases such as “ironical proverbs” confer a systematic classification strictly under paremiology, with reference to the Kooki proverbs illustrated earlier. However, the term “proverbial irony”, while quite domiciled in paremiology, extends beyond the study of proverbs, spreading its malleable tentacles into the domain of other literary fields.

1.2. Nature and Significance of Proverbial Irony

Proverbial irony is indeed an essential aspect of proverbs, with satirical cum humorous distinction that contrastively influences the understanding of human experiences. The irony in these proverbs attests to the power of literary stylistic in interpreting human communication. It deconstructs meaning at a denotative level, rather implying a registered notion of plurality; as far as meaning and interpretations as concerned, irony remains a focal part of speech acts, particularly proverbs. Imen Noamen (2016) further addresses the interface between irony and proverbs in his essay entitled, “The Social Functions of Verbal Irony: The Ironic Tone in Arabic Proverbs,” with focus on Arabic proverbs in Tunisia. He opines that Arabic proverbs are permeated with explicit and implicit irony markers which is subjected to their level of contradiction. More pertinent to his research is the functionality of proverbial ironies in relation to their contextual setting. Noamen interrogates the social functions of thirty ironic proverbs in the Tunisian cultural context. He concludes that ironic proverbs (or proverbial ironies) are multifunctional.

Furthermore, proverbial ironies are socially constructive. No-aman equally establishes the functionality of verbal ironies in Arabic Proverbs. They play a significant role by presenting a systematic syntactic disorder (chaos), with the view to replicate some level of cognitive understanding towards the establishment of order (peace). Like in the examples above, particularly the second illustration, for the bird to create or gain life, ironically loss or death must first be savoured. Or put in another perspective, the loss of one is the ultimate gain of another. Ngabire (2020) alludes the efficiency and effectiveness of proverbial irony, insisting that irony is impressively effective in deriving meaning from Ganda proverbs. In summary, despite the high level of incongruity, evasiveness and chaos that proverbial irony presents, the ultimate objective is to solve a problem or unravel some form of contests; proverbial irony never fails to engage the practice of creating an inherent equilibrium between divergent or opposite meanings.

2. Theoretical Conceptualisation and Methodology

The paper adopts Raji-Oyelade's Transgressive Paremiology, which is the phenomenon of radical proverbial utterances, as theoretical lens through which the selected textual representations of postproverbials will be critiqued. We must recall that postproverbials are material evidences of the imaginative speech acts occasioned by the new sensibilities of modern African cultural space. An important tenet of this theory is the nature of oppositions, sometimes, parallel subversions to given traditional proverbs. Ironically speaking, this is somewhat the nature of irony as a critical concept. Hence, there is a synergy of dual opposition expected in the interpretation of a given postproverbial irony. The constant subversion of meaning in postproverbial theory is obvious and imperative, with the objective of creating multiplicity of interpretations. In his explanation of the theoretical premise of the postproverbial, Raji-Oyelade (2012: 16) states:

It has been my critical intention to construct the grammar of 'postproverbials' as Transgressive alter-Native Intelligence

(TNI). In formulating a paradigm to describe and categorize the phenomenon of Yoruba deconstructed proverb, I will assume that the typical proverbial text is better signified as the semiotic act or evidence of an African modernity with its indexical hybridism, as well as the material evidence of the acclaimed playfulness of the Yoruba language.

It must be stressed again that the study or critical engagements of postproverbials does not articulate the study/translation of proverbs. Akinsete (2019: 249) corroborates Raji-Oyelade's assertion on this, underscoring the salient point that, "the postproverbial theoretical assumption entails systematic structural formations that describe the nature of transformation which begins with the parent proverb and leading to the birth of its postproverbial". Therefore, postproverbial theoretical assumption is premised on critical evaluation/interpretation of the structural transformations, which emanates from standard or conventional proverbs. It is the study of the syntactic changes due to the agency of neo-postcolonial realities, mostly enforced by a state of colonial consciousness. While Raji-Oyelade (2012: 37) foregrounds the condition of postproverbiality as "awareness of new times which required new sensibilities", Akinsete (2019: 242) opines that postproverbial is "the outcome is a cultural variation which has now generated discourses and critical altercations about the presence/absence of novel cultural/literary acts and new stylistic and literary inventions." Part of this stylistic invention is the attempted definition and description of postproverbial irony as a compelling outcome of the inherent dynamism of postproverbials.

For the purpose of this study, the selection of postproverbials, inundated with irony, is purposive. While one of the example is drawn from another source, most of these selected postproverbials are culled from the postproverbial online database, [https:// postproverbial.com](https://postproverbial.com), which is an initiative of the Postproverbial in African Cultural Expressions (PACE) in collaboration with the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation. These selected postproverbials are rooted in number of African cultures/language such as Luo (Kenya), Shona

(Zimbabwe), Yoruba (Nigeria), Luganda (Uganda) and Kiswahili (East Africa).

3. *What is Postproverbial Irony?*

The research into interface/connection between irony and proverbs establishes ironical reflections in proverbs, which has been critiqued by scholars, with enough room for further research opportunities. The nomenclature, proverbial irony, is suggestive of another example or dimension of irony. Postproverbials, as alternate proverbs, draws synergy from the mother proverb; hence there appears to be a steady growth of a new postproverbial speech act, which I refer to as 'postproverbial irony,' yet to be critically engaged. Postproverbial irony can be described as a twisted expression that has gone through satirical subversion of the intended meaning of the mother proverb, signifying the deployment of sarcasm or humour to deconstruct the initial interpretation/meaning of the mother/traditional proverb. Invariably, this form inherently utilised theoretical assumptions of both irony (as a stylistic device) and the postproverbial. Postproverbial ironies are humorous (playful), practical, sarcastic and didactic. Like the proverbial irony (or ironical proverbs), they are equally socially (de)constructive, as explained below in the analysis.

3.1. *Postproverbial Irony: Re-examining Structural Formation of Postproverbials*

Given that this study investigates postproverbial irony in selected African languages, it is essential to re-conceptualise the structural formation of postproverbials in general for proper theoretical contextualisation of postproverbial irony. Two theoretical presuppositions of the postproverbial must be reiterated: one, the postproverbial theoretical assumptions must necessitate systematic structural formations, which is required to understand the nature of postproverbial transformations. The structure should "contain two proverbemes or clauses; the first proverbeme is the main/signal clause, while the sec-

ond is the completing clause... Transformation usually takes place in the completing clause” (Raji-Oyelade, 2012: 36-37). This is the basic structure, understood to be Category I of the four major types of postproverbials proposed by Raji-Oyelade; it is equally assumed to be the most common, as at this time of conducting this research. This study will attempt to utilise the first category, because quite a number of the examples for this study structurally aligns with this category, with few exceptions.

Secondly, postproverbials are not just mere proverbial variants. Like their mother proverbs, they are purposeful, imaginative and socially constructive. Akinsete (2019: 253) in furtherance argues that the functionality of postproverbials transcend their sheer categorical classification as blasphemous and/or heretical oral expressions. He argues that beyond the external exposé of postproverbials being troublesomely transgressive and disruptive lies structural transformations embedded with constructive “philosophical interpretations” of human experiences; these experiences are primarily influenced or adulterated by neo-postcolonial African cultural experience. In the words of Mieder, proverbs should encompass “a good dose of common-sense experience, wisdom, and above all, truth.” Going by this philosophy, the research attempts to justify the constructive role and functionality of postproverbial irony within the contextual presumptions accorded to proverbs.

3.2. Analysis of Postproverbial Irony in Selected African Languages

For the purpose of this research, p1 stands for the traditional/mother proverb in its fixed state, while p2 registers as the postproverbial form/variant. The mother proverb and the postproverbial variant will be translated, followed by critical analysis and the development of connotative interpretations.

3.2.1. Postproverbial Irony in Yoruba

(Note: EFCC is acronym for Economic and Financial Crimes Commission. It is a Nigerian law enforcement agency charged with

the responsibility of investigating financial crimes in Nigeria such as money laundering and other corruption charges. It usually targets alleged corrupt individuals who appear to be living above their means.)

p1: Àwon kan kórò jo, won ò mo eni tí ó ma na. – [Mother proverb]

Translation: (Some people disproportionately heap up riches to themselves, not knowing who would take/spend them.)

p2: Àwon kan silè kórò jo, kí EFCC ko. – [Postproverbial Irony]

Translation: (Some [other] people heap up riches, only for EFCC to abruptly seize them.)

This Yoruba postproverbial proverb is ascribed to a political figure in Nigeria during the recent and ongoing general elections in 2023. The politician, the Governor of Ondo State, Mr Oluwarotimi Odunayo Akeredolu (SAN), is seen on TV, addressing the people on political issues in his state. And by mere stroke of chance, I heard his articulation of a new postproverbial, which elicited a round of applause from his attentive listeners. It must be registered that the proverbial twist created new forms of meaning, which the audience found both amusing, constructive and so say the least, ironical.

P1 is the mother proverb, which establishes the foolishness in being too greedy. It challenges the notion of individualism, which is antithetical to the pristine philosophy of African communal ways of living, whereby sharing is seen as a virtue. The proverb, which may have metamorphosed from the biblical axiom in Psalm 39:6, is a warning to greedy individuals who disproportionately and ceaselessly gather wealth, without due consideration that human life is transient. P2 is the postproverbial irony. First, let us establish the syntactic and semantic twist before alluding to its use of irony. This postproverbial signals Category II in Raji-Oyelade's typology of postproverbials; it has a significant rupture in the main clause, which causes further alteration of meaning. Following the postproverbial

theoretical acts of ‘disassemblage’ and ‘reassemblage’, the word ‘silè’ is thrust into the main clause, as an ironical anchor, in identifying a specific or particularly type of people (politicians), who are prone to financial greed and mismanagement. Ironically speaking, the irony extends to the preoccupation of the speaker himself who is in fact a politician. The completing clause, where the total twist/subversion takes places, finalizes the opposite meaning that the postproverbial irony establishes.

The speaker indirectly satirizes or make a mockery of brazen politicians who amass unimaginable wealth so that they can effectively gain power from unsuspecting masses during the electioneering period. Again, context helps breed meaning as far as postproverbiality is concerned. Without these contexts, a postproverbial may erroneously be interpreted only as transgressive and blasphemous. In summary, this postproverbial irony subverts the mother proverb with the practicality of engaging new reflections in the political dispensation of neo-postcolonial Nigerian space.

3.2.2. *Postproverbial Irony in Luo*

p1: Rieko chando jorieko.

Translation (Wisdom disturbs the wise.) - [*Mother Proverb*]

p2: Rieko chando ngama ofuwo.

Translation (Wisdom disturbs the stupid) - [*Postproverbial Irony*]

The above excerpt, which is from Luo language in Kenya, is another example of postproverbial irony. The mother proverb (p1) is a traditional proverb that illustrates the importance of wisdom in the affairs of humans. Wisdom, which signals the apt application of knowledge, is personified and presented as the overall composition of a wise man. In this instance, the word ‘disturbance’ may not necessarily articulate a negative connotation. Meaning is constantly deferred such that a plausible interpretation of the word ‘disturb’ could be ‘overwhelmed,’ ‘condensed,’ or ‘saturated.’ Here, the wise man could be said to be ‘drenched’ or ‘immersed’ in wisdom such that his actions,

words, and general dispositions are never far from it. In the end, the wise is expected to always epitomize wisdom in all matters.

However, the subversion of meaning is immediately seen in the completing clause. Please note that the syntactic structure of this postproverbial falls under the popular Category I, in which the signal or main clause remains consistent in both mother proverb and its postproverbial version, while the completing clause is totally subverted. The interjection of the word “stupid” radically changes the meaning of the entire proverbial structure. What establishes the balancing act of playfulness in p2 is the unruly distortion of fixed meaning in P1 which has societal bearing and implications. But again, can we rule out the irony, (inherent semblance of sarcasm and perhaps humour) in p2? Furthermore, wisdom is personalised as a discomfiture to those who refuses or, for one reason or the other, are not able to align with its methods and values.

At a metaphorical level of interpretation, the application and significance of wisdom in the postproverbial variant is not limited only to the wise. The irony in this context pontificates to the transcendence and superiority of wisdom in establishing its relevance in equal measure to the stupid. Hence, in its personified and empyrean state, it truly disturbs and intrudes in the way of the ill-advised. In the end, an extra meaning is generated from the transgression of the mother proverb, which invariably becomes societally constructive and relevant. It simply registers that wisdom is a practical step that all must take, irrespective of the cognitive level or perceptual ability.

3.2.3. *Postproverbial Irony in Kiswahili*

p1: Mtaka yote hupata japo moja.

Translation: (One who wants all will get at least one.) – [*Mother Proverb*]

p2: Mtaka yote hukosa yote.

Translation: (One who wants all loses all.) – [*Postproverbial Irony*]

The following excerpt is drawn from Kiswahili, a predominant language in Eastern part of Africa. There are substantial representations of postproverbials in Kiswahili, but little is known of its postproverbial irony. The social reflections in P1 is inundated with societal qualities such as hard work, bravery, consistency and determination. The mother proverb clearly illustrates these virtues in which a high level of intensity and drive is expected to yield some level of result. In summation, the interpretation of the proverb justifies the impetus of hard work, which always yields some level of dividends or gain.

But the p2, which is the postproverbial version, does not contest the values, ethics and mores that the mother proverb foregrounds in relation to meaning. But there is a complete subversion of meaning/interpretation at both the level of main/signal clauses as well as its completing clause. It can further be argued that there is perhaps little or no indication of blasphemy/ or transgressiveness. No pun or playfulness is intended. But the subversion/twist of the completing clause is ground-breaking, altering the semantic representations of the main/signal clause without interfering with its syntactic structure. This is made possible with the intrusion of irony.

The phrase 'one who wants all' indicates two different meanings at the proverbial and postproverbial levels. At the proverbial level, the personality of the proposed individual remains positive and is commendable based on societal standards. The person stands as a hero worth emulating who should benefit from the practice of consistency and motivation. But all the postproverbial level, the personality of the individual is tarnished due to the meaning and interpretation that the completing clause reveals. By losing all, the character is seen as avaricious and selfish, an exact antithesis of the English wise saying, which states, "a bird in hand is worth two in the bush." It is therefore perceived that the individual's lack of contentment results into total forfeiture of initial possession. Through the import of irony, meaning in this postproverbial is transmuted and translates into a different interpretation devoid of frivolity and irreverence but still foregrounds societal mores and values that usually accompany the practice of traditional proverbs.

3.2.4. *Postproverbial Irony in Shona*

Shona is one of the popular languages in Southern part of Africa. Belonging to the family of Bantu languages, it is the official language in Zimbabwe and also a minority language in Mozambique. An example of a postproverbial irony is illustrated below:

p1: Akupa zanhi ndewako.

He who gives you advice is a friend. – [Mother Proverb]

p2: Kupa \$ ndewako.

He who gives you USD notes is a friend. – [Postproverbial Irony]

The trajectory of irony in this postproverbial expression is established with humour. Raji-Oyelade's description of postproverbials as playful blasphemy resonates high in this excerpt. The proverbial structure here is slightly different from those analysed above. There is application of Category II of Type IIb, in which there is variation or alteration in the main/signal clause, as supposed to the usual changes in the completing clause (Akinsete, 2019:252, quoting Raji-Oyelade, 2012: 57).

Meaning is ironically deferred through the motif of change. In fact, it is more ironic that this change, implicitly retrogressive, is instituted by the advent of a neo-postcolonial culture, of which the result is hyper reality of an intensely materialistic Zimbabwean society. This neo-cultural identity is only later proven by the articulation of this postproverbial irony, captured in new speech acts of contemporary Shona society. Two expressions categorise the notion of change in both mother proverb and its postproverbial variant: 'advice' and 'USD notes'. These are binary concepts that are proofs of a fast-changing Zimbabwean (African) society, whose pristine ideology is being eroded by the effects of Western civilisation. In a nutshell, money (particularly the US dollars) is now viewed as standard practice of admiration and affection. Traditionally, one of the beautiful advantages of friendship is good advice. This, in fact, is what the postproverbial irony has shown to have been transgressed under the weight of Western capitalism.

The deployment of irony in this postproverbial, complemented by distinct taste of humour, undermines the reality of a failing and overtly encumbered African system, which repudiates its old norms and values. As portrayed through the lens of this postproverbial irony, this deviation could indeed be interpreted as transgressive and blasphemous in the real sense of Africa's conflicting neo-cultural ideology.

3.2.5. *Postproverbial Irony in Luganda*

Our last excerpt is drawn from Luganda, which is one of the major languages in Uganda. It is used in the African Great Lakes region. While irony has been portrayed as an effective device in Luganda proverbs, there is an attempt to examine if and how it is deployed in the postproverbial. Listed below is an excerpt:

p1: Abasoma bayita.

Translation: (He who reads excels.) – [Mother Proverb]

p2: Nabasoma bagwa.

Translation: (Even those who read fail.) – [Postproverbial Irony]

This satirical import of this postproverbial is extensive and reflective of a highly complex and competitive African society, whose affiliation with and dependence on Western practices becomes corrosively inimical. The mother proverb can be described as a modern type of proverb which evolved from the rise and prominence of Western education in Africa, more or less as a result of globalisation. Having established the importance of academic scholarship, the postproverbial variant mocks and ridicules the fast-paced conflicting African society, whereby scholarship does not necessitate progress and success. Meaning here is also divergent, in which there is also a presupposition that hard work does not guarantee victory in any given endeavour.

Perhaps the major clue to interpreting this postproverbial irony lies in the syntactic structure, which displays a slight rupture in the main clause, and a significance one in the completing clause, therefore activating the alteration of meaning. The depiction of irony in

this case showcases a weakening, dwindling and declining contemporary African society whose value system is constantly truncated, leading to both personal and collective disillusionment.

4. Conclusion

This study critically engages theoretical perception of postproverbial irony as a literary phenomenon in paremiological studies, drawing inferences from selected African languages such as Yoruba, Shona, Luganda, Kiswahili and Luo, with applicable tenets of transgression and subversions as postproverbial theoretical model. With critical reflections on the concept of postproverbial irony, the study further foregrounds literary presence of postproverbials as a complex but highly advanced cultural expressions in postcolonial African societies. Findings further reveal that postproverbial irony engages new reflections in socio-political dispensations of neo-postcolonial African societies, as reflected in speech act of different communities. While attesting to its blasphemous and sacrilegious peculiarities, the study nonetheless justifies the constructive role and functionality of postproverbial irony, which serves a credible lens in showcasing mutating societal values, recorded in the speech acts of selected African languages. Against the backdrop of a lopsided view of only conditioning postproverbials as sheer blasphemous verbal/speech act, the analysis highlights the irrefutable literary strength and depth of postproverbials as a viable literary concept. It underscores the potential of paremiology as part of a critical research point in contemporary African cultural space.

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List of Contributors

Kikelomo ADENIYI <adeniyiko@lasued.edu.ng>

Dr. Kikelomo Adeniyi is an Associate Professor at the Department of English, Lagos State University of Education, Lagos, Nigeria. She has authored and co-authored children literature texts and materials in journals with both national and international coverage in areas of Sociolinguistics and Applied English Linguistics. Dr Adeniyi delights in attending academic events such as workshops and conferences that have taken her to different areas of Nigeria, parts of Africa, America, the United Kingdom and United Arab Emirates. She is a teacher and teacher trainer of more than three decades and a contributor to the British Council, Teaching English Africa platform.

Damola ADEYEFA <adeyefadamola2@gmail.com>

Dr. Damola Adeyefa teaches French and Translation Studies at the Department of European Studies, University of Ibadan, Nigeria. He was a beneficiary of the University of Ibadan Postgraduate College Teaching and Research Assistant Scholarship Award from 2015 to 2017 for his doctoral work in Translation Studies. He won The British Academy Grant for African Translation and Interpreting Studies Writing Workshop held at Stellenbosch University, South Africa, 2019. He is a member of the Association of Translation Studies in Africa (ATSA) and the Secretary to the Editorial Board of the *Journal of Translation Studies in Nigeria* (JTSN).

Adeshina AFOLAYAN <adeshinaafolayan@gmail.com>

Adeshina Afolayan teaches philosophy at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria. He is a Founder's Fellow at the National Humanities Center, North Carolina. His areas of specialization include cultural studies, African political philosophy and philosophy of modernity. He is the author of *Philosophy and National Development in Nigeria* (2018), edi-

tor of *Auteuring Nollywood* (2014), and *Identities, Histories and Values in Postcolonial Nigeria* (2021), the coeditor of *The Palgrave Handbook of African Philosophy* (2017), *Pentecostalism and Politics in Africa* (2018), *Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Development in Africa* (2020), *Pathways to Alternative Epistemologies in Africa* (2021), and *Global Health, Humanity and the COVID-19 Pandemic* (2023).

Adeola Mercy AJAYI <mercyaadeolaajayi@gmail.com>

Adeola Mercy Ajayi-Adeyeba obtained her Bachelor's degree in Comparative Religious Studies at the University of Ilorin, Nigeria, where she later worked as a research assistant for three years. She bagged her Master's degree in Philosophy from the University of Ibadan, Nigeria. She is currently a prospective PhD Student at the University of Lagos, Nigeria, where she aims at researching on Bioethics.

Charles Tolulope AKINSETE <tolu304@gmail.com>

Dr Charles Akinsete teaches Literature at the Department of English, University of Ibadan. In 2015, he was Facilitator at the Association of Nigerian Authors (ANA) Creative Writing Workshop. He is a fellow of the African Humanities Program (AHP), an initiative of the American Council of Learned Society (ACLS) and two-time recipient of the Alexander Humboldt Talent Travel Award, Humboldt University, in 2015 and 2019. He graduated with a First Class degree and won the prizes for Best Graduating Student. His collections of poetry are *Do Not Preach to Me* and *Dance of a Savage Kingdom*.

Toyin FALOLA <toyinfalola@austin.utexas.edu>

Toyin Falola is a renowned scholar, historian, and professor of African Studies. He holds the Jacob and Frances Sanger Mossiker Chair in the Humanities and is a University Distinguished Teaching Professor at the University of Texas at Austin. Falola is a Fellow of the Historical Society of Nigeria and the Nigerian Academy of Letters, and

he has served as the president of the African Studies Association. Falola is a recipient of numerous awards, including the Distinguished Africanist Award from the African Studies Association, the Ibadan Foundation Award for Professional Excellence in Scholarship, and the Cheikh Anta Diop Award for Excellence in African Studies. He is also a member of the Carnegie African Diaspora Fellows Programme and the International Committee of the Thabo Mbeki African Leadership Institute at UNISA.

Peace Sorochi LONGDET <peacelongdet2011@gmail.com>

Dr Peace Longdet is a lecturer at the Department of English, Federal College of Education, Pankshin (in affiliation with the University of Jos), Plateau State. She obtained her doctorate from the Department of English, University of Jos, Jos, Nigeria. Her areas of research interest are computational folkloristics, African literature, and gender studies. She has participated in national and international conferences and also published articles in journals. In 2017, she won a Fellowship for the documentation of Mwaghavul oral literature by Firebird Foundation for Anthropological Research Fellowship, USA.

Adaobi MUO <deskola2011@gmail.com>

Adaobi Muo is a LUCAS/LAHRI Research Fellow (2023). She holds a PhD. in English (Literature) from the University of Lagos and is a Lecturer I in the Department of Foreign Languages, National Institute for Nigerian Languages (NINLAN), Aba, Abia State, Nigeria. Dr. Muo specializes in African and African Diasporic fiction and is primarily interested in the cultural connection between African and African diasporic societies and the impact of cultural plurality on contemporary black societies of the world. Muo is also interested in gender and African ecology. She has published in her research area in reputable journals.

C.B. NNABUIHE <nnagoziem2005@yahoo.com>

Professor C. B. Nnabuihe is Head of the Department of Linguistics, African and Asian Studies, University of Lagos, Nigeria. His research interests are in Igbo Language Studies with specialties in Igbo Literature and Culture where he has published several books and journal articles. He is a member of Igbo Studies Association and Linguistics Association of Nigeria.

Uche OBOKO <oboko.gloria@dou.edu.ng>

Uche Oboko is an Associate Professor at the Department of English and Literary Studies, Dennis Osadebay University, Asaba, Delta State, Nigeria, and currently, the Sub-Dean of Faculty of Arts. She is a member of many Academic Associations which includes International Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language (IATEFL), Pragmatics Association of Nigeria (PRAN) and English Language Teachers Association of Nigeria (ELTAN) to mention but a few. She has numerous national and international journal publications, books, co-authored books and book chapters to her credit. Her research interests include Linguistic Politeness, Pragmatics, Sociolinguistics, Applied Linguistics and Language Studies.

Olatunji OJERINDE <olatundeoje4@gmail.com>

Olatunde Ojerinde teaches English in the School of Education, Sikiru Adetona College of Education, Science and Technology, Omu-Ajose, Ogun State. He is at present a doctoral student at the University of Ibadan with interest in Pragmatics, Discourse Analysis, Language and Communication, and Gender in Language Education. He has taught across all levels of education in Nigeria and has attended and presented papers at conferences in Nigeria and Ghana. He contributes to the British Council's Teaching English Africa platforms as a Master Trainer, Seminar facilitator and researcher. Olatunde Ojerinde is also a playwright with the title *Museum of Dreams* (Kraft, Ibadan).

Chinyere Theodora OJIAKOR <tcorjiakor@gmail.com>

Chinyere T. Ojiakor is an Associate Professor of Literature and a one-time Associate Dean of Students' Affairs at Madonna University, Nigeria. She holds Bachelor of Arts and Master of Arts degrees in English from Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. She also holds a Postgraduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) from Imo State University, Owerri and has obtained a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in English and Literary Studies from the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. Ojiakor is the current the Head of the Department of English, Madonna University, Nigeria.

Adeola Seleem OLANIYAN <olaniyanadeolaseleem140@gmail.com>

Adeola Seleem Olaniyan is an Islamic scholar, Arabic poet, theologian, environmentalist, Sufism scholar and African traditional cultural practices researcher. After he graduated from Daru Dahwa wal-Irshad Institute of Arabic and Islamic Studies, Isolo, Lagos in 2012, he proceeded to the University of Ibadan, where he bagged his Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Philosophy in the year 2018 and 2023 respectively. His published papers include "Theocentrism is not Anthropocentric: An Enlightened Environmentalist Reading of the Holy Qur'an" and "Environmentalness is Godliness: A Critique of Anthropocentric Reading of the Bible."

Timothy Ekeledirichukwu ONYEJELEM <timothyeo@fuotuo.ke.edu.ng>

Dr. Timothy Ekeledirichukwu Onyejelem is a lecturer in the Department of Journalism and Media Studies, Federal University Otuoke, Bayelsa State, Nigeria. He holds a PhD., M.Sc. and B.Sc. in Mass Communication. He also holds a Professional Diploma in Advertising (PDA) from the Advertising Regulatory Council of Nigeria (ARCON) and a Postgraduate Diploma in Education (PGDE). Timothy is a photojournalist, Nollywood film editor and cinematographer. He is a member of over ten professional and regulatory bodies including

International Communication Association (ICA), African Council for Communication Education (ACCE), Advertising Regulatory Council of Nigeria (ARCON), Nigerian Institute of Public Relations (NIPR), among others.

Chiamaka Ngozi OYEKA <chiamaka.oyeka@yahoo.com>

Dr. Chiamaka Ngozi Oyeka is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Linguistics, African and Asian Studies, University of Lagos, Nigeria. Her research focus is in Igbo Language Studies with particular interest in Sociolinguistics, Language and Gender Studies, Onomastics and Paremiology. She has several publications to her credit. Dr. Oyeka is an associate editor of *Igede: Journal of Igbo Studies*. She is a member of Igbo Studies Association, Gender and African Studies Group and Linguistics Association of Nigeria.

Olayombo RAJI-OYELADE <olayombo.raji@utexas.edu>

Olayombo Raji-Oyelade is a doctoral student in the Department of African & African Diaspora Studies at the University of Texas at Austin, TX. Her research focuses on the ways African and African immigrants navigate themselves as racial bodies in the world through fashion, technology, Black aesthetics and performances. Raji-Oyelade's essays have appeared in *Journal of Feminist Research in Religion* and *The International Journal of Communication*.

Hauwa Mohammed SANI <hauwamohammedsanim@gmail.com>

Hauwa Mohammed Sani holds a PhD in English Language and she is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of English and Literary Studies at Ahmadu Bello University Zaria, Nigeria. Her research focus is transdisciplinary. She is a recipient of the following awards and fellowships: the Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU) Early Career Academic Grant (2016), the American Council of the Learned Society (ACLS) African Humanities Program (AHP) Disser-

tation Completion Fellowship (2016/2017), the Carnegie Corporation of New York Scholar Award (2021& 2023), the African Peacebuilding Network (APN) Individual Research Fellowship (2021), and the University of Pretoria's Future Africa Leadership Fellowship (FAR-LeaF) 2022/24.

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