

Review

Yorùbá Proverbs and their Relevance to our
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Accepted 5 December 2024

One of the universal attributes of language is the fact that it is dynamic, non-static and non-monolithic. This same attribute applies to proverbs in every language. Previous works have concentrated on the aesthetic values of proverbs without paying attention to its fluidity. This study therefore focuses on the dynamic nature of proverbs in response to the challenges of our contemporary times in order to identify how factors such as advancement in technology, medical sciences and problems such as terrorism, economic recession and pandemics affect them. Data for this study were 20 purposively selected Yorùbá proverbs. The framework used is the semantic/pragmatic theory, especially, the software design of code that reflects the intended structure and its meaning. Our findings revealed that advancement in technology has affected the relevance of such proverbs as: Ọwọ́ ọmọdẹ̀ kò tó pẹ̀pẹ̀, tàgbàlagbà ò wọ kẹ̀ngbẹ̀ (see 3), ó n bọ́, ó n bọ́ àwon làá dẹ ẹ̀ dẹ ẹ̀, (8) and Ọ̀jò òwúrọ́ ló n bí olówó nínú (10). The political dispensation of our present times have equally affected such proverbs as: Ẹ̀kẹ̀rẹ̀ kò ẹ̀é fọ́pá lù, Jagunjagun ò ẹ̀ é fọ́ba mú (1) and 'Ọ̀ba ba lóri ohun gbogbo' (2). Economic recession has affected such proverbs as: 'Àjò kii dùn k'ó ní lé má relé' (12) and 'ilẹ̀ làbọ́ sinmi oko' (15). Terrorism has affected such proverbs as: 'ilẹ̀ là á wò ká tó sọmọ́ l'órúkọ' (14); 'Jẹ́ kí n jẹ́ ní í mú ayò dùn' (17) and 'A kì ígbélé ẹ̀ni ká fọ̀rùn ro' (19). Others like 'Fìrìgbon kò sílẹ̀kùn, ẹ̀ni tó báá ní kọ̀kọ̀rọ́ ni yòò sí í', 'a pẹ́ kó tó jẹun kì í jẹ́ ìbàjẹ́' and 'bí ẹ̀şin bá dá ni, a máá n tun gùn ni' have equally been affected. Many proverbs have lost their relevance and currency as a result of technological and scientific inventions, economic recession and terrorism.

Keywords: Yorùbá proverbs, Technological development, Scientific inventions, Terrorism and economic recession

Cite This Article As: OLÚWADỌRO`, J.O., OLADOSU, O.O., AJAO, A. F. (2025). Yorùbá Proverbs and their Relevance to our Contemporary Times. Inter. J. Eng. Lit. Cult. 13(1): 8-13

* Another attribute which cannot be overemphasized is the elasticity of language which also manifests in proverbs.

INTRODUCTION

Much scholarly works have been carried out on proverbs in different languages and cultures. A few of such works are:

Adejumo (2009), Adekeye (2000), Adeleke (2009), Ademola (2009), Ademowo and Balogun (2014), Ajibola (1947), Akinlade (1987), Akinyemi (2007), Akporoboro and Emovon (1994), Alaba (1986), Arewa and Dundes (1964), Auchan (2001), Bada (1995), Bada (1979), Baldick (2004), Bamgbose (1968), Beier and Gbadamosi (1959), Bello-Olowookere (2003), Crowther (1852), Delano (1966), Delano (1972), Dzobo (1992), Finnegan (1970), Holmes (2008), Hymes (1962; 1964; 1972; 1974), Jang (1994), Kehinde (2004), Kirk-Greene (1966), Magwire (2005), Mieder (1993), Mieder (1994), Mieder (2005), Nwachukwu-Agbada (1990), Ogunsina (1983), Ojoade (2004), Okekunle (2014), Olatunji (1984), Olujinmi (2004), Olujinmi (2012), Oluwadoro and Ajayi (2016), Oluwadoro (2017a), Raji-Oyelade (2004), Sheba (2006), Taylor (1931), Umma (2014), Ventola (1979), Yina (2004), Yusuf (1994), and many others.

According to Olujinmi (2012), proverb is a universal phenomenon, globally valued from the ancient to the present age, so it has attracted the attention of scholars from different perspectives

– religion, philosophy, history, communication arts and Linguistics. We shall examine the statement of the problem in the next section.

Statement of the Problem

Most of these previous scholars concentrated on the use of proverbs for oracular purposes, meant for the elderly. They focused on the aesthetic value of proverbs without examining their relevance to the challenges of our contemporary times. Thus, this academic endeavour is an attempt to assess how factors such as politics, terrorism, economic recession and advancement in technology as well as Basic Medical Sciences have affected and are still affecting some of these proverbs, especially in relation to their relevance at such a time like this. Our major thrust here is to examine the tendency of youths in our contemporary times to impose new interpretations on the proverbs in reality of the challenges of present day Nigeria. In other words, everything boils down on the attitude of the younger ones, the proverbs have not really lost their meanings and effect. We present the literature review in the next section.

Literature Review

Finnegan's (1970) work takes a look at proverbs as important tools through which communicative events are garnished in African culture. Seitel (1969) concentrates on the social use of proverbs and their metaphorical import. Akporoboro and Emovon (1994) discuss proverbs as used in different African cultures. The scholars explained that the Lamba of Central Africa make use of proverbs to pass oblique and tactful remarks when they are advising people. According to them, the Nyanja of Malawi apply proverbs for oracular purposes, aimed solely for the understanding of elders. For the Fante of Ghana, proverbs are important tool for child rearing, entertainment and value orientation. The Igbo of Nigeria view proverbs as the principal means of emphasizing their points forcefully. They make use of proverbs to perform illuminative and corrective functions. Hausa proverbs have also been studied by some scholars see Kirk-Greene (1966), Bada (1995), Dahir (2002) and Muhammad (2013). Their works focus essentially on the use of proverbs for literary functions and poetic devices.

Most studies on Yorùbá proverbs focus on interpretation, translation into English and the philosophical perspective. Sodipe and Odejobi (1984) did a functional categorization of proverbs into five. These are proverbs that advise, proverbs that offer explanation, proverbs that encourage, proverbs that warn and proverbs that rebuke. Olujinmi (2012) examines the utilitarian value of Yorùbá proverbs to entrepreneurship. Oluwadoro (2017a) did an ethnographic analysis of proverbs used by the Ex-Governor of Osun State, Prince Olagunsoye Oyinlola. He discussed how the politician used proverbs to woo the hearts of his people and sustain their support during his tenure. A recent work done by the present scholar examined the use of proverbs in a Christian film by the Evangelical Outreach Ministry (EVOM), titled: "An Ethnographic Analysis of Proverbs in Christian Films: The Missing Link as a Case Study". The author equally underscores the utilitarian cum aesthetic values of proverbs with particular reference to religious discourse. The work is a kind of prophetic declaration on COVID-19 as far back as year 2015. We move to data presentation in the next section.

Data Presentation

SN	Proverbs	Translations
1.	Şékéré kò şeé fópá lù, Jagunjagun ò şe é foba mú	Just as sékéré (the beaded-gourd) cannot be beaten by a rod, the soldier is not threatened by a king.
2.	Ọba ba lóri ohun gbogbo	The king rules/reigns over all things.
3.	Ọwo ọmọdé kò tó pẹpẹ tàgbàlagbà wọ kẹ̀ngbẹ̀	Just as the hand of the youngster does not reach the shelf, that of the elderly one does not penetrate the narrow mouth of the gourd (everybody has his own limitation).
4.	Adeṣe kò le è fún wàrà, ó lè da wàrà nù can waste the milk. (technology)	The leprous man cannot milk the cow but he
5.	Ogedé dúdú kò yá bù şán, ọmọ búburú kò yá lùpa	The unripe plantain is not a delicacy just as the bad child is not giving up to die
6.	Igi ganganran má gún mi lójú, òkèèrè branch of a tree to prick his eyes take precaution ahead of time.	He who does not want the sharp-edged láti ń wò ó
7.	Enìkan kì í şipe nàró fábuké straighten up himself.	The hunch back man is not advised to
8.	Ó ń bọ, ó ń bọ; àwọn là á deẹ́dè é prevented with alacrity	An impending danger is summarily
9.	Bí ọmọdé bá ń gégi nígbó, àgbà ni máa wó sí its fall. (technology has overtaken this).	When the youngsters are cutting a tree only yòò mọ ibi tí ó the elderly ones can predict the direction of
10.	Ọjò òwùrò tí ń bí olówó nínú rich man (Technological Development in terms of telecommunications has overtaken this).	The early morning rain angers/infuriates the
11.	Sùúrù la fi ń şe ọkọ obìnrin husband rules his wife.	Patience is the weapon with which the
12.	Àjò kì í dún kó ní lé má re 'lé pilgrim will want to return home.	However enjoyable a foreign land is, the
13.	A pẹ́ kó tó jẹun kì í jẹ ìbàjẹ́ food. (economic recession)	He that exercises patience does not eat spoilt
14.	Ilé là á wò ká tó sọmọ lórúko consideration the strength of his purse and the prevailing economic situation.	Before a child is named, the father takes into
15.	Ilé làbọ́ sinmi oko (Economic recession has turned the hearts of many citizens against their home land)	The native land is the ultimate resting place of the pilgrim.
16.	Jẹ kí ń jẹ níí mú ayò dùn players/contenders to win (this is applicable to terrorists and herdsman).	The beauty of every game is the equal chances it offers the

17. Ibi gbogbo là á dání alẹ́ ọ̀bẹ́ ló
tastes differently (Recession and health
challenges) Supper is prepared in every home but the dùn jura wọ̀nsoup
18. A kì í gbélé ẹ̀ni ká fọ̀rùn rọ́
home/one does not get his head or neck
wounded twisted in his own house. (straybullets) One does not sustain injury to his neck in his
19. Ojú bọ̀rọ́ kọ́ la fi ń gbọ̀mọ low ọ́ ẹ̀kùrọ́
The palm kernel does not release the fruit inside without
much efforts (technology have made things easier).
20. Bí ẹ̀şin bá dání a máa ń tún-un gùn ni
the man to remount the horse (unlike Ex-Governor Kangiwa of Sokoto who died after falling down from riding horse) If the horse causes a man to fall, it is left for

Grouping

1. Proverbs Affected by Contemporary Politics – 1 and 2.
2. Proverbs Affected by Technology – 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, and 19.
3. Proverbs Affected by Economic Recession/ Terrorism – 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, and 18.

Data Analysis

For the purpose of analysis, the proverbs in this study are classified into four major groups, depending on the factors that affect them.

1. Politics: 1 and 2: Contemporary politics which places, the President, Governors, Senators, House of Representatives Members, etc. above the traditional rulers has led to a drastic reduction in the status of traditional rulers. As a result, there is little the traditional rulers can do. Some case studies:

(a) During the regime of General Buhari/Tunde Idiagbon, two prominent traditional rulers – the Ooni of Ife and the Alááfin of Oyo were placed on house detention. Again, during Buhari's tenure as civilian president, the Emir of Kano – Lamido Sanusi was deposed by Governor Ganduje. During the regime of General Sanni Abacha, the Sultan of Sokoto, Alhaji Dasuki was deposed, the same thing happened to several others, apart from those who were sent to exile.

2. Advancement in Technology and Medical Sciences have also affected the following proverbs: 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, and 19: Number 10 which reflects the effect of early morningrain on the rich man is now becoming a thing of the past with advancement in telecommunications. The rich man and his employees do not need to nurse the fear of rain, wind or storm, as long as the necessary facilities such as data and network facilities are made available. A single businessman can monitor his business in different countries simultaneously.

3. Terrorism/Economic Recession (11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, and 18): The harsh effect of economic recession coupled with terrorists' activities have sent many citizens of Nigeria abroad to Europe in order to seek greener pasture. Many of such citizens are not in a hurry to come back home in spite of sweet promises of politicians to remedy the situations. In fact, some have turned themselves into perpetual refugees in neighbouring African countries.

4. Mysterious Events/Accident (20): In the Second Republic, former Governor of Sokoto State, Alhaji Kangiwa fell while taking part in horse riding competition. A related event was that of Ex-Governor of Taraba State (Danbaba Suntai) who was trying to pilot a jet all by himself. In the process, the plane crashed, he sustained fatal injuries from which he never recovered.

In summary, a careful look at the proverbs sampled above, has brought to the fore the fact that Yorùbá proverbs are receiving new interpretations on the basis of happenings in recent times, especially from the youths.

Summary and Conclusion

Factors such as technology, civilisation, advancement in medical sciences, and terrorism are greatly affecting the relevance and timelines of many Yorùbá proverbs. Under normal circumstances, proverbs are the prerogatives of the sage, elderly people who are very competent in the host language. However, the teeming population of youths now makes use of proverbs, and imposes different interpretations on them. This paper has undergone significant reviews (from: *The Changing Profiles of Selected Yoruba Proverbs to: Yoruba Proverbs and the Problems of Semantic Extension to the present title*)

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