

**SOCIOLINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF ÈBÌRÀ  
PROVERBS**

**BY**

**ZUBERU NOEL NDA**

**NSU/ART/MA/LNG/020/14/15**

**M.A. LINGUISTICS**

**DECEMBER, 2019**

**SOCIOLINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF ÈBÌRÀ PROVERBS**

**BY**

**ZUBERU NOEL NDA**

**NSU/ART/MA/LNG/020/14/15**

**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF  
POSTGRADUATE STUDIES,**

**NASARAWA STATE UNIVERSITY, IN PARTIAL  
FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE  
AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS  
(M.A.) LINGUISTICS**

**DEPARTMENT OF LANGUAGES AND LINGUISTICS  
FACULTY OF ARTS NASARAWA STATE UNIVERSITY,  
KEFFI NIGERIA**

**DECEMBER, 2019.**

## DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation has been written by me and it is a report of my research work. It has not been presented in any previous application for any degree. All quotations are indicated and sources of information specifically acknowledged by means of references.



Signature:.....

Date: 8/07/2020.....

**Zuberu Noel Nda**

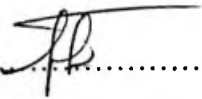
**NSU/ART/MA/LNG/020/14/15**

## CERTIFICATION

This dissertation "Sociolinguistic Analysis of Ebirá Proverbs" meets the regulations governing the award of Master of Arts in Linguistics, School of Post Graduate Studies, Nasarawa State University, Keffi, and is approved for its contribution to knowledge.

.....  
Dr. Akase T. Tiav

Chairman, Supervisory Committee

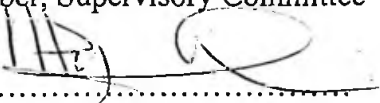
.....  


.....  
Date

.....  
5/12/2019

.....  
Dr. Yakubu J. Umaru

Member, Supervisory Committee

.....  


.....  
Date

.....  
15/12/19

.....  
Dr. P.M. Imoh

Head of Department

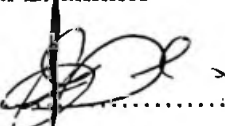
.....  


.....  
Date

.....  
5/12/2019

.....  
Prof. G.S. Omachonu

Internal Examiner

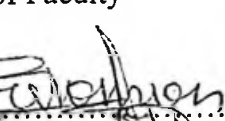
.....  


.....  
Date

.....  
5/12/2019

.....  
Prof. Adewole Alagbe

Dean of Faculty

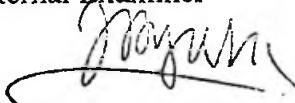
.....  


.....  
Date

.....  
5/12/2019

.....  
Prof. Gbenga Ibiye Solomon

External Examiner

.....  


.....  
Date

.....  
9/5/12/2019

.....  
Prof. Jonathan Ayuba

Dean, School of Post Graduate Studies

.....  
Date

## **DEDICATION**

This work is dedicated to God Almighty, my Dad and my late Mum, Mrs. Deborah Zuberu.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First, I want to thank God for giving me the privilege to get to this level of my life, though it has not been easy but He has seen me through, I thank Him. I also thank my able Supervisor Dr. Akase Tiav for his immense and unquestionable assistance towards this research work. I also want to thank Dr. Yakubu Umaru for helping me as a second supervisor even when it seems I was lost during this work and will always call to know how far I have gone with the research, may God reward you both.

I will not fail to acknowledge all the lecturers in the Department of Languages and Linguistics who have trained me to this level from my undergraduate level; worthy of note are Prof. G.S Omachonu, Prof. Thomas Adeyanju, Prof. Philip Anagbogu, Dr. Philip Imoh, Dr. David Abraham, Mr. Charles Amende and all other lecturers in the department. May God reward you all.

My profound gratitude goes to my Father, Dr. Emmanuel Zuberu and my Mothers, Mrs. Comfort Zuberu, Mrs. Patient Zuberu and Mrs. Ramat Zuberu, my siblings and my beautiful fiancée Glory Jacob who have always prayed for my success; I love you all. Lastly, I thank all my mates in the Department of Languages and Linguistics especially Kenneth Agwadu who assisted me during the tone marking of this work, my wonderful siblings and my friend, Amos Moses who assisted me throughout the typing of this work. May God reward you all.

## Table of Contents

Cover page-----	i
Title Page-----	ii
Declaration-----	iii
Certification-----	iv
Dedication -----	v
Acknowledgements-----	vi
Table of Content-----	vii-ix
Abbreviations-----	x
Abstract -----	xi
Table 1.1-----	8
Table 1.2-----	9

## CHAPTER ONE

### General Introduction

1.1 Background to the Study-----	1
1.2 Statement of the Problem-----	1-2
1.3 Research Questions-----	2
1.4 Aim/Research Objectives-----	2
1.5 Significance of the Study-----	3
1.6 Scope of the Study-----	3
1.7 Basic Linguistic Information-----	4
1.7.1 The language, People and Demography -----	4-5
1.7.2 Language Classification-----	6-7
1.7.3 Sociolinguistic Profile -----	8

1.7.3 Dialect Situation of Ebira language -----	8-9
---	-----

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

2.0 Preamble -----	9
2.1 Conceptual Review-----	9
2.1.1 Proverbs-----	9-10
2.1.2 Origin of Proverbs-----	11
2.1.3 Domains of Use-----	12-13
2.1.4 Universal Characteristics of Proverbs-----	13-14
2.1.5 Functions of Proverbs-----	14-15
2.1.6 Sociolinguistic Factors or Variables in the use of proverbs-----	16-18
2.2 Theoretical Framework-----	18-21
2.3 Empirical Review-----	21-31
2.4 Summary-----	31

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

3.1 Research Design-----	32
3.2 Area of study-----	32
3.3 Instrumentation and Sources of Data-----	32
3.4 Population and Sampling Techniques-----	32
3.5 Methods of Data Collection-----	32-33
3.6 Methods of Data Presentation and Analysis-----	33



## CHAPTER FOUR

### DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.0 Chapter Overview-----	34
4.1 Possible Domains where Proverbs can be used in the Ebira Community -----	34
4.1.1 Patience and Tolerance-----	34-35
4.1.2 Vengeance-----	36-38
4.1.3 Hatred and Conflict-----	38-39
4.1.4 Advice Against Evil Deeds-----	39-41
4.1.5 Words of Admonition-----	41-43
4.1.6 Settlement of Disputes and Misunderstanding-----	43-45
4.1.7 Unity and Mutual Support-----	45-46
4.1.8 Inter-personal Relationship-----	46-48
4.1.9 Proverbs Collected Generally-----	48-50
4.2 The Role of Ebira Proverbs in the Society/culture-----	51-52
4.3 The Influence of Proverbs on Ebira Names-----	52-55
4.4 Summary of Findings and Discussion -----	55-58

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1 Summary .....	59
5.2 Conclusion -----	59-60
5.3 Recommendation-----	60
5.4 Contribution to Knowledge-----	60
5.5 Suggestions for further Studies-----	61
References-----	62-66

Appendix-----	66-98
Dialectical Map of Epira Tao-----	99

### *Abstract*

Globally, proverbs are symbolic expressions of people. In Nigeria, proverbs are influenced, to a large extent, by the linguistic and socio-geographical experiences and orientations of the diverse people that make up the country. The imagery in proverbs, their forms and context of use as well as aesthetics reflect the peculiar natural environment of the users, whether from the Northern or Southern regions of Nigeria where hundreds of languages are spoken or elsewhere in the world. Deploying Sperber and Wilson's 'Relevant' model of speech analysis, fifty-six (56) Ebara proverbs were purposefully selected and subjected to content analysis in this study. The researcher selected the proverbs through critical observation, note taking and recording. At the end of the research work, it was revealed that proverbs are not only the palm oil with which words are eaten according to Achebe but are the very words on which wisdom is built. This is because the researcher discovered that proverbs has a lot of roles to play in terms of peace building and several other things which has been examined in this research work.

# CHAPTER ONE

## GENERAL INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background to the Study

This research examines proverbs that exist in Ebira language with the focus on their social and contextual meanings and how they enhance communication. Proverbs are very essential ingredients of a language which are capable of expressing a basic truth, which may be applied to common situations. No wonder, Achebe (1958:5) says proverbs are "palm oil with which words are eaten". Despite the importance of proverbs, many Ebira people hardly use them because they don't even know them, thereby leaving out the beauty of what they want to say. Yoruba and English proverbs are now frequently used in Ebira environment, not because the Ebira proverbs does not exist but, because they are not well documented and used. Consequently, children grow up not even knowing these proverbs not to talk of using them. Most speakers of the language can hardly express themselves in proverbs not to interpret them. This work therefore, calls for the examination and documentation of Ebira proverbs with attention giving to their social and contextual meanings and how they enhance communication in the language.

Though there are various works that have been done on proverbs generally, but to the best of my knowledge, nothing is done on Ebira proverbs. The only work that appear to be related to Ebira proverbs is that of Salami (2013) Dynamics of Ebira Language, where he outlines some idiomatic expressions in Ebira language and some important aspects of Ebira grammar. His work is only close to Ebira proverbs but did not dwell on them.

The absence of any reasearch on this area in Ebira has therefore, created a vacuum in which the researcher wants to fill by examining the Ebira proverbs, by bringing out their contextual meaning and how they enhance communication in the language.

### 1.2. Statement of the Problem

Proverb is a crucial aspect of our various indigenous Nigerian languages. Most existing ethnolinguistic studies of proverbs in Nigeria have focused mainly on two major languages

in Nigeria; is Igbo and Yoruba (Lamidi, 2008; Adedimeji, 2003). To the best of the knowledge of the Researcher, nothing has been done on aspects of the language of Ebira proverbs. The absence of study on the aspects of the language necessiated this study. Furthermore, it is a sociolinguistic fact that most minority languages of the world are facing the threat of possible extinction. In the light of the above, vital aspects of the Ebira language like the proverbs, are gradually fading away in the repertoire of the new generation of Ebira speakers. This scenario calls for research into the various aspects of Ebira and culture. This will go a long way to preserve the language and increase the communicative and performative competence of the users/speakers of the Ebira language.

### **1.3 Research Questions**

In a bid to achieve the objectives of this study, the following research questions were formulated:

- i. What are the possible domains or factors that lead to the usage of a particular proverb in Ebira Community?
- ii. What are the roles of proverbs in Ebira society?
- iii. What are the influences of proverbs of Ebira names?

### **1.4 Research Objectives**

The study aims at exploring and analyzing Ebira proverbs from the sociolinguistic perspective. This will offer a sociolinguistic insight to the contributions of Ebira language, culture and way of life in the sociolinguistic context of English as a second language in Nigeria.

The broad objective of this research is to provide the social and the contextual meanings of proverbs in Ebira . The specific objectives therefore are:

- i. To identify the possible domain of the use of proverbs i.e. the various variables or factors that necessitate the usage of a particular proverb.
- ii. To determine the roles of proverbs in Ebira Society
- iii. To determine the influence of proverbs on Ebira names

### **1.5 Significance of the study**

This study is a contribution to the existing studies of proverbs and particularly to the sociolinguistic aspect of Ebira proverbs. It is a contribution to the body of research that seeks to study aspects of language and culture of indigenous Ebira proverbs. Studying the mother tongue speech codes is very significant. This is because meaning mappings provided by proverbs are significant for attention in the second language context where L1 ideas are transposed on L2 ideas (Adedimeji, 1998). This study shows how socio-cultural values and belief systems of the Ebira are communicated in English as a second language situation. Also, in the event of minority languages facing extinction all over the world, this research is significant, especially as it will serve as a documentary that will help to preserve Ebira proverbs, which is an aspect of Ebira language and culture. The study will go a long way to enhance the sociolinguistic background of the Ebira community and ethnolinguistic potentials of the Ebira language.

Apart from increasing the communicative competence of the new generation of Ebira speakers, the study will also contribute to the discourse of English as an L2 in Nigeria as the translation of indigenous Nigerian proverbs into English is a necessary feature of domestication of the English language in context. Again, this study is relevant to students of African literature in English, as it provides a basis for a sociolinguistic interpretation of Ebira proverbs as used in African novels, plays and poems. The work can also provoke more research materials for other scholars who are interested in African studies and oral tradition among indigenous Nigerian cultures.

### **1.6 Scope of the study**

This study is based on the sociolinguistic analysis of Ebira proverbs. It is an impossible task to analyse all the proverbs available in the linguistic repertoire of Ebira. Time and space will not even allow for this. Randomly selected Ebira proverbs are gleaned from Ebira native speakers from the context of use. Whereas necessary cross references will be made to proverbs from other language communities in order to explicate their usefulness in depicting the values, the norms, the aspirations, the likes and dislikes and sometimes, the do's and don'ts of members of the society at large.

## 1.7 Basic Linguistic Information

### 1.7.1 The Language, People and Demography

The word "Ebira" refers to the people themselves, their language and their geographical location. Using the name of the most popular town of the land, we may refer to them as Ebira Okene. The Ebira Okene occupy the hilly stretch of land southwest of the Niger-Benue confluence area and share boundaries with the Yoruba-speaking people of Akoko, Owe and Ijumu to the west as well as the various Akoko-Edo people to the South and Southwest.

The Ebira Tao are the outspoken and very hardworking Nupoid-speaking ethno-linguistic group located in the Central Senatorial district of Kogi State (not far from the Niger-Benue confluence) in Nigeria. Recent in depth research indicates that Ebira have been part and parcel of what is now generally known as Central Nigeria since 4000BC (Ohiare 1988). The Ebira zone is also prominent in the prehistoric civilization of the Iron Age generally characterized by the Central Nigeria as epitomized by Nok culture. Even recently, the Iron-working site of Ife-Ijumu (Kogi State) has been dated to 260BC. Thus, it could be deduced that Ebira as a group existed for a long time in locations within Central Nigeria not far from where they are located presently (Williamson 1987)). Ebira people are found in Kogi, Kwara, Nasarawa, and the Federal Capital territory. Okene is said to be the administrative centre of the Ebira speaking people in Kogi State.

The spelling of the name came about largely due to historical developments and contact with Yoruba, a major dominant language neighbor to Ebira. The Yoruba influence the Ebira from the West and that is why most people living in Okene are Christians. This influence from the Yoruba came as a result of migration of some Ebira people travelling to Yoruba land for trade and marriage as a result of the closeness of states such as Kwara and Ondo that are very close to Okene and as time went on, many Ebira speakers started speaking Yoruba to their kids and some have even made it a household language. From the North, Ebira is spoken by those living in Lokoja who are mostly Muslims. However, the people themselves call their language Ebira (Ebira) and refer to themselves as 'Anebira (anebira) "people of Ebira".

The early missionaries and colonial masters referred to the Ebira people at that time with the name 'Igbirra' which means "behaviour". In 1974, a strong ethnic organization known as Ebira People's Association (EPA) formally changed the name of the language from (Igbirra to Ebira) because "Ebira" refers to the people themselves, their language and their geographical location, and published this change in the Nigerian daily newspaper in July, 1974. Writers in the language have gradually changed to the correct name 'Ebira', which we shall be using in this study, because, any synchronic linguistic study has to give an objective account of what the speakers of a language say about their language.

Ebiraland, the home of Ebira Tao, is located in the central Senatorial District of Kogi State. It has a landmass of 3,426km. The 1991 national census puts the population of the area at 722,032. Another national head count was undertaken in 2006, it was revealed that Ebira language is spoken by over Two million (2,000,000) people around Nigeria (Salami 2013).

The Ebira people are republican by nature, outspoken and very hardworking. Farming and cloth-weaving are occupations for which the Ebira are known. The Ebira presently spread in five Local Government Areas of Kogi state namely: Adavi, Okene, Okehi, Ajaokuta and Ogori-Magongo. A sizeable number of the Ebiras are found in Lokoja Local Government, Ondo, Ogun, and Oyo states. The paramount ruler is called Ohinoyi of Ebiraland.

The pre-colonial Ebira community was essentially segmentary. It consisted of five principal clans among several others, namely, Okengwe, Eika, Okehi, Adavi, and Ihima. The respective priests (heads) of these clans were known as Ohindase, Adeika, Ohiomahi, Asema and Obonbanyi. Each clan was self governing and did not regard any other as superior to it.

Significantly, the clan was the main unit of political organization. The post of the clan head was normally conferred on the oldest living male member of the clan. His religious duties and disciplinary powers were, however, limited to his own family. His political influence was quite small and although he presided over the meetings of his clan, his judgment was determined largely by the consensus of opinion of the elders. The administration of all the clan heads constituting a community in Ebiraland lies in the hands of the elders, influential individuals and the chief priest (Ohinoyi).



### 1.7.2 Language Classification

Greenberg (1970) divided Africa languages into four (4) different language families, they are: Khoisan, Afroasiatic, Nilo-Saharan and Niger-Kordofanian. For the sake of this study the researcher shall focus more on the Niger-Kordofanian because Ebira language falls under this particular language family group. Greenberg initially called it Niger-Congo, from the two great rivers which flow mainly through the land where these languages are spoken; later he added to it at a higher level the Kordofanian languages spoken in Sudan and renamed the enlarged family Niger-Kordofanian Greenberg (1970).

The Niger-Congo family is by far the largest language family in Nigeria and in Africa. In fact, some linguists claim that the Niger-Congo language family has the highest number of distinct languages in the world. Proto-Niger Congo languages are indigenous to Africa. Almost all languages in Southern Nigeria and Central Regions belong to the Niger-Congo group of which Ebira is one of the Niger-Congo languages.

The Niger-Congo family has many subphyla such as Mande (represented in Nigeria by the cluster of Borgu languages around new Bussa and Kalama called book or Bokobaru), Atlantic (which is represented in Nigeria by Fulani), Gur (which is represented in Nigeria by Batonu in Kwara state), kwa ( which is represented by big languages such as Yoruba, Igbo, Iteskiri, Nupe, Igala, ibibio-Efik, Idoma, Ebira and so on, making it the biggest subphylum in the Niger- Congo family), Benue-congo (represented in Nigeria by Tiv, Jukun, Tarok, Kambari, Ogoni, etc) and Adamawa-Ubangian (represented by several Adamawa and Taraba languages). Experts have believed that the Niger-Congo languages show sufficient similarities in structural characteristics and lexical properties to warrant being identified as a language family.

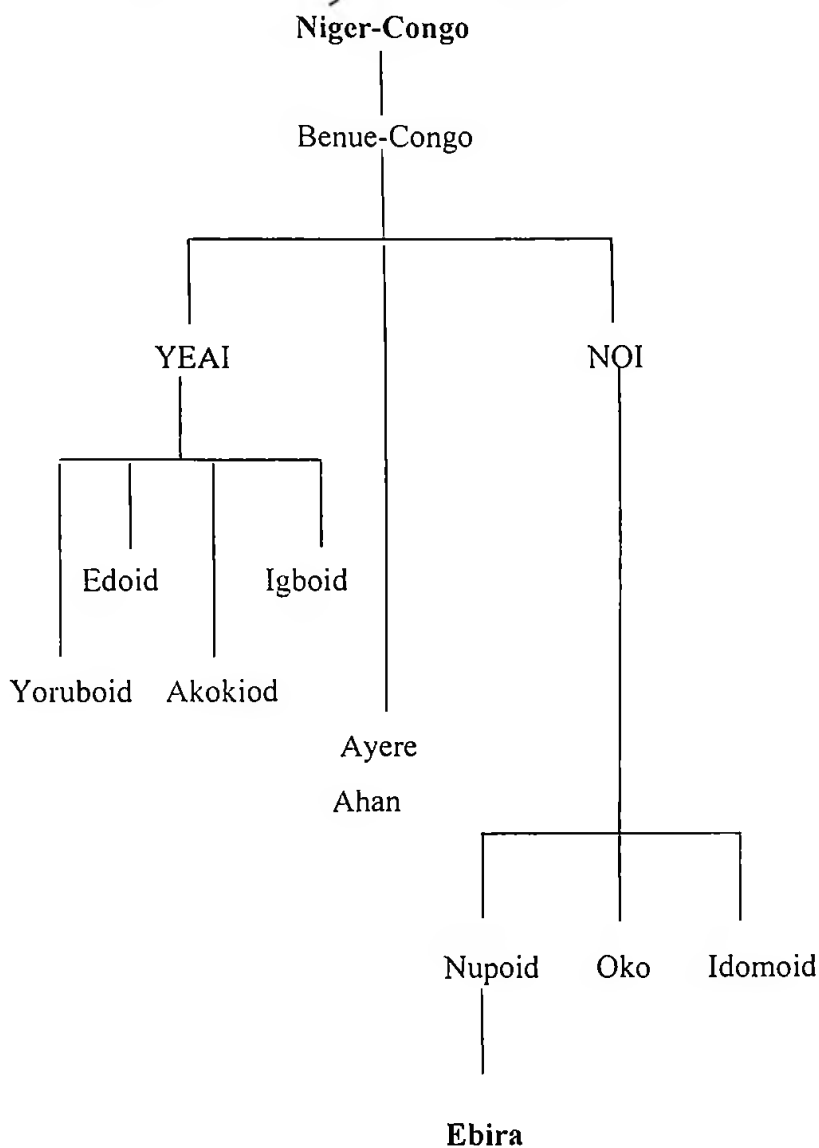
Paradoxically, Williamson (1971) observes that despite the Benue Congo Comparative Wordlist Study, no convincing lexical innovations were found for Benue-Congo, despite its acceptance as a grouping. In de Wolf's work, no attempt was made to search outside language for examples of the Benue Congo items quoted, and many of the larger West African linguistics entites.

The first three of the eleven groups are tiny languages which appear to have no close relatives and are therefore listed as separate branches of Benue-Congo: Ogori, Akpes, and Ukaan, all spoken around the area where Bendel, Ondo, and Kwara State meet. The same area is the

homeland of the Akokoid languages, named after the Akoko area, whose nearest relatives are the Yoruboid languages, i.e. Yoruba, Igala, and Isekiri. The next group is Edoid, i.e. languages closely related to Edo; Nupoid includes Nupe, Gbari, Ebira, and other languages around the confluence of the Niger and the Benue; Idomoid consists of Idoma and languages closely related to it, on both sides of the Benue; Igbooid consists of Igbo and closely related languages, south of Yoruboid and Idomoid.

**Table 1.1**

**THE NIGER-CONGO FAMILY TREE**



**Williamson & Blench (2000:11)**

### 1.7.3 Sociolinguistic Profile

#### 1.7.3.1 Dialectical Situation of Ebira Language

Scholz (1976) provides a bibliographic review of early classifications of the three major dialects of the Ebira group:

- Ebira-Koto which are also known as (Ebira-Anavi). The Koto live northeast of the Niger-Benue confluence. The dialect is spoken in Nasarawa state in Toto local Government Area.
- Etuno (Igara). The variety of Ebira spoken at Igarra town in Bendel state which is presently known as Delta state. The only printed source of lexical items in Ladefoged (1964).
- Ebira-Qkene also known as (Ebira-Tao), the most well known dialect of Ebir. The dialect is found in Okene, Okehi, Adavi, Ihima Local Government Area of Kogi state.

**Table 1.2**

Lexical variation Table of the Ebira dialects as shown below:

	Money	Wizard	Hill	Elder brother	Grand father	Penis	Lie
Ebira Koto	Egye	Okwokyi	Iresuwaha	Inengbeni	Ohikwo	Iretu	Adere
Ebira Tao	èkèhì	ópòchí	Átábá	Énébèní	Adá òbányí	Ánápá	Írechè
Ebira Etuno	Ekeshi	Enebe	Iresufa	Oyaram ozoku	Ada obani	Tete	Apie

**Source: Abdulwahab (2013:11)**

The Okene dialect, the main prestigious dialect used in media and publishing was used in this work. It is spoken in the West of the Niger-Benue confluence.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.0 Preamble

This chapter reviews relevant literature related to this study. It examines relevant works of scholars in this field to discover the gap(s) yet to be filled. An attempt to effectively analyse Epira proverbs from sociolinguistic perspective would begin with a definition of term, origin of the word proverb, domains of use, universal characteristics of proverbs, functions of proverbs, theoretical framework and finally the empirical review. Language cannot be mentioned without reference to the society. This is as a result of the fact that language does not exist in a vacuum. Rather, it is deeply rooted in a society. In the same vein, a society without language would be impossible. So this chapter critically examines most empirical studies that have been done on proverbs.

#### 2.1 Conceptual Review

##### 2.1.1 Proverbs

The meaning of proverb, to a great extent depends on the circumstance of use, the dexterity of the speaker (user), the iconic cultural and interpretative skills of the listener (audience), among other linguistic tropes which embodies its aesthetics. Suru (2010) affirms that aesthetics deals with those responses to natural objects (including proverbs) and their judgment; whether they should be regarded as beautiful or ugly. Omoera (2012), though in a slightly different context, argues that, what we see, say, hear has 'colour'- or 'art' attached to it and equally constitutes an aesthetic. Essence, which is a 'moment' of beauty in both tangible and intangible terms. Here lies the aesthetic bite and relevance of proverbs as artistic embodiment that can engage provoke, evoke human thought/ideas tangibly and intangibly depending on the speaker/listener and native intelligence interfaces.

Many other attempts have been made at defining proverb; some of them include Finnegan (1970) who defines proverbs as "a saying in more or less fixed form marked by shortness, sense, and salts are distinguished by the popular acceptance of the truth tersely expressed in it. Crystal (1997) sees proverbs as the nuggets of popular wisdom expressed in the form of succinct sayings in every culture.

Nwoga (1975) observes that proverbs are "the wisdom of many and the wit of one, the

experience and wisdom of several ages gathered and summed up in one expression and as the edged tools of speech". The books of proverbs in the Holy Bible is the wit of Solomon the King, and as Nwoga (1975) has rightly noted in his definitions proverbs portray a great economy of words and are a vehicle of traditional wisdom. This wisdom contained in proverb stands the test of time. Longman dictionary of contemporary English simply defines proverbs as "a short well known statement that contains advice about life in general" the advanced learners dictionary defines a proverb as "a well known phrase which gives advice or says something that is generally true" the above dictionary definition of proverbs shows that a proverb is a short statement that is aimed at counseling about life and that such statements are usually axiomatic in the society. This view is maintained by Mieder (1985, 1993) and Eagle (1970).

Her view about proverb shows that a proverb is a literary or theoretical device that is generally used to express something that is accepted as truth and well known by people. Proverbs form an integral part of Oral literature in Africa. Proverbs of a particular language are the embodiment of the wisdom and ethics of that linguistic community. Obiechima (1975) in Egbe (2004:4) provides a comprehensive definition of proverbs thus: Proverbs are kernels, which contain the wisdom of the traditional people. They are philosophical and moral exposition shrunk to a few words, and form a mnemonic device in societies in which everything worth knowing and relevant to day-to-day life has to be committed to memory.... The use of proverb is one more way in which the individual expresses the primacy of society. The man who proverbialises is putting his individual in a traditional context, enforcing his personal point of view by objectifying its validity, and indirectly pays tribute to himself as a possessor of traditional wisdom. Akporobaro (2003) definition will be accepted for this work, he says "proverbs have been and remain a most powerful and effective instrument for transmission of culture, social morality, manners and ideas of a people from one generation to another". He also mentions that proverbs reveal the thought, wisdom, and verbal artist. This definition will help in this work, in that, he looked at proverbs based on their influences on our cultural lives and the influence they have on people; which is what this work will be putting into consideration.

### 2.1.2 Origin of the Word 'Proverb'

It is not easy to trace the origin of proverbs. Etymologically, the word "proverb" originates from the Latin word "proverbial" where 'pro' means "for" and 'verbial' means "word". The term proverbial implies that proverb is what is used instead of a plain word. Bryant (1989) traces the origin of proverbs to "the times of Aristotle that grew up unconstructively with human race". His view is closely shared by Whiting (1932) who regards proverbs as "great antiquity constantly applicable and appealing, because it bears resemblance of universal truth".

The origin of proverbs can also be traced from the medieval times when they were found in many societies and in different forms of literatures. In England, for example, several collections of proverbs were made. These collections were associated with famous names like Alfred Cato and Aristotle. The most important of these were proverbs of Alfred (1981) and the witty proverbs of Hendyng (1983). In the 18th century, "proverbs dramatiques" flourished in France. The development of proverbs was also quite remarkable among the Spanish.

In Spain, almost everything in context and object had its own proverb. These proverbs were full of shrewd sense and knowledge of human nature and rich in grave Spanish humor (Chambers Encyclopedia 1969: 11-26). Italian proverbs were equally remarkable for their wit and humor. These proverbs were characterized by brilliant epigrammatic neatness of expression and distinction. In Arabia, Arabic proverbs maintained a high quality especially in clear expression. There were also evidence for the existence of proverbs among the Persians, Turks and the Hebrew as resource for any meaningful dialogue.

The Holy Bible contains a good number of proverbs and indeed, a full chapter devoted to proverbs. Some of the concern family relations, matters of etiquette in social relationships need for self-control, humility, patience, respect for the poor and loyalty to friends. Much of it has to do practically with everyday concern. From the above, we can observe that proverbs are as old as speech and human race.

### 2.1.3 Domains of Use

Some people are so gifted in the use of proverbs, that they hardly say much without proverbs. For such people, proverb spares them the energy they would have used to say something worth two pages. Proverbs are also a way out when expressions become difficult.

Proverbs can be used to give warning. An offended person would simply get to the house of the offender and speak a proverb and return to his house. The proverbs will speak volumes that would push the offender to swing into action immediately to beg for forgiveness or take a stance of confrontation. Proverbs are widely used at social gatherings like traditional marriage ceremonies, village/town convocations, age grade meetings, settlement of disputes, all kinds of celebrations. At home, parents use proverbs when advising their children and relations. People have realized that proverbs speak better than volumes of ordinary prose.

Similarly, to other forms of literature, proverbs have also been used as valuable units of language in drama and films. This is true from the days of classical Greek works to old French to Shakespeare to 19<sup>th</sup> century Spanish, to today. The use of proverbs in drama and film today is still found in languages around the world, such as Yoruba and Ebera. A film that makes rich use of proverbs is *Forest Gump*, known for both using and creating proverbs. Other studies of the use of proverbs include 'Sango' in the film 'Sango'.

In music proverbs are often poetic in and of themselves, making them ideally suited for adapting into songs. Proverbs have been used in music from opera to country to hip-hop. Proverbs have also been used in music to other languages such as the Akan language, the Igede language and Spanish. In addition to proverbs being used in songs, some rock bands have used parts of proverbs as their names, such as the Rolling Stones, Bad Company, The Mother of Invention, Feast or Famine, Mice or Men and so on. There have been at least two groups that called themselves "The Proverbs", and there is a hip-hop performer in South Africa known as "Proverb".

Also, in visual form, people around the world have recorded proverbs in virtual form. This has been done in two ways. First, proverbs have been written to be displayed, often in decorative manner, such as on pottery, cross-stitch, morals and so on. Secondly, proverbs have often been visually depicted in a variety of media, including paintings, etchings, and sculpture. Jakob Jordaens painted a plague with a proverb about drunkenness, above a drunk man wearing a crown, titled "The King Drinks".

Sometimes well-known proverbs are pictured on objects, without a text actually quoting the proverb, such as the 'three wise monkeys who remind us, hear no evil, see no evil, speak no evil. When the proverb is well known, viewers are able to recognize the proverb and understand the image appropriately, but if viewers do not recognize the proverb, much of the effect of the image is lost.

Also in Cartoons, cartoonists, both editorial and pure humorists, have often used proverbs, sometimes primarily building on the text, sometimes primarily on the situation visually, the best cartoons combining both. Not surprisingly, cartoonists often twist proverbs such as visually depicting a proverb literally or twisting the text as an anti-proverb. An example with all of these traits is a cartoon showing a waitress delivering two plates with worms on them, telling the customers, 'two early bird specials...here we go'. In religion many proverbs from around the world address matters of ethnics and expected behaviour. Therefore, it is not surprising that proverbs are often important texts in religions. The most obvious example is the 'Book of Proverbs in the Bible'. Additional proverbs have also been coined to support religious values, such as the following from Dari of Afghanistan: In childhood you are playful, in youth you are lustful, in old age you re fable, so when will you before God be worshipful? Clearly proverbs in religion are not limited to monotheists; among the Badaga of India, there is a traditional proverb "catch hold of and join with the man who has placed sacred ash on himself". Proverbs are widely associated with large religions that draws from sacred books, but they are also used for religious purposes among groups with their own traditional religions, such as the Guji Oromo. We can continue to mention different domains where proverbs can be used of which time and chance will not allow us. It is important at this juncture to say that most of the activities that humanbeings participate are all embedded with proverbs.

#### **2.1.4 Universal Characteristics of Proverbs**

We cannot exhaustively treat the characteristics of proverbs, because, what may be described as the features of a proverb in one context may not apply in another. The features outlined below are the universal characteristics of all observable proverbs in all languages.

The style and structural contents of proverbs are uniquely different from everyday expressions. One of the first things one notices is their figurative mode of communication



which Seattle (1969) refers to as “social use of metaphors”. He further describes proverbs as “manifestations in traditional, artistic and relatively short form of metaphorical, reasoning used in an intersectional context to serve certain purposes”. Commenting on the style and structure of proverbs, Finnegan (1976) explains further that “proverbs are picked out first and most obviously as being short and secondly by the fact that even where the wording itself is not absolutely fixed, at least the main structural pattern is accepted as an appropriate one for the purpose”. This postulation indicates that the meaning of proverbs is tied to the cultural conventions.

Apart from pragmatic competence, tenseness and relative fixity discussed above as features of proverbs, they are also characterized by some kind of poetic quality in style. They may not have word translation. This is exemplified in the following Epira proverbs: (1) Epira proverbs says

“àvábé ávuta òvàyí kù ìda, òzà ọ yí yé òní ínè àzi

Together lizard lie cover stone one is not know ones stomach pain

All lizards lie on their bellies; one cannot know the one with stomach-ache.

Meaning: it is difficult to detect or identify the guilty from a group of suspects.

In addition to the above general characteristics of proverbs, they have both the surface structure and deep meaning. The surface structure may fulfill the grammatical requirements of subject, verbs, object and so on, and yet have myriad meanings.

### 2.1.5 Functions of Proverbs

Generally, proverbs perform various functions in the society. The function of proverbs in this context means the importance of proverbs in the act of communication. Based on this premise, we can identify the following functions of proverbs.

One of the major functions of proverbs is that they represent people’s philosophy. It is through proverbs that a whole range of human experiences can be commented on and analyzed, generalizations and principles expressed and the general implications brought to mind. Finnegan shares his view that “proverbs make use of tribal laws or illustrate every belief and prescribe piece of behavior in a direct literal way”. Proverbs are used to inform, advice, educate, warn, and encourage the people. Closely related, proverbs can be used in settlement or management of judicial matters. Yankah (1986) postulates that; in the exercise of sophisticated verbal skills, the domain of arbitration provides ample evidence, partly

because proverbs often are generated by stress and conflict. Also, because it is within the domain that the power of rhetoric is best put to use. Here, litigants may argue their case corroborating their argument with the skillful use of proverbs and the prosecutors, elders and members of the jury may reply, examine cases and pronounce judgment in proverbial language. This view is shared by Adeiyongo (2001) that “proverbs help in the settlement of legal decisions and the resolution of conflicts”. In Indonesia, proverbs function in arguing out legal matters. According to Loeb (1952) “the real law of western Indonesia existed in former times, and still does to a considerable extent, in the form of proverbs”. Writing specifically on the legal function of proverbs among Africans, Herzog and Blooah (1936) have declared that: “the Africans are very legalistically minded since almost any act has legalistic aspect, there is hardly a discussion of consequence (whether or not actually in court) in which proverbs are not employed.

The role of proverbs in the area of education cannot be over emphasized, those proverbs are used quite formally and consciously as vehicle to achieve specific ends, for instance, candidates are given an option between a proverb and other topics to write on in the West African Senior School Certificate Examinations and Senior School Certificate Examinations organized by National Examination Council. This is usually the first section of English language, which tests the candidate’s skills in continuous writing.

Proverbs are also given specific function in the Holy Bible. Through them, one gets wisdom and instruction to perceive the words of understanding. They enabled King Solomon to dispense justice, judgment and equity. They are the words that educate the fool and make the wise wiser.

Apart from the above functions both Bascom (1954) and Arewa (1970) agree that proverbs perform such functions as educating the young, certification of loaded statement, giving points and adding color to ordinary and important conversations.

One of the basic functions of proverb in the Ebira is that it is essential to life, without them, the language would be but a skeleton without flesh, body and soul that is, proverbs serves to warn, instruct, direct, rebuke and so on.

### 2.1.6 Sociolinguistic Factors or Variables in the use of Proverbs

Variation is a characteristic of language: there is more than one way of saying the same thing with the use of proverbs. Speakers may vary in pronunciation (accent), word choice (lexicon), or morphology and syntax (Ronald 2006).

But we are going to look at variation here in terms of the usage of proverbs among different sets of people. The use of proverbs may vary in terms of age, gender, peer groups, religious bodies, ethnic groups and so on.

It should be noted that, it is easier for adults to distinguish between proverbs than kids i.e. an adult could easily apply a proverb to a situation and at the same time interpret the meaning than children. Proverb variation does not equate with language ungrammaticality, but speakers are still (often unconsciously) sensitive to what is and what is not possible in their native dialect (Gyekye 1996).

Variation in proverb is a core concept in sociolinguistics. Sociolinguists investigate whether elements of the surrounding linguistic context promote or inhibit the usage of certain structures in terms of proverbs.

Studies of proverb variation and its correlation with sociological categories has been studied by authors such as Williams Labov's (1963) paper "The social motivation of a sound change", that led to the foundation of sociolinguistics as a subfield of linguistics.

What follows is the researcher takes a look at some of the major factors that determine the use of proverbs in the society:

#### i. Age

There are several types of age-based variation, one may see within a population. They are proverbs of a sub-group with membership typically characterized by a specific age range, age-graded variation, and indications of linguistic change in progress. Between the ages of 10-18, it is expected that children at this level should understand certain proverbs, for them to be able to communicate effectively, wherever they find themselves and this will go a long way to help them understand their indigenous proverbs whenever they are being used. For example

- 2i. actions speak louder than voice
- ii. all good things come to an end
- iii. it's better to be late than to be late

- iv all roads lead to Rome
- v all that glitters is not gold
- vi always put your best foot forward
- vii an empty vessel makes much noise

The researcher can keep going on mentioning a whole lot of age based proverbs, but it is also very paramount that we note that some of the aforementioned proverbs are not only used by a particular age group, but are saying that is easier for people between the same age group to use the above proverbs in their conversations.

## ii. **Gender**

Gender refers to sexual identity in relation to culture and society (Lakoff 1975) The African continent is known for its rich oral traditions. Proverbs are the most widely and commonly used in this tradition of oral arts. The influence of proverbs on African thought is so strong to the point that even the concept of gender is so persistently carved from it. According, to Setuba (2002:1) in Africa, “the proverb is regarded as a noble genre of African oral tradition that enjoys the prestige of a custodian of a people’s wisdom and philosophy of life”.

Finnegan (1970:390) also posits that “in many African culture a feeling for language, for imagery, and for the expression of abstract idea through compressed and allusive phraseology comes out particularly clear in proverbs”. Finnegan’s idea is reflected in this Igbo statement which says “proverbs are the palm oil with which words are eaten”, Oha (1998:87). If proverbs are the palm oil with which words are eaten, it is logical then for words that portray gender to be embraced in proverbs. Proverbs, therefore, to a large extent form the basis of African thought, including gender construction.

All societies across the world are generally male dominated. Patriarchy is viewed as legitimate by me, because it keeps women in subordinate positions to the advantage of men who do not want to lose the privileged roles, and therefore, the power their gender as men gives them, including access to power and the scarce resources available to all. An Ebira proverb entrenches this idea when it says, “when a woman buys a gun, it is kept in a man’s room”. This provebs shows that

women do not have the capacity and ability to manage valueable property, an indication that they must play insignificant and subordinate roles to men with regards to property ownership.

**iii. Religion**

Religion is another major factor in the usage of proverbs. In the Christendom for instance, the Bible clearly identified a chapter as the book of proverb believed to be written by King Solomon. The first section (chapter 1-9) consists of an initial invitation to youn men to take up the course of wisdom, ten instructions and five poems on personified women wisdom. Proverbs 10:1-22:16, with 375 says, consist of two parts, the first constrasting the wise man and the fool (or the righteous and the wicked) the second addressing wise and foolish speech. We can categorically state here that the proverbs we use in the churches are quit different from the ones we use in our day to day affairs. So religious also has given priority to the use of proverbs because it could actually get one to understand fully words that may be very difficult to understand.

## **2.2 Theoretical Framework**

The Researcher used Relevance Theory approach propounded by Sperber and Wilson (1995) for the analysis of data.the theory is relevant is analyzing proverbsconsidering when applied to the study of proverbs in other languages therefore the theory was used in chapter four of this work as pertaining to the domain where proverbs are used in the Ebira community.

Relevance Theory (RT from now onwards) defines communication as a process involving two different mechanisms of information-processing devices. The first one is about the modification of the physical environment of the hearer. For Sperber and Wilson (1995), in oral communication the hearer always tries to modify the hearer's environment to entertain some particular thoughts that the speaker wants to share with the hearer, which is, then, the second device to create/build representations similar to the ones of the hearer. With these two approaches, Sperber and Wilson (1995) proposed two questions: what is communicated and how is communication achieved?

Hence, pragmatics assumes that what is communicated is the speaker's meaning that conveys a set of assumptions expressed either explicitly or implicitly. Decoding will be the main device to achieve explicit communication, but implicit communication is mainly inferred.

As communication is a matter of degree, some assumptions can be more or less manifest to an individual depending on whether it is non-verbal or verbal communication. Despite the fact that Sperber and Wilson never approached the study of proverbs, from the point of view of the researcher, the theory can still be used for proverb analysis, since their meaning relies mainly on the identification of the speaker's intention and the inference of implicit communication rather than decoding what is explicitly stated.

Until this point, we can say that RT agrees with Grice's main originality, that as long as there is some way of recognizing the communicator's intentions, then communication is possible (Sperber and Wilson, 1995:25). However, Sperber and Wilson propose a definition for 'relevance' in as: "assumption is relevant in a context if and only if it has some contextual effect in the context" (Sperber and Wilson 1995:122). Thus, this definition can be applied to the analysis of proverbs since having some contextual effect is a necessary condition for the relevance of a proverb.

Furthermore, Sperber and Wilson (1995:119) also assume that people are able to identify relevant from irrelevant information or, what is more, more relevant and less relevant information (Sperber and Wilson, 1995:119). It does not mean that relevance cannot be achieved by expressing irrelevant information, because expressing something irrelevant might be very relevant too. In fact, what is explicitly stated in proverbs commonly seems irrelevant to the context at first because of the mismatch between the literal meaning and the given context. For instance, if two interlocutors are talking about a new situation they have to face and they do not know how and one of them says: "when in Rome, do as Romans do" (Fergusson, 2000:36), it might seem irrelevant at first since they are not in Rome or talking about Romans. However, it achieves relevance due to the familiarity of this proverb and its figurative meaning.

Why do we choose Relevance Theory to explain proverbs and not the Gricean approach instead? Grice's Cooperative Principles has been applied to the study of proverbs because the hearer expects the speaker to be cooperative. Although Grice never apply proverbs in his theory, they would imply a flouting of the maxims of relevance-make your contribution relevant for the context-and quality-do not say what you believe to be false-since the speaker would say something blatantly false or irrelevant. For instance, in example 3

"Hasta los gatos quieren zapatos"

'Even the cats want shoes'

(Junceda, 1995:249) would be nonsensical since cats and shoes have no apparent relation. Thus, from Grice's point of view, the hearer would be impossible to recover what the speaker really means (a criticism of people who ask for unnecessary things or something that they do not deserve) but he/she would only interpret it literally ('cats want shoes'). However, the non-literal or figurative use is something related to what the speaker means when using the piece of language. Thus, the non-literal meaning of proverbs goes beyond its literal meaning. Despite the fact that Grice creates the maxims and established some rules giving for granted the cooperation between interlocutors, communicators do not always stick to norms, "but may also violate them to achieve particular effects: and the audience uses its knowledge of the norms in interpreting communicative behavior" (Sperber and Wilson, 1995:162). It means that, even though speakers use tools such as metaphorical languages, irony, non-finished sentences and all kind of language phenomena, hearers are able to recognize their intentions achieving communication. So a distinction has to be made between pragmatic inferences involved in implicated assumptions.

This theory reflects in this work, in that, it has been able to show that apportioning relevance to proverbs cannot be overemphasized. An individual cannot just decide to use a proverb except a situation warrants it.

It should also be noted that there is no human in existence that doesn't bear a name. This theory has enabled us to know why people bear certain names and what are the possible behaviours that should be accepted from the bearer of such names especially our native names.

Benjamin (2001) in his work stated that in using the Relevance Theory for proverbial analysis, that the communicator and addressee do not need to mutually know the contextual assumptions stored in his memory. He must simply be able to construct them, either on the basis of what he can perceive in his immediate physical environment or on the basis of assumptions already stored in the memory.

Relevance theory is a wide-ranging framework (or research programme) for the study of not only proverbs but cognition, it was devised primarily in order to provide an account of communication that is psychologically realistic and emphatically plausible.

Relevance theory has been the leading theory for research in pragmatics. There has been work within the relevance-theoretic framework on such central topics as scalar implicatures, Carston, 1998; Breheny, Katsos & Williams (2006), non-verbal communication, Wharton

(2009), the referential/ attributive distinction, Rouchota and Casrton (1997) and lastly irony by Sperber and Wilson (2006). All the above authors were able to do an outstanding work using the relevance theory as a basis for their work to bring out the real meaning of what they are discussing.

### **2.3 Empirical Review**

The study of proverbs is an exciting area of scholarship for a very long time. Its nature, function, and rhetorical use for speech embellishment have attracted the attention of many scholars from different linguistic backgrounds and fields of human study. In this review of literature below, we will show some trends in the study of proverbs carried out by different scholars.

Ojaide's (2007) *Urhobo Proverbs and Maxims* is an important step in the study of Urhobo proverbs in particular. In this study, Ojaide states the use of proverbs and its connection to the Urhobo people. He goes further to classify Urhobo proverbs into precolonial and post-colonial proverbs, which to a large extent, can also be found in the Epira society. Pre-colonial proverbs are those which arose from traditional living condition. To him, these proverbs adopt the traditional mode of knowing and doing things. Post-colonial proverbs resulted from the new life that came with the contact of the Europeans and their values. He further attests to the fact that whether traditional or modern, "proverbs give colour and intellectual spice to the Urhobo language. So many proverbs attest not only to the richness of the language but also to the various experiences of the people. Despite the importance nature of this work to the study of Epira proverbs, it is descriptive and informative. Ojaide's study is not methodical, as he did not subject Urhobo proverbs to any linguistic or literary analysis. Therefore, it creates a gap in scholarship.

Elsewhere, Tadi (2007) takes a pedagogical approach to study proverbs in Tangale society in Gombe State in Northern Nigeria. He argues that proverbs have multiple functions, most of which can be summed under education. He makes the point that formal education in modern times makes use of proverbs as a pedagogical tool citing the study of the grammatical function and communicative effect of the use of proverbs in classrooms by the three major ethnic languages in Nigeria (Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba). As can be gleaned from this study, Tadi (2007) state the obvious, that proverbs all over the world are pedagogic in nature. He did not tell us the social use of proverbs in the Tangle society. At the same time, while the



pedagogic role of proverbs cannot be overlooked in any study of proverbs, the researcher makes it more obvious in this study through the sociolinguistic theory.

In the same vein, Odebunmi (2008) examines the pragmatic function of crisis motivated proverbs in Ola Rotimi's "The Gods are not to Blame" by applying the pragmatic act theory of Mey (2001). He identifies two types of crisis motivated proverbs: Social crisis-motivated proverbs and political crisis-motivated proverbs. To him, these are characterized by practices such as counseling, challenging, persuading, encouraging, threatening and admitting among others. He concludes that, studying proverbs from pragmatic perspective gives insight into the paramiological tool and has a pedagogic function. This work differs from Tadi's by being an analysis first from the pragmatic approach and second, it is a study from scripted document; thus, the reality of field information in real life situation is absent. Like Odebunmi, Emike (2012) view the study of Afemai proverbs from the pragmatic approach (Afemai is a language spoken in Etsako and some parts of Owan in Edo state). It differs slightly from Odebunmi's work by relying on the pragmatic theories of implicature, presupposition, mutual contextual belief and knowledge of the world among others. His aim in this study is to elucidate how Afemai speakers exhibit pragmatic prowess in the use of Afemai proverbs.

Adopting the socio-semiotic theoretical approach as espoused by Renkerha (2004), Adepoju (2009) explores further the place of proverbs in conflict resolution. He drew his proverbs mainly from proverbs that touch on conflict and conflict resolution in Yoruba language. He concludes that, apart from cultural values, proverbs carry rhetorical strokes that give pragmatic forces to their interpretation through the linguistic and rhetorical devices used in proverbs. Though, an exciting work since it relates to the society, it is only restricted to the society. There is much more to proverbs in society than conflict resolution. Related to the meaning of proverbs in society is Olubode Sowe's (2009) work on "Interpreting Yoruba proverbs: Some Hearer Strategies". Its main focus is on how hearers of proverbs arrive at meaning when they hear proverbs. His aim is to determine the cues deposited in proverbs to enable the hearer decide the meaning of the proverb. However, a careful study and analysis of proverbs in some languages show that there may be so cues resident in the proverb to decide the meaning.

From a purely linguistic perspective, Mensa (2010) undertakes a morpho-syntactic description of Efik Proverbs. Efik is a language spoken in Southern Cross River State. He observes that, proverbs are morpho-syntactic construction of different kinds, structures and

functions. His linguistic investigation of the internal structures of Efik proverbs highlights aspects of Efik language and culture which are on the verge of extinction. He argues further that proverbs do not only have stylistic and sociolinguistic relevance; they have structural relationship which they enter into in the lexicon. The major aim of the work as he states, is to preserve a valuable part of Efik language, culture and literary form.

Furthermore, Lamidi (2008) undertakes a comparative approach of Yoruba and Igbo proverbs with emphasis on structure and texture of proverbs in both languages. His data were drawn from scripted sources: literary works and scholarly publication from Yoruba and Igbo scholars. According to him, his findings reveal that proverbs from both languages have similar structures. Therefore, he concludes by over-generalizing that proverbs are universal in structure and texture. However, the researcher considers this conclusion faulty. First, his source of data is not authentic, that is, not from real life situations. Also, the relativity between the structures and texture of Igbo and Yoruba language is not enough to make a universal statement.

Proverbs have been discussed extensively in narrative fiction from the literary perspective Obiechina (1992) discovered what he calls “narrative proverbs” in African fiction. These proverbs are autonomous stories that appear in different genres and narrative register...they function as images, metaphors, and symbols and advance the meanings and formal qualities of the narrative in which they occur.

Alimi (2012) discusses the use of proverbs in Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart* and *Arrow of God*. In his work, he examines how Achebe uses proverbs to delineate his characters, how proverbs are used generally in the literary texts and their interpretation. As mentioned earlier, these works are limited to the analysis of proverbs in the fictional world of the novels, though they are interesting and relevant.

Mujidat (2014) stress that proverbs are deeply rooted in African culture and almost everybody who understands his/her indigenous language is living carrier of proverbs. Mibiti (1995) has contended that the language of proverbs has a rich vocabulary of words, symbols, pictures, allusions, association and comparison. He argues further that proverbs are drawn from the whole society. Perhaps, it can be argued that proverbs mean different things to different people. Proverbs are symbols of communication packed into short sentences or even anecdotes and stories, sometimes carved on wood, stone or other materials, or even sung or danced (Mibiti 1995). Proverbs are drawn from and referred to all activities of society,

natural objective and phenomena. In many African languages, proverbs act as catalyst of knowledge, wisdom, philosophy, ethics and morals which provokes further reflection and call for a deeper thinking and consideration of issues. Perhaps, it is on this basis that the case may be made for the reexamination of the pedagogical values of proverbs in socializing the youth about the norms and values of the society and re-position them for the challenges of the global world, more so, a tree that has no root will soon bow to the world.

Thus, Owomoyela (2012) opines that language development and socialization among the Yoruba people of South-Western Nigeria are done through the use of proverbs. He avers that the Yoruba people “approach with deliberate care, taking great pains to avoid careless or thoughtless statement, whose damage might outlast lifetimes”. Also, among the Igbo of Southeastern Nigeria, Achebe (1958:13) while underscoring the importance of proverbs to Igbo world-view and culture states in his maiden novel, “Things fall Apart”, that “proverbs are the oil which words are eaten”.

Among Hausa and other ethnic groups constituting Nigeria, proverbs are a veritable tool for education in values, culture and social activities, especially, in the indigenous educational practices. It could, therefore be asserted that prior to the European invasion of the African continent of which Nigeria is a part, indigenous educational systems existed. Mara (2006) mentions that African traditional education apart from focusing on vocational training aimed at inducting the members of society into activities are made of thought that conformed to the norms and values of the society. Mara further observes that African societies were noted for their cultural heritage which was preserved and transmitted from generation to generation through a system of traditional education. According to Okoro (2010), traditional education took place within the family by means of stories and proverbs as the occasion presented itself and acquisition of functional life skills. Children were taught the virtues of living together peacefully under the same roof. The principle of community living centered around themes of moderation, solidarity, respect for truth, and willingness to work and suffer for itself and community advancement, respect for authority, sense for honesty, modesty, tolerance, sense of goodness and kindness, love of one’s neighbor, respect for life and so on (Ntahobari and Ndayiziga 2003, Okoro, 2010, Falade, Adeniyi and Olowo, 2011).

Aesthetically speaking, a proverb may be used to show joy, to mourn, to praise, to indicate failure or to warn. Therefore, apart from the literal and linguistic contexts, the social context of any proverb determines its suitability of use in a particular situation (Bashir and Idris-

Amali, 2012:495).

However, the aesthetic as seen in the context of usage is of paramount interest to this discourse. The elements of choice of words and imagery will be revealing factors of traditions, value or culture of an individual. In general, “proverbs evolved with the growth and development of the society, it reflects diverse aspect of people’s culture, belief, tradition, social, political institutions, ethnics, commerce, health etc. indeed proverbs encapsulate the world view of a people and serve as a means of arousing, defining, manifesting and establishing the expectations, aspiration and consciousness of a people. Kwame acknowledge this aspect and says ‘(proverbs) contains some thought, which expressed in words (and which) all who are of the people recognized at once as something which all the instinct of their lives and thoughts and traditions tell them to be true to their own nature.

Tiav (2013) observes, that some proverbs essentially contradict each other. For this reason, they are easily misappropriated by the unskilled and troublesome individuals. Consequently, regulatory proverbs are used to check the effects of the expressive proverbs. He used the linguistics repertoire of the speakers to get his data. Looking at the Tiv proverbs through this framework of categorization (unskilled and mischievous) makes it obvious that the seeming contradiction does not even exist in the culture. He examined some Tiv proverbs in given context and classified them into expressive and regulatory proverbs. The work also resolves the contradiction by revealing it to be self-regulatory network of proverbial system, which is capable of curbing the excesses, misapplication and the unguarded use of the others. The work, therefore, creates awareness that both expressive and regulatory proverbs exists side by side in the language and whenever an expressive proverb is to be used, the user should know that it might have another proverb regulating it.

Quoting Yusuf and Methangwane (2013), Odebunmi (2008) defines proverbs as “relatively short expressions, which are usually associated with wisdom and are used to perform a variety of social functions”. A simple and concrete saying popularly known and repeated, this expresses the truth, based on common sense, or the practical experience of humanity. They are often Metaphorical. A proverb that describes a basic rule of conduct may also be known as a Maxim. If a proverb is distinguished by particularly good phrasing, it may be known as an Aphorism.

Maxims and aphorisms are synonyms of proverbs. Although they suggest here that proverbs “are often borrowed from similar languages, and sometimes come to the present through

more than one language". The researcher wishes to assert that this may not apply in the case of West Africa. Even as the article acknowledges, West Africa is rich in Proverbs and that there are some people or groups, as in North America who do not have so much proverbs. What we suggest here is that if there are similarities in the form and content of proverbs in some cultures, it could be similarity in motifs and not necessarily borrowing. Just as the human anatomy is the same whether white, brown or black, features of human language should have some similarities as indicated in the Chomskyian concept of Universal Grammar. In addition, it is clear that proverbs are meant to perform some social functions. Though proverbs are basically poetical paremiological literature shows that they can also be non-poetical. Emuobonuvie (2010), listed some of the stylistic features of poetry observed in proverbs they include;

- (i) Metaphors: haste makes waste; more haste less speed
- (ii) Alliteration: forgive and forget
- (iii) Parallelism: no venture no success
- (iv) Rhyme: when that is away, the mice will play
- (v) Ellipsis: once beaten twice shy, a good wine needs no bush
- (vi) Hyperbole: no peace without war, all is fair in love and war
- (vii) Personification: experience is the best teacher, hunger is the best cook

Proverbs are context-dependent. This means that the context of use determines the meaning a proverb conveys. In Walt Disney's *Mulan* when the Chinese Emperor was told by his captor to bow to him, he restored saying "No matter how much the wind howls the mountain can never bow to it". It was clear that the Emperor was prepared for the worst.

Proverbs are spiritual. They are taken from the deep recesses of the sender and go deep into the innermost being of the receiver. They are powerful weapons of war as is characteristic of chants and incantations hence the "unlearned" will not be able to decipher the meaning of what is being said. Typical examples can be found in Ola Rotimi's "the gods are not to blame".

On-line sources states that the Nazi's used proverbs as tools for propaganda; that in academics, proverbs have been used for the study of abstract reasoning of children; acculturation of immigration; intelligence; differing mental processes in mental illness; and cultural themes.

Quoting Finnegan (1994) and Achebe (in Ogbaa 1981) Odebunmi (2008) explains that "in

terms of function proverbs in Africa have been observed to ‘occur on all occasions when language is used for communication either as art or as tool’. He further states that they are used in oratory, counseling, judging, embellishing speeches and enriching conversations”. Two examples he cited from the Yoruba culture to illustrate this:

Example (4) **Omo beere, osi beere.**

Many children, much poverty

‘One who has plenty children invites poverty’

(5) **Bi oko ba moju aya tan, alarina a yeba**

If husband knows face wife finish intruder will influence

‘If a husband knows his wife, an intruder will not have influence over them’

The moment a love relationship/marriage is initiated/contracted; the matchmaker steps aside. The proverb as exemplified in (3) touches on an aspect, of the socio-economic values of the Yoruba. It simply suggests that having a few children, and by so doing, planning one’s family, helps to rule out poverty. This proverb has proved particularly useful in the SouthWestern Nigeria electronic media campaigns on family planning by nongovernmental organizations and hospitals.

In example (4), the proverb reveals the practice in the marriage culture of the Yoruba, and specifies a norm that is associated with the institution. That, the matchmaker’s duty ends at the initiation of the relationship or contracting of the marriage, implies that the Yoruba believe that no external influence is, or should be, allowed in the marital lives of couples.

In the analysis of proverbs in Ola Rotimi’s “The gods are not to Blame”, Odebunmi (2008) pointed out instance where proverbs are used in counseling and persuading.

At the level of interpersonal communication, proverbs are used in such a way as to say things gently and in a veiled way. For example, it was reported in the literature that in the 18th and 19th centuries, Russian proverbs were used by the masses to show their displeasure over the way they were being treated.

Niyi (2010) argues that proverb remains an oral form with constant relevance to modern man. In his work on “Yoruba Green-Proverbs In English: A Green Study of Niyi Osundare’s Midlife (2010). To him, proverb is a powerful and effective instrument for transmission of

culture, social morality and ideas of a people from one generation to another. Proverb is a graphic statement that expresses a truth of experience, gives freshness to speech, reveals the verbal techniques of the past and is a model of compresses or forceful language for the speaker and the verbal artist. To Niyi (2010), the form of the proverb is akin to the category of figurative and aesthetically conceived forms of expressions like the metaphor, simile, hyperbole, wit, and so on. The poet deploys items of nature like fauna, flora and landscape to promote his social and aesthetic vision of the natural environment. It is note worthy also to appreciate how he contextually re-conceptualizes and craftily transfers nature-Yoruba proverbs into English. His use of lexical compounding is the sustaining poetic nerve on which metaphorization animates and runs through the vein of the entire poem.

Gbenga (2006) argues that like the thesis of the descriptive theories of reference in the philosophy of language, that for every name, there is a description that correlates with it, there is also a description that correlates Yoruba proverbs and name, the proverb also helps in unveiling the catalysts that arouse, define and manifest role expectations, aspirations and consciousness of the bearer of the name. This awareness can indeed end some of the root causes of social vices in contemporary Yoruba society. The severed link between names and proverbs that retard the recognition of the veritable name-proverb relation, denies concerning the cultural elements that define and work towards meeting certain socially approved expectations and aspirations in life. Gbanga (2006) recommended that the seemingly severed link between proverbs and names should be restored to deliberate cultural re-orientation as a way to recoup the erstwhile vibrant virtues and values that would help build and develop a peculiar and virile Yoruba society, especially in these days of rapid globalization.

Also, Osaba (2014) states that socio-linguistically, the content of Yoruba proverbs can be classified under various categories and headings. Two major headings (although there are many more) have been identified and studied. These are “Educational Role” and “Rhetorical Role”. Under the former, the content of Yoruba proverbs includes beliefs and philosophy, moral, individual and collective roles. And under the latter, the content includes warning and advice, allusions and anecdotes, private ends, settlement of disputes/conflicts and entertainment.

The preliterate Ife society relies on proverbs as one of the means to educate youth on their religions, beliefs, philosophy and morality. This is well illustrated in the content of “He who witnesses how Sango (god of thunder) enters the ground will never abuse Oba Koso (the

king did not hang himself)". And "The only way to avoid a pointed stick from piecing into one's eyes is to walk away from it, at a distance". And another says "manner is the beauty of man". There is moral in "to remove the pot, the kolanut tree is cut, to remove the bearded, a child's head is cut". According to Osaba (2014), a good number of Yoruba Proverbs (Ile-Ife), in which the didactic aspect is secondary, proverb serve as Rhetoric and are commonly used to win an argument, to establish a fact. There are those with domestic instruments and other elements in its content. Consider "when a long gatherer collects his logs, it is on his head that he carries them" or "As long as there are lice on the head, there will be blood on the tip of fingernail". This and many more Osaba did, to contribute his own quota to the study of proverb in Yoruba language.

Timothy (2015) reveals that the fact that, all the proverbs in Yoruba are ruled governed and that proverbs are not just said, they have the structures which they follow. The proverb that the speaker intends to use will dictate which syntactic structure the form will take when it is said. He therefore posited that *dà* as a question marker is used to elicit information on concrete rather than abstract things. It is also said in his work that various structures within which Yoruba proverbs are said bring out the aesthetics of the language.

Egbe (2016) discusses Ejagham Proverbs, their Meaning and the Context in which they are used. Ejagham people known to outsiders like Efik, as the Ekoi are found in the South Eastern part of Nigeria and in Western Cameroun (Essein 1987:29)

According to her, proverbs are always true and they apply to one human community, some, if not all, can be borrowed and used in alien communities when stating facts and giving advice in situations similar to those in which they are usually employed in their societies of origin, the Ejagham communities

Egbe (2016), believes Ejagham speakers hardly use any proverbs at all in the language, which is the reason why most of their speeches lack the seasoning, usually provided by proverbs in utterances. While speaking instead of using an Ejagham proverb, an English equivalent of is used. For her if this is not checked, the consequence is that in future an Ejagham person may never know or use a proverb while speaking in Ejagham, since the older generation that now use them may have passed away.

Omolosho (2012), studies Yoruba proverbs from the linguistic pragmatic approach. He argues that structural semantics alone cannot account for the meaning of proverbs. And that since proverbs encode the language user's worldview, contextual variables must be deloyed



with linguistic resources to decode the meaning of proverbs in real discourse situation with the understanding of their structure and the immediate and wider context of use. This will go a long way to project culture of the user and promote inter-ethnic relation and peace. This are sociolinguistic fact in the study which in a way relates to our community. But his incorporation of the structural approach and non use of sociolinguistic theories creates a gap to be filled.

Again, Fasika (2006) explores Yoruba proverbs relationship with names as an attempt towards contributing to the development of national consciousness. This study takes a critical review of the nature of proverbs and explores the dialectical relationship between Yoruba proverbs and names. This is an exciting study but limited in scope. It considers a small area of proverbs: names in Yoruba proverbs.

From a critical discourse perspective, Hussein (2005) analyses African proverbs in creating and perpetuating gender culture. Sexist proverbs were analysed within the post modern theory of power relation between social groups and the role of language to mediate this relationship and explore the implications of gender stereotypes.

In a similar vein, prior to Hussein (2005), Oha (1998) had analysed Igbo proverbs from the critical discourse perspective. Oha's *Semantics of Female Devaluation in Igbo proverbs* focuses on the semantics of female devaluation and derogation in Igbo proverbs. His approach is based on some modern theories of some feminist poets like Julia Kristeva (1981, 1992, Luce Irigavey (1985, 1992), Dale Spender (1992) amongst others. Based on this approach, he observes the language as used in Igbo proverbs promotes sexual politics played by the male to the disadvantage of the female. This study underscores the female subjugation and male dominance prevalent in the Igbo society. These two works are very ambitious, interesting and exciting, but they are totally silent on the sociolinguistic study of proverbs.

Meledo's (2015) work on "A Sociolinguistic Analysis of Urhobo Proverbs underscores the didactic nature of Urhobo proverbs which teaches morals and their uses such as to advise, caution, train and instill discipline in the hearers, which is very close to this work.

Proverbs mirror allude and observe the Urhobo culture and traditional phenomenon. The bane of her work is that she only concentrated on the sociolinguistic aspect living out the use of tone marks which should have shown us how these words are being pronounced in Urhobo, because in linguistics it is believed that, for a data to be accepted one need to know how these words are pronounced for the sake of those who seek to study this language in the

future. The Researcher can state categorically here that there are no written document on Ebira proverbs and this is a vacuum which the researcher will fill through this research work.

#### **2.4 Summary**

As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, scholarly works have been done on proverbs of other languages. Our review has shown that there is enormous literature available in the study of proverbs.

As clearly stated by Nwogo (1975) that “proverbs portray a great economy of words and are vehicle of traditional wisdom”. This goes to show that of of the best ways of economizing words is through the use of proverbs because it makes it easiers for expressions to sink into the minds of people, rather than making a whole lot of utterance that one may not comprehend. Also Egbe (2016) made a very important remark that the reason why most of our speeches lack seasoning is because of the lack of proverbs. Most people just talk without reasoning and that is why many people have gotton themselves into trouble because they just use words as they like without considering its implications. But with the use of proverbs, things can be said without necessarily offending people and the society will be a better place. Niyi (2010) has constantly affirmed that proverbs are not only to be used by the aged but should also be applied in the modern world so that people can learn about their culture and tradition and not only restricted to knowing how to speak their language.

It is important to state here that nothing really have been done in the area of Ebira proverbs in terms of specifying the roles they play in the society and how they can be used daily to facilitate communication. The only work that is somehow close to proverbs was done by Salami (2013), where he identified idioms and their importance to the Ebira community as a whole. This is one important gap this research will cover to enable users of the language to acclimatize themselves with these proverbs and apply it when necessary.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Research Design**

The qualitative and descriptive research design are adopted for this study as against the quantitative approach. The qualitative approach is suitable for our analysis because the study is an ethnographic in nature. Ethnography, according to the Oxford Advanced Learners' Dictionary is the scientific description of different cultures and races. This procedure, therefore, is appropriate since the study is centred on people and culture. The descriptive survey gives a picture of a situation or a population. It is a scientific method which involves observing and describing the behavior of a subject without in any way influencing it.

#### **3.2 Area of study**

This study is on the proverbs that exist in Epira Tao dialect of Epira language. There is a need for the researcher to revive the aesthetic nature of the proverbs with respect to their social and contextual meanings and how they enhance communication. The research covered Epira spoken in Okene, Kogi State.

#### **3.3 Instrumentation and Sources of Data**

Data for this work were collected from primary sources; these include; native speakers of Epira language who live in Okene suburb and the intuitive knowledge of the researcher. Oral interview and observations were also used to elicit data for this work. The above instruments were chosen because they are very relevant to the achievement of great result for this work. Also, oral interviews and observations among the people is pivotal to this work in the sense that the aged people who have experiences, and are able to differentiate where and how these proverbs can be applied. Instruments such as tape recorder, pencil and biro were all used to put down every single detail mentioned during the course of this research work.

#### **3.4 Population and Sampling Techniques**

In the course of the research, the researcher used about thirty (30) Epira native speakers with a minimum of secondary school education to get his data. The native speakers were responsible for providing and interpretation of the proverbs. Also, the researcher's intuitive knowledge of the language was also a useful tool. Graduates, undergraduates and civil

servants within the ages of 30-60 years, who are still very vibrant in the usage of the language were also consulted.

### **3.5 Methods of Data collection**

Some proverbs were collected from aged Ebira men and women who are verse in Ebira proverbs, tape recording and anonymous observation and note taking were all used to collect data. In all three hundred and nine (359) proverbs were collected about fifty-six (56) were selected for analysis since the research design adopted for the study is analytical. All the proverbs used here are tone marked and literally translated into English to enhance readability and understanding. Three Hundred and eleven (311) Ebira proverbs are moved to the appendix for further research in the future.

### **3.6 Methods of Data Presentation and Analysis**

The data collected from the field were analyzed using a contextual model of approach by Sperber and Wilson (1995). A contextual model of analysis was used specifically for the semantic interpretation of Ebira proverbs. This is because the contextual model or approach is more relevant to determine the most appropriate meanings of Ebira proverbs. Also the researcher used lipzip glossing rule for the translation of the proverbs.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

#### 4.0 Chapter Overview

This chapter deals with the sociolinguistic analysis of Ebira proverbs using Sperber and Wilson's (1995) Relevant Theory. This researcher started by discussing possible domains where proverbs can be used in the Ebira community, the roles of Ebira proverbs and the influence of proverbs on Ebira name. All the proverbs are properly glossed and tone marked. Thus, it the chapter paves the way for the understanding of Ebira proverbs in the context of English as a second language in Nigeria.

#### 4.1 Possible Domains where proverbs can be used in the Ebira Community

The typological classification in this study was done based on the types of proverbs gotten during this research work. Three Hundred and fifty-Nine (359) Ebira Tao proverbs were gotten, that is not to say the proverbs are limited to that very number, but that has at the time of this research work, those were the ones available as data to be worked on.

##### 4.1.1 Patience and Tolerance

The concept Patience simply means to be content, not losing one's temper while waiting while Tolerance on the other hand is the ability to endure pain or hardship. The Ebira extol patience as one of the greatest virtues anyone can cultivate. It is said that if one is patient, a stone put on fire would get done (cooked) in his presence. Not all things are meant to be accomplished in one day. The Almighty God could create the world in a split-second by merely saying "let there be" and it would be. But he chose to create the universe over a period of seven days. You see, nature can never be hurried because its creation was not done in a hurry. Trees come into blossom and fruit at particular seasons appointed by nature, not earlier. So, if you hurriedly harvest the flowers you ruin the fruits.

As for eggs, they hatch after incubation for the number of days specified by nature which can never be shortened. And the patience and tolerance of hen to sit on its eggs over the period produces the chicks. If it is impatient and abandons or hatches its eggs few days earlier, the eggs become a waste. Some indigenous proverbs related to patience and tolerance are analyzed here.

(6) **éyíháa, óo dà òzà ikoro**

Hurry do cut someone knee

‘Hurry (leads to sustaining) cuts on the knee’

Too much of a hurry or impatience creates problem resulting in retardation of progress.

(7) **irùkù ènèyihà, ó ma hura vi**

Pot impatience do not fast done

‘Pot of impatience doesn’t cook in time’

The pot of yams of the impatient person does not often get cooked on time.

The impatient create for themselves unnecessary anxiety which may end up in frustration.

(8) **àhù ònyáà-ònyáà áàtù húùnì ùkò**

leg one- one remove from pit

‘step by step they remove leg from pit’

Things should be done one after the other to ensure success.

(9) **ùkónkónó ka óyì tàngwà zì óò yí zà òzà ka àsí óngù ìzì**

Millipede say that slow walk do not hold person say carry reach where  
áànò.

going

‘The millipede says that moving slowly does not prevent one from reaching his destination’

(10) **òmè yì òzà, óòmè yí engwu anì**

doer for someone, doer for body himself

‘He who labours for someone, labours for himself’

Someone who serves another faithfully and diligently is only training himself to achieve success when he is on his own.

All the above proverbs call for patience and tolerance among the users, for it is by so doing that progress will be achieved in Ebara Society.

## Analysis and Interpretation

From example (6) where we have “*éyíháa*” which means to ‘hurry’ and example (7) where we have “*ènèyihà*” which means one that is in a ‘hurry’ and lastly example (8) where we have “*ònyáà-ònyáà*” which means ‘step by step’ are actually pointing to the same thing which actually tells us that patience is very paramount for humans to have whatsoever they desire in life. Hurry or being in a hurry will never yield any positive result but will only expose one to an unpleasant situation. For sometimes now, the Ebira people have been known as people that take action anytime toes are been stepped on, for instance, we see a situation where one has been on the lookout for a job and at the end of the day he/she decides to venture into rituals to make fast money. The above four (4) proverbs could be used to discourage such a person in order to avoid an unpleasant situation in the future. Example (7) clearly shows us for instance that if you are working under someone no matter the job specification, you don’t need to rush into getting yours. You need to pay a prize to get anything in life especially when you are laboring for someone tirelessly without complaint or cheating, someday you will reap the reward of your patience. In essence we need to tolerate each other no matter the situation at hand.

### 4.1.2 Vengeance

Vengeance simply means retaliation of an offence towards someone, everyone is prone to be offended in one way or the other. It only takes a forgiving heart to temper justice with mercy. Vengeance is therefore best left to God for His divine law would invariably take its course. Here, we critically look at some intriguing proverbs used when one has an intention of retaliation in the Ebira community:

(11) *ísá óní ònyíchéré rị óo tù ùhwà nì*  
thing that monkey eat it remove molar it

‘something the monkey eats for the removal of its molar tooth’

The problem being faced by the individual is a direct consequence of certain actions taken by him.

(12) *òrị isà óhúnéné, óma hère ịrị-ira*  
Eater food cold, not vomit hot-fire

‘One that eats cold food never let out hot vomit’

It is what one sows he reaps

(13) òzà éné ku etè éere irùvú ózà, òzà ènèsá ónì

Someone who down earth see buttock someone, someone else also

récé re Ìrùvò ani

see see buttock himself

Indulging into the secrets or weaknesses of others exposes the your secrets and weaknesses to others too

(14) óchí áná sị si ùkónkònó, ónìrí ùkónkònó óo zini

Tree used pick pick millipede, together millipede it goes

‘the stick used to pick the millipede goes with the millipede’

the person championing evil against another may equally be consumed by evil.

(15) ò kà divi, ò sị ódivi re.

Is say bad, do see bad see

‘May the speaker of bad things experience bad thing’

In the Ebara community, there are instances of two clans fighting each other probably because of Royalty or because of land. The proverbs above show us that before reprisal is taken against anyone, one should recognize that he or she may have contributed in one way or the other to the problem that he faced now, because vengeance won't just come up if there hadn't been a problem. Data (11) clearly show us this; in essence what the proverb means is that it takes hot food from the mouth before a hot-fire can come out, that is in order not for vengeance to sprout up we should not allow ourselves to be the cause of the problem, because at the end of the day toes would be stepped upon and all of this may lead to disagreement. If I know that taking a royal sit for instance, does not belong to my family or clan or claim a land that is not mine, I will at the end of the day cause an uproar and if anyone hits me, I will likely hit back, to avoid all these, proverbs like these can be used when elders see that people are over stepping their boundaries.

Data (10, 11 and 12) are actually also passing the same message, in that in data (11) if you think that you are looking at someone's buttock, you shouldn't get angry when someone is also looking at yours, i.e. to avoid problem that will later on degenerate into something else,



the best way is not to be an architect that of problem. Data (13) also clearly show us that if you champion evil against someone there is every tendency that the evil will consume him someday.

In a nutshell Ebira proverbs seeks to tell us that vengeance can only occur when there has been a hit-up of situation so to avoid this, whoever wants to enjoy peace and security should not wish people evil or become an architect through which problems come up in order to avoid retaliation or vengeance from the other party as have been exemplified from the above examples. Coming together to sort out disputes is the best way to avoid vengeance and it can only lead to a fruitful life and not strife.

#### 4.1.3 Hatred and Conflict

Hatred which simply means strong aversion, intense dislike against someone or something and conflict on the other hand, means to clash or have a disagreement between two opposing groups or individuals.

Love is a free gift from God which both the rich and the poor can afford to give generously. But in place of love, hatred and conflicts abound and make life difficult for others but for themselves also. This is because in attempt to kick your neighbour, out of hatred, you risk a fall since you have to stand on one foot. Proverbs that convey moral message of abhorrence of hatred and avoidance of conflicts are treated data 14-17

(16) òmè òzà, óòmè èngwù áńńị

doer someone, doer body himself

‘He who does (evil) to others (invariably end up doing evil to himself’

Divine law of retributive justice for evil done to others will always take its course.

(17) ényị nyị síyị òkirà rùvò

Nothing nothing given carrier hand

‘No reward is given to the one who carries fire in his hand’

There is no benefit to be derived from engaging in a dangerous venture at the expense of some other person.

(18) à tú ọ ọtọ órìhì dí ú na ka ózi

If send you message slave then you go say free-born

‘If you are sent on an errand as a slave, should deliver as a free-born’

A messenger should moderate the bitterness in the message being conveyed so as to draw attention.

(19) ézé àà hí “dú mị tọ dú mị tọ”, óbèdù óma yara ènyì ọ.

Dance is call “save- me save save-me save”, novice not know step

‘When the beat of the pot-drum is repeatedly saying “save me-save me’ the novice does not know the dance steps’

The nature or direction that this problem is going is beyond my capability.

We all know that it is hatred that begets conflict that is there is an awakening of hatred that is a consciousness of hatred before it degenerates to conflict. The Ebira belief that if your heart is hurt towards someone, you are the one who eventually gets hurt because you will always be troubled in your mind and at the end of the day someone may likely get hurt. For instance, data (15) above means that no matter how hurt you are feeling towards someone, no reward can be giving to you because it will never yield to anything positive. So the best way is to give room for forgiveness and move on with your life. Fire will only hurt you and will never add any value to us as humans. Data (16) shed more light on this by saying, a messenger has the capability to stop conflict from happening. We see instances where a messenger is sent to deliver a very strong message to an opposing faction. When he gets there, he tries as much as possible to pacify the situation in order to avoid any conflict that may arouse. What this means in essence is that, the tone in a language could actually determine the response you get. In our daily lives we are faced with situation in which people misinterpret messages and because of lack of understanding, it breaks into conflict which may lead to lost of life and property. So the Ebira proverbs in this situation seeks to curtails hatred and conflict by the usage of these proverbs, so that peace can rain amongst them.

#### 4.1.4 Advice against Evil Deeds

Advice is an opinion recommended or offered, as worthy to be followed. Evil is something universally condemned. Good and evil are however not universal in conception as they are

defined by each society's norms, values, customs and tradition. Violation of a society's moral code attracts various sanctions. But even without detection and imposition of sanctions by man, man's inhumanities to man will still not go unpunished. This is according to the Ebirá traditional belief in the divine law of retributive justice.

The preference for good deeds and abhorrence of evil are aggressively preached in Ebirá traditional society as evidenced in some selected proverbs listed and explained in this example 19-23.

(20) òtúrǎ ózà ngụ àvì, óòvidí ngụ áavini.

follower someone enter bush, first enter bush

'In an attempt to harm someone else, the person risks being the first to be harmed'

(21) ózì áná ka àsí ònyì anì sù, ónì ìnyembà óò yí sùara

Child that say never mother himself sleep, him himself will not sleep

'A child who hinder its mother from sleeping does not sleep too'

(22) òhu ìra ọ mune arèyì ni.

blower fire is swallow smoke it

'One who blows a fire with his breath also inhales some smoke (in the process)'

Trouble-making or encouragement of crisis induces adverse consequences.

(23) ìjì ìrùrà òó kàyi- ìrà, ẹzà veè-che

When (piece of pot) is set- fire, beans (burst-up)

'When the pieces of earthen pot get hot, the beans would (be forced) to burst up'

When enough pressure is mounted or when the situation becomes unbearable, the truth will be elicited or solution would be found.

(24) ònùvù ka ízì ónì jì ìra tẹ yì, ánáa ri ná àvó ényìzì ọ

Madman say place himself strike fire set point that eat go beyond nothing do

kànyì ọnì

concern him

'The madman says that he set fire at this point so the one raging beyond that point does not concern him'

An initiator of an action trying to claim non-involvement in the aftermath

In example (19) it is noted that, in an attempt to harm someone else, the person risks being the first to be harmed. The example simply highlights, that in an attempt to harm someone you may likely be the first to be harmed because the person might be innocent. For instance, a woman poisoned food and kept it for her step-child and at the end of the day her own child was the one who came back from school earlier and ate the food and died. If the woman would have tried to avoid the evil plot against her step-son, maybe the bitterness of losing her own son might have been prevented. So it is very necessary to avoid evil in order for one not get harmed first.

Data (20) which says a troublesome child that will always bring problem to the family, also will never be at rest. For instance, if a male child always goes out to fight and at the end of the day, he is being punished by the law enforcement agency, after the warning from the parents that he shouldn't fight, at the end of the day he alone must bear the punishment even if it will cost the parents anything, he also will not be spared.

Example (20, 21 and 22) also convey the same message, in that people should learn to desist from evil because it does not pay but rather it can only create a bad image of the entire family. The image every family will always want to protect is a positive one, so it is expedient to take heed to advice in order not to fall into evil.

#### 4.1.5 Words of Admonition

Admonition simply means to counsel against wrong practices; to caution or advice. In the Ebira culture, elders admonish their youths, who may be going into marriage or business or depending on the situation that occurs.

A regular greeting in Ebira from which the Ebira Tao derived their distinctive name is “**tao**” (tangwa o) which translated means “take care” “be careful”. In a similar vein, powerful masquerades always have a flutist (**ónókòkòrò**) who shower praises on him thereby energizing him to action, but would also intermittently sound a note of caution by saying: “**Mí yarẹ́ ú ọ! òsìrì hí ẹtẹ̀ ọ** (Be careful! The ground is slippery! There is slippery fern on ground!!). Proverbs employed by elders to elicit the right type of caution a behavior are presented in the following examples.

(25) **ájẹ ó ma pítà yí ònyí-ùùhwè**

Egg do not gist claim mother-hen

‘The egg cannot recount legends to the mother-hen’

The youth cannot claim to know better than elders

(26) **òzà ó me tù ìhì ìrèkù kànyí ópà.**

Somebody not do reach when war make arrow

‘One does not wait for the time of war before making arrows’

It is in the time of peace or plenty that one prepares for war or adversity.

(27) **íní ààhè ááyà chàka ẹnya èchèrè nì**

inside play they break plate decorated it

‘It is in play that a decorated calabash is broken’

Costly jokes or plays may cause serious dissatisfaction or conflict among people.

(28) **èpè ó ma gòdò hu òzà ene chirèè.**

okro no do tall pass person that planted

‘The okro plant is never taller than he who planted it’

A child or ward is never too big for his father or guardian.

(29) **òzà ónì oò rè àtìtò hí àngwà irà.**

Someone that is see ashes have fears fire

‘Someone burnt by fire fears ashes’

Previous bitter experience dictates the cautious response to a similar one in the future.

In the Ebira culture when children begin to attain the ages of 15, 16, 17 and above their character seems to start changing. When parents begin to see this youthful attitude in them, what he or she uses the above proverbs to admonish them against the evil that is coming before them. For instance, in data (26) above, it is believed, that what an elder sees sitting down, no matter how tall a youth stand he can’t see it. This proverb is being applied to make the child understand that experience in life really counts a lot. Elders are believed to have learnt a lot in life, so for a youth that wants to succeed in life, he or she needs to take instructions in order not to do anything negative.

Also data (27) buttresses this point by saying that it is only someone who has been burnt by fire that fears ashes. If you have never had experience of war, you will always clamour for it, but once you have experienced, you will not pray to see it again because it does not add value to life.

The researcher, take the case of a man that wanted to sell his family property to travel abroad. His mother was not happy about this idea because he never consulted any member of the family before doing this. The mother had to admonish him by telling him, that it is evil to sell the family property without consulting anybody and that if he goes ahead and do that he should be ready to face the consequences that follow.

#### 4.1.6 Settlement of Disputes and Misunderstanding

Settlement is an official agreement that ends an argument or a dispute that is negotiating a peace/pay settlement. Conflict is inevitable in human interaction. This is aptly depicted in the Ebira symbolism, though the fact the teeth and the tongue live as neighbours in the same house (mouth), they at times quarrel-the strong teeth biting the weak tongue. But both still live together in the mouth. When conflicts occur, efforts should be geared towards speedy and amicable resolution.

(30) ényá èèváá éenyí nyègù yà ini èèhi ka ényì kànyí engu.

Plat two nothing calabash stay inside house without nothing touch body  
 ‘Two plates (calabashes) cannot be in the same house without touching each other.  
 Occasional conflict between two people staying together is inevitable.

(31) ísá óní úmènè zu dò ukata óòyí zùdò.

Something that gently can collect force not achieve

‘What gentle approach cannot achieve, force cannot realize it’

Force will not always help one achieve good things in life as long as calmness or simplicity has not been able to achieve it.

(32) ònyíchéchè ka ozi ányá ini ine anì óní nyéngu kù yíni, óni óò yí

Moneky say child there inside tommy itself it can vouch for it is not

zụ kụ yị ónị sí kú úgàdà.

can cover it self carry cover thigh

‘The monkey says it is only the child in its womb it can vouch for or defend (as being innocent) not the one it is carrying on her bottom’

(33) àá ka ààkú àvábé ọkọ ánáa mè àrèyì húùnì irà, irà sìmì.

they say bring together firewood that do smoke from fire, fire off

‘If one says all firewood producing smoke should be removed from the fire, the fire would die out’

If all offenders or evil-doers are to be expelled from the community, the community would collapse. Or, we have to tolerate even the evil doers to get the community going.

(34) àvábé àvùtá óòvayì kú idà, òzà óò yí yè ọnì inẹ ààzì.

Together lizard chest cover stone someone is not know one stomach pain

‘All lizards lie on their bellies; one cannot know the one with stomach-ache’

It is difficult to detect or identify the guilty from a group of suspects.

When conflict occurs, settlement must be the next thing that should be looked into in order to resolve any hitches. Despite the fact that the teeth sometimes bit the tongue, they have learnt to stay together because they know that they need each other and they cannot be easily separated. In essence humanbeing should be able to accommodate each other as this example portrays in data (28).

Plates will always touch each other because they are in the same basket, so humans should learn to tolerate one another. Sometimes we could be the first to say sorry whether or not at fault. For instance, when two people live in the same compound or room, possibly because of financial reasons, they need to learn to stay with each other because no one will like to pack out due to financial reasons. Humans must learn to understand each other because we all come from different culture and different background. In essence, the proverb empasizes that, rather than retaliating, we should try as much as possible to create a room for settlement in order to live together peacefully. As humans will always step on each others toes, but we must learn to outgrow our weaknesses.

Data (31) actually says we cannot evacuate all evil doers from the society or community. Therefore, must just learn to cohabit with them in order to live in peace. That a firewood is buring furiously, that doesn’t mean it should be removed all of them, because we may likely

quench the fire. The other examples also point to the same thing, in that, settlement is the only way we can live together because the weeds and plants will always grow together no matter how the farmer tries to get them off his products.

#### 4.1.7 Unity and Mutual Support

Unity, which simply means to stay together and support one another no matter the differences that exists among people. People can only enjoy themselves when there is mutual support amongst them through unity.

“Unity is Strength” is a popular maxim. Unity is also recognized and accepted as a pre-requisite for development in any society. The traditional Ebira society therefore expectedly placed much emphasis on one being his brother’s keeper as well as the household, kindred, clan and the community. The importance attached to unity is embedded in several Ebira proverbs, a selection of which is contained in this section.

(35) **úvó èèvá óọ nyịna èngwù nì**

Hand two is wash themselves it

‘Two hands can wash themselves better’

‘There is mutual benefit in helping one another’

(36) **èèhu irèkwosè, írẹşu áàzì àdùúhwè.**

Roast partridge, head ache guinea-fowl

‘When partridge is being roasted, the guinea-fowl develop headache’

Deep emotions are evoked in people when adverse comments are passed or when misfortune befall their kinsman or relative.

(37) **izè òpóripò óvị ízè òyíbẹne nì**

Wealth cotton-gin derives local spindle it

‘The wealth of the local cotton gin (oporipo), is where the local spindle (oyibene) derives its own wealth’

People are mutually inter-dependent.



(38) ùkòónkóno ka àhù órúrù áasị wù àvì nì.

Millipede say leg plenty use kill grasses it

‘The millipede says that a large number of feet are required to get grasses killed’

Large number of people in attendance is required at a meeting, social occasion or for the job to be done so as to record huge success.

(39) ẹzẹ ó ma tìtè dì òzà òsí ụvọ hu ìràchi.

Dance not can available then someone use hand scratch chest

‘A pot drum cannot be available and one begins to beat his chest with hands’

It is unnecessary to over-task oneself when there are people that could offer needed assistance.

In these groups of proverbs, one is being admonished to unite and support one another to bring development to the various regions. Communities must learn to support each other when ever the need comes up. This is because nobody exists as an island, people need to come together and share whatsoever they have in order to create an atmosphere of care and tolerance. This is exemplified in data (33), one hand cannot wash itself well, it needs the other hand to help out.

Data (37) sheds more light on this by saying; you wouldn’t have someone around you, who could be a solution to your problems and you keep quiet and continue to wallow in depression. Once you notice that some one can help you achieve certain goals in life, you try as much as possible to seek the audience of such person in order to bring succor to yourself. Sometimes, because we have not kept faith to ourselves as humans it becomes difficult if not impossible to relate our problems to each other, thereby creating and opening for depression. We live for each other to survive, so let us learn to hit the drum and leave the chest to perform its own function.

In a nutshell, unity is very important to any state that must survive because in unity lies the strength as a people and as a nation as showcased in data (34, 35 and 36).

#### **4.1.8 Inter-Perconal Relationship**

This particular concept shows the kind of attitude one has towards himself and the relationship with other people. Inter-personal relationship in traditional Epira society was

guided by societal norms, ethics and taboos. These established codes of moral conduct had their attendant sanctions for defaulters. The expectations in respect of inter-personal relationship are as reflected in some selected proverbs which are featured in example 38-42.

(40) Wàà táná ìgègè, áná vákáù vẹ ka àvi èwụù yo?

If point finger, that facing come say if you what?

‘When you point a finger, the others pointing in your direction are asking: suppose you are the one?’

Whatever your intentions, utterances or actions towards someone else, you should remember that you could be the one involved.

(41) òkú ávóò èèrì óo hu èvàchà nị

Greeter gratitude yesterday is drink remnant it

‘One who shows gratitude for yesterday, drinks of the remnant wine’

Showing gratitude for some favour done to you would prepare ground for more favours in the future.

(42) Ikéyi íní óòyí zẹ kàtụ ịni áhù

Thorn inside does hinders remove inside foot

‘The thorn in the hands hinders the removal of that in the foot’

The personal problems of the speaker does not give him room to assist his neighbour.

(43) Aamè ori ẹbà dị étéèté èèrec.

worship deity sky the ground looking

‘When the sky-god is being worshipped, the ground-god watches’

A child watches and copies the actions of adults or his elders.

(44) ózì áná sị tura òkéèhe óòyí yẹ ẹẹ mèmè nòzè.

Child that carry on-top shoulder not know ground how-how far

‘The child carried on the shoulders does not know how far the journey is’

A child catered for may not appreciate or understand the difficulties involved

As we all know there is the need to love each other. Perhaps the Ebirá belief system is such that if you take a look at yourself before looking at other people, maybe things will be

a lot better as can be deduced from the following examples above. From data (38) above, if you point a finger to someone, the remaining four points back at you. This means, what if you were the one. This simply means, before taking any action of making any utterance, one should put himself in that position of who is being affected. For instance there have been a situation on ground that demands that everybody keeps it as a secret, but unfortunately you had some issues with a colleague in the same office; you then decide to divulge such information that was to be kept a secret, because the person involved is your enemy and in order to gain undue advantage in the office at the detriment of slender or defame someone character, you should also be aware that, it could have been you and next time you will think twice before doing such a thing. The proverbs in this section seeks to show that we need to treat people the way we want to be treated.

Also, data (42) buttresses this point by saying, “a child catered for will not always appreciate it until he or she begins to cater for himself. This goes to show that one needs to appreciate people’s efforts in one’s life so that people can also appreciate him because what goes around in one way or the other will always come around. People have suffered innocently in life because they have not learnt to show respect to people, but are seeking to be respected. It doesn’t always work that way. To promote a good relationship with people there is the need to make sure you have good ethics and attitude so that it doesn’t affect your personal relationship with others.

There is the need to remove the speck in one’s eyes before you can remove the one in another person’s own.

#### **4.1.9 Proverbs collected Generally, which can be used for any purpose**

These last set of proverbs to be analysed covers a wide range of subject. That is, they could easily be applied, no matter the situation at hand. The physical environment provides ready raw materials to careful observers and local philosophers for the production and packaging of these incisive proverbs.

(45) *ékú òokukù óọ zụ ówóọwa idò*

Masquerade old is show new rites

‘it is the old masquerade that guides the new one on expected rites and rituals’

A predecessor is an invaluable asset to the successor in terms of guidance.

(46) **úhì óò yí nyì oyì, óò nyí ùjì àkasa**

Shame do not have thief, is catch basket old

'if the thief is not ashamed, the old basket (used to carry the stolen items) is ashamed.

Being ashamed for shameless culprit'

(47). **írezi óní ihinébà ọ ka ónị áa dà ùyà yirị dí òsị**

Dog himself Almighty is say himself will cut suffer eat will give

itàhù túbá ìnị ipátẹ-irèsù

wound swollen inside middle-head

'The dog God intends to punish. He makes a sore to develop on the centre of it head'

A bad person facing a problem whose solution is beyond him and causing him deep embarrassment.

(48) **ényá ọ ma rárà hu irèsù**

Load do not heavy pass head

'A load is never heavier than the head (carrying it)'

One should never allow a problem to overwhelm him since, by and large, he bears the problem.

(49) **ísé ńdà ọ ngụ eyi**

Feather vulture is enter eyes

What you have is what you admire

It is what one has that he can be proud of.

(50) **ógweyí veè-hee ọsúrụ**

Blind by-chance palm-nut

'The blind may by chance find the juicy and palatable palm-nut'

A twist of fate may make one in a hopeless situation to record a break-through

(51) **èé túbà ọbo, di ọbo ee túbà irùku**

If draw rope, then rope will draw forest

'When the rope (climbing plants) are being pulled it (in turn) pulls the forest'

An attempt to deal with an individual one may involve many other unintended persons.

(52) írezi òóràà jì òzà áná pàà íreru

Dog has cut person who train bit

‘The dog has bitten its trainer (mentor)’

The miscreant has misbehaved to the person who has been giving him support or production

(53) òó sí dáà, òò yí re èpè sị va

Is carry cut, is not see soup carry paste

‘He has cut a morsel (of food) but has no soup (to eat it)’

One has pushed himself into a serious problem

(54) òzà ó mà kàtà, óọ kàtà yì isù

Someone is not power, is power for death

‘One is never powerful and too powerful for death’

Death is the ultimate conqueror for even the strong.

(55) òzà óọ sí óchí túrá izà, áná yá irèmà ò gòdò hù nì

Person is carry tree ontop shoulder, portion at back is longer pass it

“When one carries a stick on the shoulder, the portion at the back is longer than that in the front”.

#### 4.2 The Roles of Ebira Proverbs

Proverbs are indispensable in conflict resolution and crisis management. As an oratory and linguistic tool, proverbs when applied to conflict situation, they can function as ice breaker in relieving tension, as the rapeutic tools in facilitating trauma healing, in promoting introspection which brings about change, in promotion of interpersonal communication. Ebira as a group, is part of human family and as such, are subject to be influenced by the natural causes of conflict among humans, which may include such things as, differences in needs, values, opinion and other components of human interaction. These differences often lead to conflict. Conflict, according to Ajayi and Buhari (2014) can be described as a condition in which an identifiable group of human beings whether tribal, ethnic, linguistic, religious, socio-political, economic, cultural or otherwise is in conscious opposition to one or more other identifiable human group because these groups are pursuing what appears to be incompatible goals. They also assert that more importantly; conflict arises from the

interaction of individuals who have partly incompatible ends.

We look at the following proverbs and their roles in conflict resolution in the Ebira language.

(56) òmè òzà, òmè engụ áni ni

Doer person, doer body himself him

‘He who does evil to others (invariably end up) doing evil to himself’

This proverb is used when one always has intention to harm people. The Ebira belief that if you point a finger at someone, the remaining four fingers are pointing back at you. It becomes very paramount to know that, as long as someone does not hurt you and you decide to hurt that person, whatsoever you do, you are at the recurring end; doing it to yourself i.e. it will either come to you or your children.

(57) ényi ógwù áàsiyị òkìrà rùvò

No reward given carrier-fire handle

‘No reward is given to the one who carries fire’

For some decades the Ebira have been known as people who fight within themselves. The above proverbs explain that there are some individuals who deliberately look for trouble to see what will be other person’s reaction. If an elder sight such an individual he tells him “there is no reward for he who starts trouble” so it is better for one to restrain from evil rather than making himself/herself a thong on peoples flesh in the community. In a nutshell there is no reward for a trouble-maker because trouble does not carry anything good with it.

(58) òwụ írèku, oo jì irekú nì

alarm war, is cut war it

‘the shout of alarm has the ability to stop a war’

When there is a proper warning, war can be averted

This simply means that, when there are rumours that a fight is coming up to verify, if it is good to make it known earlier so that negotiations between the two factions can take place before it becomes a reality. It is expedient that we recognize that hiding issues that relates to riots and acts of war is very evil, because it will not give room for arguments to come up in

order for resolutions to come up between the two communities that are involved. The relevance of the above proverbs is to help see reasons why conflict does not contribute to the development of a community or society.

#### 4.3 The Influence of Proverbs on Ebira names

A name according to most cultural heritages, depicts the nature and life of a corporate personality, body or organization; the focus and outlook of a personality, body or organization, to a great extent, are influenced by the name he or she who carries it. For the Ebira, names are more than identification tags; they constitute an integral part of human existence. Some names are used to accentuate and situate the significance of an experience, event or phenomenon, and proverbs, are instrument of arousing, defining, manifesting and establishing the expectations, aspirations and consciousness of the bearers.

It must be noted that among the Ebira, there are diverse sorts of names. For instance there are names that are believed to be bestowed on the bearer by nature in virtue of some special or extra-ordinary features and circumstances about the birth of the child. Names such as “**ítopa**” (name brought about by story), **onúyà**, **òvùrèvù** and so on.

According to Ebira, no one bears a name without a reason, and no name exists without an explanation or a justification. Hence, every name has its own peculiarity bestowed on it by virtue of certain circumstances, environment, the nature and the situation of the family or parent of the person being named. All these peculiarities serve as the explanation or justification for the name’s ‘òzómàrisi’ (nobody eats fly), which reiterates the importance or significance of the name.

There are two ways proverbs and names are related in order to define and establish the role expectations, aspirations and consciousness of Ebira. Firstly, there are proverbs that underscore the importance of names, thus we shall examine three specific names that correlate with proverbs and analyse them.

(59) onúyà

**onúyà ó ma zu vórò jẹ**

sufferer can not even stand up

‘one who suffers cannot stand’

If you don’t have affluence you cannot talk

The above proverb shows that anybody given birth during hard times will continue to live in poverty. It could also mean “a child given birth to in pain”. The influence of the name continues to show in the child till death because the community believe that nothing good should ever come out of the life of the child. The name becomes a force that drives him or her, and acts as a catalyst, which propels the bearer to continue to live in abject poverty no matter how he/she works. Therefore, where people of affluence are making contribution, the bearer of this name cannot talk because they feel that even if he has wisdom he/she does not have anything to offer his community and the society at large.

(60) òvùrèvù

**òvùrèvù ínì idà éma híánwà írèsu òyíhà**

fighter inside rock not fear head break

‘one who fights on the rock does not fear to break head’

This proverb means, if a person indulges in something that is dangerous, he/she does not fear the outcome. It is expected that anyone who bears this name should be brave in doing anything. This person must not be scared of the outcome he or she might likely face. As a result, it would be frowned upon if a person called “òvùrèvù”, who is from the family of fighters, cannot show his/her expertise on the battle field, because great responsibility is bestowed on the bearer of the name to demonstrate this expertise. Therefore, it should be the aspiration of the bearer of the name to meet this challenge which encourages him or her to strive hard not to bear the name in vain, and as this is done, he or she works very hard to improve, eventually contributing positively to the development of the community when the need arises.

(61) itopà

**ísí ani eyi òzà re ónó vi itopà**

thing that eyes person see that the story

‘what one has pass through in the past is the story’

This proverb means, that the child named “itopà” has a lot of stories stories sorrowing him which may either be negative or positive depending on what happened during the time the child was born. For instance, during the time a child was born probably the woman lost her



husband and suffered during that period. This situation is what actually propels that name. In the future you see - that since the intention of the mother while naming the child was negative, the child's life remains miserable because the scenario behind his birth was negative.

In conclusion, we have argued that in every name, there is a description that correlates with it. There is also a description that correlates Ebira proverbs and names. And just as the description attached to a name helps in fixing the reference of the name, the proverbs also help in unveiling the catalysts that arouse, define and manifest role expectations, aspirations and consciousness of the bearer of the name. This awareness can indeed end some of the root causes of social vices in contemporary Ebira society. The severed link between names and proverbs that retard the recognition of the veritable name-proverb relation denies concerning the cultural elements that define and work towards meeting certain socially approved expectations and aspirations in life.

## 62. òzìvìzì

**User: Human**

**Setting: Village/City**

**Age: Unlimited**

**Gender: Female**

### Òzìvìzì

Okukuku òzà ví íze ni o

Long person bring wealth

No matter how long, it is a person the makes wealth

The Ebira really believe in hardwork. Anyone who bears this name; a male or a female is expected to live a life of hardwork. These days it is a pity that so many people want to get rich, but do not want to work hard to get rich. People should be willing to work in order not to beg so that, humanbeings can bear each others burden. So whoever bears this name is not expected to be lazy, otherwise he or she will end up living in penury. The main reason behind this name is that, humans are the ones who create wealth and it simply means that sitting at home will never bring food to your table. As the saying goes 'iron sharpeneth iron', meaning as human, one make wealth as he use his hands in doing.

### 63. Àsùkù

**User: Human**

**Setting: City/Village**

**Age: Unlimited**

**Gender: Male**

#### Àsùkù

Ozì áná sí enwúro yí oyi ani o vi Àsùkù ni

Child that give peace give mother his is the rest on

“A child that gives his mother peace of mind is called rest”

Everyone in life needs comfort in one way or the other. The above name is given mostly to a male child and someone you can trust to be your confident. Àsùkù in the Ebira society is referred to as cover, so it is expected that as humanbeings we should be able to rely on each other to survive in life. A male child in the Ebira community is believed to be very important and highly valued, especially when he is the first born, the parents and other family members rely on him to bring succor and peace of mind to everyone and should be trusted with every possession the family has. The Ebira are very observant when it comes to naming a child, because it is believed that whatsoever name a child is called in his house, that is what he or she will be called outside. This brings us to the conclusion that a good name is better than silver and gold.

#### 4.4 Summary of findings and discussion

This work goes a long way to agree with Mey (2001) who believes that proverbs serves as a catalyst in counseling, challenging, persuading and so on, as have been exemplified critically. The preceeding analysis shows that the physical setting or actual places where proverbs are used in conflict situation, as word of admonition, as a tool for advice against evil deeds and so on can help a community of people to achieve unity and peace in their different sociolinguistic environment.

Sociolinguistic implication of this is that Ebira people do not only regard the home as the nucleus of the society, but also as a place where aspects of Ebira culture and language can be entranged. Home as used in this context includes both one's home, the home of the head of the family or street and the home of a Chief. Ceremonies and the King's Palace are other domains.

Also temporal setting, which has to do with time of the day shows that proverbs are used in the evenings which may include night, afternoon and morning. The perceived frequency of the use of proverbs in the evening is understood by the fact that evening is the appropriate time for the settlement of disputes and holding of important meetings at home when people have retired from their daily activities. Afternoons are also appropriate especially for specific days (market days and festivals).

Proverbs can be used to address children, the meaning are instantly explained in the discourse to enable the addressee understand the contextual meaning and message inherent in the proverb.

While reading about proverbs, one could ask why people use proverbs at all. As we know, proverbs don't usually function as mere poetic adornments of speech, neither are they used to meet man's need for philosophic phrasemongering. As a rule, they are used for some practical purposes in various circumstances of everyday communication. According to Taylor (1996), 'men buy and read collections of proverbs to awaken and enlarge reflection on the world and the nature of man, to suggest subjects for conversation, or to provide themselves with comment appropriate to situation in daily life'.

Proverbs were and used nowadays as an effective spoken or written tool of expressing various meanings and intentions. They include wisdom, knowledge and truth which is manifested in a few colourful words. In spite of the fact the proverbs have figurative meaning, the message they carry is delivered very quickly and to the point which makes it very functional while used in spoken language, political speeches, newspapers, headlines, cartoon titles and slogans in the advertisements. Proverbs can be used to manoeuvre people politically and economically and they may be very serious tool as 'expressions of stereotypical invectives or unfounded generalizations.

Proverbs had and still have a didactic function as exemplified in the work above. By using them we wish to teach people, give them some advice, help in difficult situations, show people what are the most important things in life, show the proper way of life. Proverbs are a tool by means of which we can discredit or mock someone or criticize someone or situation. Using politeness, in a short, pithy sentence we can hide our own thoughts and say something we would not dare to say in a direct manner. By means of proverbs we can depict wide range of basic people's experiences and problems of modern life in satirical and moralizing way. We would say 'A good husband makes a good wife' if we hear a man complain about his

wife while we know it is not only her fault. In modern writings functions of proverbs differs a little bit from that of traditional ones. While proverbs in older literature usually served didactic and moralistic purposes, they are now often employed for expression of parody, irony or satire (Mieder 1993:71).

Another implication of this work is that a good society can only be achieved through peaceful means. In shading light on this essence, one of the Epira proverbs states that:

**ísá      óní úmènè zu dò      ukata óòyi zùdòò.**

Something that gently can collect force not achieve  
'what gentle approach cannot achieve; force cannot realize it'.

As a community peace building form, this proverb draws the community to a sense of alternative resolution of conflicts that are not destructive to life and property. Violence, for example, war, destroys, it cannot build. The proverbs also direct the community to focus attention on peace instead of violence, as major problem facing a nation or a community can only be addressed when people are united. As a Zimbabwe Catholic Bishop wrote in their Pastoral letter in (Mey 2000), 'let our common enemy be poverty, disease and ignorance, not our fellow citizens'.

Epira proverbs can also be very instrumental in pointing at how conflict in a community should be resolved. Epira greatest, yet least used wealth is the intelligence and creativity of her indigenes. Traditionally, many conflicts are resolved through discussion for example, a Ndebele proverb says; 'itshekewa ebandla', meaning that problems are discussed at an indeba. Conflicts involving individuals would be tackled in a discussion with the extended family. If the family was unable to resolve the conflict, it would be discussed with the Kraalhead. If the conflict was difficult for the Kraalhead to resolve, it would be taken to the Chief's court (indaba or dare). The spirit medium would also give advice (ACPD, 2002). A lot of conflict are still resolved this way, in the communal areas. In modern times, community workers have resolved conflicts peacefully as part of their work in the development process. Another implication is that; proverbs can also be handy in showing how power is a tool which can be used positively or negatively. Power is good when it is practiced in its total fairness, but it can also be destructive if it is used as a form of oppression or for the purposes of corruption.

Proverbs also plays an important part in Epira culture and other cultures all over the world and continent. The beauty of proverbs is the universality of their meaning, everyone can

relate to them in some way and on some levels Ebira proverbs can convey wisdom, truth, a discovery of ideas, as well as life lessons.

The research also states that the Ebira proverbs have been found to be embedded with a lot of figures of speech such as symbols, hyperboles, personification as exemplified in data 9, 21, 28, 31 and so on. This shows that, what is supposed to be said casually could actually be said using proverbs to pass a lot of message.

Furthermore, the research has also shown here that proverbs can serve as catalyst in influencing the names people bear and the way they behave in the Ebira culture. As stated by Osaba (2014), which insisted that the content of proverbs include beliefs, philosophy, moral and so on which has great effect in the life of an individual. Proverbs could correct manner and the way people or individually behave.

In consonance with the theory used in this work; that is the Relevance Theory by Sperber and Wilson (1995) it has been proven that the only solid way to maintain the value of proverbs is to apply them where necessary and should not just be used haphazardly. For instance, the researcher has been able to justify that situations actually necessitate the bearing of names and it is in agreement with this that parents actually name their children.

The result from this research shows that proverbs have essential roles to play in different situations that we find ourselves as humans. As have been discussed from the examples above, we can conclude that proverbs can serve as catalyst to influence people's lives and decisions, whether good or bad depending on the situation at hand. Also we have seen the roles proverbs play in conflict resolution and also the roles they play in people's life especially when it comes to parents naming their children.

Firstly, proverbs did not just come to be by chance, our ancestors knew their relevance and that is why they made sure they used them often. It is our responsibility to put them down as a way of documenting so that the upcoming generation can have something to fall back to in order to promote their culture.

## **Chapter Five**

### **Summary, Conclusion and Recommendation**

#### **5.1 Summary**

On account of the data analysis as well as the discussion of findings, the following submissions are made:

The use of a linguistic theory for the analysis of literary text has proved to be a success. This is particularly true of proverbs where the linguistic, situation sociological and cosmological variables are used for the understanding of the moral significance of analysed proverbs. The study also reveals the dominance of assertive and directive illocutionary force as direct and indirect speech act respectively. This is not unconnected with the fact that proverbs are symbols of people's collective wisdom, a linguistic repertoire of the people who shows the same culture, language and world view. Hence, "assertive" indicates the people's stand or position on a matter why "directive" suggest or prescribe how people behave in line with the societal cultural norms and values.

In addition, the linguistic content represents majorly the ordinary or lexical meaning and partly the communicative meaning. However, the communicative meaning which according to Malinowski (1923, 1935) is influenced by the cultural content of the language users can be better understood through the exploration of the remaining three (3) variables namely: situational, sociological and cosmological.

The situational context considers the actual location of utterance; who says what, to who, where, why and how? This study postulates that certain forces determining how the above communicative roles are played by the number of speech community and the culture occupies a vintage position in contextual negotiation.

The sociological variables, the relationship between the interlocutors, their knowledge of the society, their societal norms and values including issues such as attitudes to laziness, respect for elders, cultural preservation etc.

(1995).

#### **5.2 Conclusion**

Pragmatics as the study of the contextual meaning is no doubt a reliable means of determining meaning, there is a wide gap of differences between what the person might say and what the

person meant. It is on the basis that Mey (2006:6) describes pragmatics as the study of how to say what one means and how to mean what one says. An expression such as was the door opened when you entered? This question may not require either a Yes or No answer. Rather, it may be directing a person to either open or close the door. In view of this, to understand an expression (either literary or otherwise) there is no need for the contextual exploitation of the expression and to understand context, the cultural background of the language users should be considered relevant.

The above submission is particularly true of proverbs. Proverbs are context bound and cultural specific. The cultural specific of proverbs does not mean that the same proverb cannot be found in different cultures (see Ojiade, 2004). However, the relevance of context (adaptive context in this study) in the determination of the intended meaning is non-negotiable. This is because the same proverb can have different interpretations depending on the situation of use. This implies that a proverb that is used to scold a child somewhere may be used to praise the dsame child in another context.

### **5.3 Recommendation**

Proverbs should be considered important and included in the curriculum of relevant undergraduate and post-graduate courses in other to strengthen their efficacy and preserve the societal cultural heritage. It is hoped that renewed interest on proverbs will help substantially during this era of ethnic consciousness.

### **5.4 Contribution to Knowledge**

This work has become an “eyes opener” to the various domains in which proverbs can be applied in the Ebira community generally and it has also become a bases by which generations unborn can begin to learn their language and the ingredients embedded in it as it pertains the usage of proverbs.

Furthermore, this work has been able to prove that proverbs have great influence on the society and the kind of names people bears. So we shouldn't be surprised if people behave according to the name they bear. Lastly, this work now serve as a document containing about three hundred and fifty (350) that can serve as a teaching manual to anyone who wishes to learn Ebira proverbs and their meanings in English language as an L2

### **5.5 Suggestions for Further Studies**

The results of this study are limited to the sociolinguistic aspects of Ebira proverbs as it contributes to the existing materials in Ebira. Therefore, other researchers in this field could do a comparative analysis of Ebira idioms and Ebira proverbs. Also, they could do a syntactic analysis of Ebira proverbs looking at the Ebira proverbs from the sentence level.



## References

- Abdulwahab I.S (2013). Epira language for everybody. Okene: Dima Printers
- Achebe, C. (1958). Things Fall Apart. Edinburgh: Heinemann Books Ltd.
- Adeiyong, O. (2011). Tiv Proverbs as Tools for the Management and Resolution of Conflicts and Judicial Matters. In Jos Journal of General studies, Vol. 1. Jos: University of Jos Printing Press.
- Alfred (1981). A Dictionary of Anglo-American Proverbs and Proverbial Phrases. New York: Dell Publishing Company
- Alimi, S.A. (2012). A Study of The Use of Proverbs as a Literary Device in Achebe's Things Fall Apart and Arrow of God. Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences. Vol. 2, No. 3. Pg. 121-127. Print.
- Arewa, E.O (1970). Proverb Usage in a Natural Context and Oral Literary Criticism. Journal of American Folklore
- Bascom, W.R (1954). Journal of American Folklore. University of California.
- Bashir, A.A and Idris Amali, H.O (2012). Positive Portrayer of Women in Idoma Proverbs, a Gazelle of the Savannah: Sunday Ododo and the Framing of Techno-Cultural Performance in Nigeria Vol.1 (eds.) Rochester, Kent: Alpha Crownes Publishers.
- Blooh, C.G (1936). Pro verbs from Liberia. London: Oxford University Press Bryant, M. (1989). Proverbs and how to collect them. Research in African Literature.
- Chambers Encyclopedia (1969). Vol. 1. Pp 403
- Crystal, D. (1997). Linguistics. Harmondworth: Penguin.
- Crystal, D. (1997:53). The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Language. Second (ed). Cambridge University Press.
- Eagle D. (1970). The Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Literature. (2'' Ed). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Egbe, B (2004). Introduction to writing the Research Paper in English for Academic Communication. Pp. 106-119, Calabar, Nigeria.
- Emike, A.J. (2012). Afenmai Proverbs: Towards a Pragmatic Analysis. Online International Journal of Arts and Humanities. Vol.12. [http :/www.onlineresearchjournals.org/IJAH](http://www.onlineresearchjournals.org/IJAH)
- Emuobonvie, M.A (2010). Language as an Inquiry into the Meaning of life. Proceedings of the Benin Library Society Nigeria 2010 conference. Benin city.

- Emuobonuvie, M.A. (2012). Proverbs and The Management of Conflicts. In The Nigerian Linguists Festschrift series. Delta state University, Abraka Delta State. Falade, D.A, Adeniyi, I. & Olowo (2011). Participatory meansf Teaching Peace Education concepts in the Universal Basic Education. Lagos: Government Printer. Finnegan, R. (1970). Proverbs in Africa, the Wisdom of Many. In Mieder, W & Alan, D. (Eds) Essays on Provers. Madison: University of Wisconsin press.
- Fasika, G. (2006). Yoruba Proverbs, Names and National Consciousness. The Journal of Pan African Studies. Vol.4. 2006. 50-63
- Finnegan, R. (1976). Oral Literature in Africa. London: Claranta press
- Gbenga, F. (2006). Yoruba Proverbs, Names and National Consciousness. In "The Journal of Pan African studies, Vol. 1, No 4.
- Greenberg, J.H. (1970). The Languages of Africa. The Hague: Mouton; hAL 29.1, Publication 25 of the Indian University Research Center in Anthropology, Folklore and Linguistics. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Hendyng (1983). The Durham Proverbs. Oxford: Clarendon Press
- Herzog G & Blooah C.G (1936). Jab a Proverb from Liberia. London: Humphery Mi I ford.
- Hussein, J.U. (2005). The Social and Ethno-Cultural Construction of Masculinity and Feminity in African Proverbs. African Study Monographs 59-87
- Hymes, D. (1974). Foundations in Sociolinguistics: An Ethnographic Approach. Philadelphia: University of Penysylvania Press.Print
- Julia. K. (1992). An Introduction to Sociolinguistics. USA: longman Print.
- Koelle S.W. (1854). Polyglotta Africana, A Comparative Vocabulary of nearly three hundred words and Phrases in more than one hundred distinct African Languages. London: Church Missionary House, Gregg International. Reprint. Graz: Akademische Druck-und Verlagsanstalt.
- Hornby AS. (1998). Advanced Learners Dictionary of Current English. Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Ladefoged, P. (1964). Igbirra Notes and Wordlist. JWAL 1.1. 27-37
- Lamidi, M.T (2008). The Structure and Texture of English Translations of Yoruba and Igbo Proverbs. Journal of Language and Translation 9-1. Print
- Loeb, E. (1952). The Functions of Proverbs in the Intellectual Development of Primitive People. USA: Sameer Gupta

- Mara, J.K. (2006). The Virtues and Challenges of Traditional African Education. *Journal of Pan-African Studies*.
- Mey, J. (2001). *Pragmatics: An Introduction*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.
- Mbiti, J.S. (1995). Children Confer Glory at Home: Introduction to the African Proverbs Series. In Mi. Mokitimi, *Proverbs of the Basotho*. Ibadan: Daystar.
- Meledo, E.A (2015). A Soda-linguistic Analysis of Urhobo Proverb. University of Nigeria Nsukka
- Mensah, E.Q. (2010). A Morphosyntactic Analysis of Efik Proverbs. *GLOSSA: An Interdisciplinary Journal*. Pg 250-280. Print
- Meider, W. (1985). Popular View of The Proverb. *Proverbium*. Vol. 2. Pg. 109-143
- Migeod. C.K. (1911). *The Languages of West Africa*. London
- Mujidat, O & Babatunde, A. (2014). The Place of Indigenous Proverbs in Peace Education in Nigeria: Implications for Social Studies Curriculum. In *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*. Vol. 4 No. 2. Institute of Education. Obafemi Awolowo University Ile-Ife.
- Osundare, N. (2010). *Yoruba Green-Proverbs in English. A Green Study of Niyi Osundare's Midlife*: Covenant University, Ota Ogun State.
- Ntahobari J & Ndayiziza M. (2003). *The Role of Burundi Women in Peaceful Settlement Conflicts*, Paris: UNESCO
- Nwoga, Di (1975). Appraisal of Igbo Proverbs and Idioms. Pp 186-204. In Ogbalu, F.C & Emenanjo, N.E (eds)
- Obiechina, E. (1992). Narrative Proverbs in African Novel. *Oral Tradition* Vol. 7 Pg. 197-230
- Odebuni, A. (2008). A Pragmatic Functions of Crises-Motivated Proverbs. In *Cia Rotimi's The Gods are not to Blame*. Linguistic Online.
- Ogbaa, K. (1981). Interview with Chinua Ache be. *A Research in African Literatures*.
- Oha, O. (1998). *Semantics of Female Devaluation in Igbo Proverbs*. African study monographs. Print.
- Ojaide, T. (2007). *Urhobo Proverbs and Maxims*. In Ojaide and Aziza (eds). *Urobo Language Today*. Print

- Okoro, I.T.C. (2010). African Traditional Education: A Viable Alternative for Peace Building Process in Modern Africa. *Journal of Alternative Perspectives in the Social Science*.
- Omoera, O.S (2012). *The Significance of the Facekuerade Theory in Contemporary African*. Ibadan: Enicrownfit Publishers
- Osaba, J.B. (2014). The Nature, Form and Functions of Yoruba Proverbs A SocioPragmatic Perspective. In the *Journal of Humanities and Social Science*.
- Owomoyela, O. (2012). *Yoruba Proverbs*, published by University of Nebraska Press
- Scholz, Hans-Jorgen (1976). *Igbira Phonology*. LD-AF7, microfiche. Dallas: SIL
- Seattle (1969). *Best of Proverb & Gospel Corner Records*. Kachebere: Privately Printed
- Sowe, EQ. (2009). *Interpreting Yoruba Proverbs: Some Hearers Strategy*. California Linguistic Notes vol. xxxiv No.2 Spring print.
- Sperber .D.& Wilson D. (1995). *Communication and Cognitio*. Second Ed, Oxford/Cambridge:Blackwells,pgs 2-9
- Suru, D.C (2010). *The African Aesthetics and the Performing Arts. The Performer: Ilorin a Techno-Cultural Performance in Nigeria Vol.1 (eds.)*. New York: Scholastic, Inc.
- Renkerha, M (2004). *Semantic and Pragmatic Presupposition in Proverbs: a case study of Chinua Achebe's "Arrow of God"* In Babatunde, S.T and Dele, Adeyanju (eds.) *Language, Meaning and Society*. Illorin: Haytee Press and Publishing Co. Nig. Ltd.
- Roseline Egbe (2016). *Ejahgam Proverbs*. In Ozo-Mekuri Ndimele (Ed) *Language and Culture in Nigeria: A Festschrift for Okon Essien*.
- Salami, S.S. (2013). *The Dynamics of Ebira Language*. Okene: Dima Printing press. Sterk J. (1977). *Linguistic Communication: Theory and Definition*. In Rumbaugh D.M. (ed.) *Language learning by a Chimpanzee*. Academic Press, New York
- Tadi, N. (2007). *A Contextual Analysis of the Pedagogical Functions of Proverbs in Tangle Society*. In Atoye, R. O (ed). *Papers in English and Linguistics*. Vol. 7&8. Print
- Tiav, A.T (2013). *Semantic Contradictions of Some Expressive and Regulatory Proverbs in Tiv*. In *The Journal Of Communicative English Vol.1*. University of Agriculture, Makurdi.
- Timothy, A.A (2015). *Global Journal of Huliveman-Social Science. Linguistics & Education*. Published by Global Journals Inc. USA

- Williamson .K (1987). *The Pedigree of Nation, Historical Linguistics in Nigeria. An Inaugural Lecture Delivered at the University of Port Harcourt.*
- Whiting, B.J (1932). *The Nature of Proverbs. In Harvard Studies and Notes in Philosophy and Literature.* New York: New York University Press.
- Yankah, K (1986). *Proverb Rhetoric and African Judicial Processes.* New York: Falmer

## Appendix

### A list of Proverbs Discovered in Epira Language

Below is a list of 311 proverbs discovered during this research work.

64. **Òzá áná ángwẹ, óò géne yi ọzà áná zá ókú nì**  
Person that oil, is cautiously know person that carry wood it  
'The person carrying palm-oil is the one who cautiously avoids the one carrying wood'
65. **Íremá ìgrì, ó ví ìgòrì nì.**  
Back game, is the game it  
'It is the ending of game "ìgòrì" (ayo) that decides the game (i.e. the winner)'
66. **Ózìóní òzà ma óo ngu ìhiyèrè tú àhù, óo nyéngú sí ùhwò dàá neta?**  
one's child birth is leave defecates on laps, is would can knife cut throw
67. **Isèè éngu ùzongwà, ó vaa nyẹ ngu òdòkò.**  
Thing enter scarce, is will can enter common  
'The thing that goes scarce would later common'
68. **Òzà óò yí huví ano ri ísa, óò huví àkòkò ri .**  
One do not because salt eat food is because pepper eat  
'if one does not partake in a meal because of the salt, he (may) eat it because of the pepper (in it)'
69. **Àgé ózè oku, avaa ge ózè oswe.**  
Meet road wood, they meet road stream  
'people will always meet either where they fetch wood or where they fetch water'
70. **Òzà òósí ògò na dà ehú**  
One carry fuck-stick go cut honey  
'One to plunge a long fork-stick into the hive of bees (to bring it down)'
71. **Owúdu óniri irahu émè rè èngù**  
Afternoon together night never see eachother  
'Day and night never see each others'
72. **Òzà òo sí ànchi béri irego hù**  
Person is carry spear-grass along elephant-grass  
'One to uproot the spear-grass along with the elephant grass'
73. **Ónúvúu óó ná u ità, èwà ré, nàá úse**

Madman is tear your cloth, you to tear rag  
'If a madman tears your dress, you too should tear his rags'

74. Òkùtè òó ma bùrù hu àhù

Walking-stick is not large than leg

'A walking stick cannot be bigger than the leg'

75. Wàá sí ìngèrè wú wáa si òsù?

You have black-smith you acquired handle hammer?

'You have acquired the ability to speak the black-smith language (ingere) but can you handle the hammer?'

76. Òtarù yà ògàné, uvo ání tú Òmavi

Wound at Ogane, hand that reach Omavi

'Otaru is at Ogane, his hands reaches Omavi'

77. Òzà áná nyí òzà òò nyi ónirí ùhwò-obanyi áni

one that own one is own together knife- big himself

'He who "owns" someone owns him and his cutlass too'

78. Ízì cku veè chi, di ìrahu óò yí ye?

Place masquerade perform down, before night do not know?

'How can the night masquerade perform without the night knowing?'

79. Írezi ánáá zá òvàgù óchí-úvó éèrè

Dog that cut chimpanzee stick- hand seen

'The do that would catch a chimpanzee, it is the (strength of the) fore-arms one notices'

80. Énu ho ùmè óòyí hù

Yam outgrow time for roast

'A yam outgrows the size for roasting'

81. Írezí ùmè ògòni óo yára bè úyè ùmè ògòni ni

Dog know nowadays is how hunt meat know nowadays it

'It is the dogs of these days who knows how to hunt the animals of nowadays'

82. Ò hùsé ózè, o me nyé eeyi

One ask road is not miss direction

'He who asks for directions never misses his way'

83. Òzà áná hí ózà, óo vi òzóku yo ní

One that call one, is the elder him it

‘He who calls or invites another is “senior” to the one called’

84. **Òzà ó ma té irema igégé ónya**

One do not hide back finger one

‘One cannot hide behind one’s finger’

85. **Éyí ínóyí áá gà úye áná vù ní**

Eye public to share meat that spoil it

‘It is in the presence of the public that rotten meat is (best) shared’

86. **Àkú òò hu vá, òò yí hu vá, ánúsé ózé óo ye ní**

Corn is due harvest, is known due harvest, passer road is know it

‘Whether or not the guinea-corn is due for harvest is (best) known to the passers-by’

87. **Òzà èè chéèche, óvi eyi ádényara àni**

Person is lie, presence eyes half-brother himself

‘If one is telling lies (it is good) his half-brother is present’

88. **Òkú ápè óo su, dí àsi ápé ne**

Death pretentious is die, should carry pretentious burial

‘A pretentious death should be given a pretentious burial’

89. **Máa yé ózá óní mì nyì, èèyì vi uhu ó vi**

I know person that I have, not an insult is not

‘I know the type of person I have (as a relative) is not an insult’

90. **Òzà óò yì zu ku òretèè húuni èvà**

Person is not can remove seer from divination

‘One cannot remove ‘orete’ from traditional ‘eva’ divination’

91. **Évu ényí ò sí ósà na ri ágáganá ní**

Goat some is carry another go eat cactus it

‘It is some wayward goat that leads another to eat cactus plant’

92. **Ísì óo nyi ànyì, òò yi nyi anyi, óní íkénébé óo ye ní**

Fly is have teeth, is not have teeth, person wound is know it

‘Whether or not the fly has teeth is best known to the person with a big sore’

93. **Òzà ò ma si ònìya júwa ánásé**



One is not carry lonely describe anase

‘One should not use Oniya to describe Anase’

94. **Úno mémé bànyi itàhu àni tura ni**

Cow how big wound itself swell it

‘The size of the cow determines or accounts for the size of the sore on its body’

95. **Ózà ànà nyí írehi óo yé ízì éénu íní àni**

One that own house is know place leak inside himself

‘The person who owns the house is the one that knows the point that leaks’

96. **Òzà ó me zúé para úmómó àní hú**

One is not run leave shadow himself behind

‘One cannot run away from his own shadow’

97. **Ìhyàmà ini éngú ózòzà, àà chì óò ri ni**

Lice inside body individual, is suck is eat it

‘The lice in each individual’s body sucks the individual’

98. **Òzà óo ka ásì úhi ówéyì nyi òni óbányi óò nyi oní**

One is say not shy small miss his big is miss him

‘One who attempts to avoid minor disgrace, bigger one may await him’

99. **Úngwe òó kú òzà na ri isa òpòchíni**

Hunger is compel one go eat food wizard

‘It is hunger that compels one to eat food offered by a wizard/witch’

100. **Énu óo vù tú ini àánkú**

Yam is rotten left inside crown

‘If yam gets rotten, at least a small portion is left at the crown’

101. **Ìtáhù èyí tura ù, isì wéè nèè kù ò?**

Sore not swell you, fly would goes cover is?

‘If there was no sore, would the fly have perched on it?’

102. **Òzà òó dáà ányáva kú òhudà**

Person is cut side cover other

‘To cut from one side to cover the other’

103. èéyí yà ínì “òvàrà”, èéyí yà ínì “òtura”  
Not stay inside ovara, not yet inside draw  
‘He neither falls in “ovara” nor in “otura”
104. Èyìzà ó ma nyi ètu  
Gift is not attract bonus  
‘A gift does not attract requested free addition (bonuses)’
105. Òò hí írehi, dí óò hí èhè  
It full house, then it full outside  
‘The house gets filled before the outside gets filled’
106. Òzà òó ma si èvù yi ànèkù dí ò sí òbo tu òbè (òròkò)  
One is not carry goat give ancestor then is carry rope hold neck  
‘One does not offer a goat to the gods and still hold unto the rope on its neck’
107. Òzà ó ma si eyi ùhì dò ùkù ara  
One is not carry eyes shy contract diseases sex  
‘One should not through shyness (allow herself) to contract sexual diseases’
108. Òzà ó ma si òzà tu na ngu ini echi  
One do not carry one to leave till inside house  
‘One does not see somebody ( a visitor) off to (as far as) the visitor’s house’
109. Òzà òò sí úsi adeji na do usí éya  
One is carry lap rabbit go get lap buffalo  
‘ One to use the hind-leg of a hare to get the hind-leg of a buffalo’
110. Kà gúri oku, ví ègò ò kau èyì  
Move near corpse , let tears is force eyes  
‘Move closer to the corpse to force tears out of your eyes’
111. Òzà ó ma si àkìka rùvò dí ò ka ungwè òò ku ònì dà  
One do not carry pieces hold it is say hunger is make him once  
‘ One does not hold a charred piece of yam (as food) and say he was once’  
hungry.
112. Òzà áná yá èhì, óo ne oku owudù ni  
One that here home, is throw corpse afternoon it  
‘It is the person at home that does the burial at mid-day’

113. Wàá ka àsí ota awù rí òhinoyi, wèè yí re òzà vi òta óhinoyi  
If say carry friend your do king, you never see person be friend king  
'If you do not want a friend to become a chief, you too cannot become a friend to a chief'

114. Èné ka wa ri isa dí wàa ké èpè?  
Who say you eat food then you fetch soup?  
'Who ever want you to eat and you are resorting to licking the soup excessively?'

115. òzà òó ka ọni aà si utu irènù, u sí òtù ónúbè  
One is say him is carry put mouth, you carry put vilifying  
'If someone to expose to public ridicule, you should (be tactful enough) to expose him as a vilifying person'

116. írcku dú mi na yi èvàsà  
War chased me go to Bassa  
'War chased me out ending up in the hands of the Bassa people'.

117. úsú ka oni óo wu ubi, óni yẹ ka isu ovẹ ávọọ ni  
Death say it is kill monitor-lizard, it know say death come already it  
'The monitor lizard says when it receives a heavy blow on its body, then it would know that death has come'

118. ékú ónirí anuva éèyí zu nyi irèyì  
Masquerade together drummer can't come not malice  
'The masquerade and pot-drum(er) cannot become enemies or keep malice'

119. àá ká óchi òò mà ọsi òhi-ààrẹ wu, ú kúkú nee hùsè  
They say tree is fall carry owner-farm kill, you then goes ask  
ka óò chàkà àbà?  
say is break heap?  
'A tree was said to have fallen killing the owner of the farm, you are asking if the yam-heaps (he made) were scattered (in the process)?'

120. òzà oò zúnè usi àgùvì uvọ òtú  
One is force thigh because hand fore-leg  
'One to forcefully claim rights to have the thigh (of an animal killed) as a play

to be considered for the fore-leg'

121. **óbóòbọ òzà sí mè ónọrọ nì**  
Prank one carry display manhood it  
'It is by tact that one displays his manhood'
122. **èngúzávò èyí vi àngwàhi**  
Charm never is cowardice  
'Wearing charms against contingencies or eventualities is never (a sign) of  
Cowardice'
123. **ùkókórò òò yí dàkà sì ózì-ùùhwè, ùmòmò áni chírè àngwà**  
eagle is not yet carry child-hen, shadow it instill fear  
'Even if the eagle does not snatch the chick, its shadow (alone) instills some fear  
in the chick'
124. **ízi ó zìchì, áazii bàa nì**  
Plant is germinate, pass harvest it  
'It is from the point of germination that one digs up (during harvest)'
125. **Adú iràdà ná da, dí àva tu ònyí-ùùhwẹ òhùvò**  
Chase wide-cat go first, then before put mother-hen blame  
'Let the wild cat be chased off first after which we can blame the mother-hen  
(for poor motherly care)'
126. **ánigéré ka òhóò o ma nyi àruhwòtò**  
Black-smith say yes is not result slap  
'The blacksmith says that acceptance does not result in a slap'
127. **árásí èèta ọ vi isa nì**  
Tripod three is cook food it  
'It is on a tripod hearth that food gets cooked'
128. **òzà óò yí yẹ ízì áánò, áávọrọ ká ò yé ízì ó hurẹ áàvé**  
One is not know where goes, suppose say is know where is from come  
'If one does not know where he is going, he ought to know where he is coming'

129. *éè si èzè, àsí uvọ nyà àre ini èèhi dí àva si ó nọ*  
 They want dance carry hand hit seeing inside home then before carry is go  
*èhè*  
 outside  
 ‘When a new pot-drum is made, it is tried at home before it is taken out for  
 public performance’
130. *òzà ó ma nyi iràkwò na pa iràkwò*  
 One do not posses witchcraft go beg witchcraft  
 ‘One does not possess witchcraft and go begging for witchcraft’
131. *òzà tèrè náà yì ú ka wa yàáyitẹ, u ka ò kwèété yi u wa hùtete*  
 One shift go for you say want sit, you say is standup for you want lie-down  
 ‘Someone shifted to create space for you to sit down, now you are asking him to  
 stand up to make space fbr you to lie down’
132. *úye ikònyàà ánà wù, wèé sí ka wa ri étùpà èwurenà íní ani?*  
 Animal one that kill, you like to want eat hoofs fourteen inside it?  
 ‘Of only one animal slaughtered, you desire to eat fourteen hoots (out of it)?’
133. *àáràà sí ónẹ yì ú, áarẹ si ùvènè tu óò yì u?*  
 they give wife to you, still give mat put is for you?  
 ‘You have been given a wife, you want to be provided with a mat too?’
134. *òzà ánáá pà, éyí vòrò ka òpa írezi*  
 One that train. not ought to cater dog  
 ‘Someone being catered for ought not to keep or pet-dog’
135. *òzà ò ma si íresu òsùsù za ènyùsè*  
 One do not carry head empty hold iron  
 ‘One does not use the bare head to carry (heavy) iron’
136. *.óó zózà nyi òzà ụhì*  
 Is beautiful induced person shyness  
 “She is beautiful” induced shyness (in the person praised)
137. *òri baaba vi ònì írẹva vaa záa òrí kiki vi ọni isì vaà ji ùtò*  
 Eat glutton is one wallow will caught eater small is one thing will cut ear  
 ‘The greedy (glutton) would wallow in unsatisfied desire (when food is scarce)’

while the moderate feeder would (only) have their ears brushed (sniped) by flies'

138. **órhíjì ánáa siigé ità, áarẹ zu si ngwáá.**

Needle that hold cloth, used can use remove

'The needle used to sew cloth can also be used to remove the stitches'

139. **wáá chí ẹtẹ yi ọzà, yára chí ọ àgùvi ka wéè yí yẹ ọzà ana**  
When dig ground for one, beware dig is because say you not know person that  
**véc hóro ngu**

will fall into

'When building trench for somebody, beware how you dig it because you can never tell who would fall into it'

140. **éyí áná nyíne o dahí hu ne gùù ni**

Eyes that sunken are better pass better blind it

'Eyes that are sunken in their sockets are better than those that are blind'

141. **òzà áá ri irùvú, óọ rị ánáa ngu ájẹ àni**

One to eat toad, is eat that full egg itself

'If one has to eat toads, he should eat the one full of eggs'

142. **ízi òzà kúriku na tu, ó vi èhu útóò avi ni**

Where person cultivation go stop, is where boundary mark bush

'The point where one's cultivation ends marks the boundary of the bush'

143. **ánó kíkí áná ngú èpè áarongu**

Salt small that enter soup multitude

'The small (pinch) of salt that is sufficient for the soup meant for the multitude (engaged in co-operative farming)'

144. **áá mée ùkù, òzà ó ma mè usu**

They do sickness, one is not do death

'Treatment can be sought for illness, death has no treatment or cure'

145. **ìpààpà ó ma su bì**

First is do never crash

'The very first attempt never ends in a crash'

146. **ízi éyi vọ tù, áà hị ùchòchò ni**

Where hair remain point, is call shaved it

‘It is the point where you have hair left (on a shaven head) that is called  
“Uchocho”

147. **érçéré áà ho èpètè áámi ká òò nyi àngwè**

Raw is process boiled beans mine say is have oil

‘Can you imagine someone asking if my special boiled beans (epete) has palm oil’

148. **ózi èégú írehi ètètè, àdà áni àanyi áví ne**

Child thatch house gound, father his collecting grass throw

‘If a son is thatching the roof (of the hut) well, his father (assists) by throwing  
grasses meant for the thatching (up to his son on top of the hut)’

149. **yi nyi oza oní ehe sí úvó ka írema ka óò yí tu írachì**

Their no one whom provide give hand say back say is not shoot chest

‘There is no one whom providence gives supporting hand on his back that would  
not shoot out his chest’

150. **òzà óò yí ri ùbà, áà wú òò ne ta**

One is not eat vulture, it kill be throw away

‘Even if one does not eat the vulture, it could be killed and thrown away’

151. **oza ene re cyi ireku, ee ne opa ni**

One that see from war, they throw arrow it

‘It is someone seen at the war from that is shot at with an arrow’

152. **ihyèrè ènè hòrò óo hura ani-èbìrà kú ni**

Shit that watery is quick man-behaviour pack it

‘The watery stool is easier for the Ebira man to pack (than the solid excreta)’

153. **òzà òó béè avi írehi áni nọ èhè**

One is remove grass house himself go outside

‘One who removes thatch grasses from his own hut to give (or mend the hut of  
an outsider)’

154. **òzà òó nyí àngwè, éèyí ví irùvú áka ò si chíne**

One is have oil, not yet toad says is carry dish

‘If one has palm-oil, it is not for him to prepare dish of toads’

155. **ísá oní òzà ne tú òvìdi, óò hèé ni**

Thing that one throw meet ahead, is find it

'It is what one throws ahead (of himself) that he finds (later) on his way'

156. òzòzà óohu íreva ònyí ààni

Everyone suck breast mother his

'Let everyone suck his own mother's breast'

157. osí àrúhwẹ oweyì na pà òbànyì

collect slap small go beg big

'To beg for a bigger blow by (giving someone) a smaller blow'

158. òkú ẹtẹ kú òzà nyí írẹta rùvọ

Cover earth greet person pick stone hold

'One who kneels to greet, picking up stones (in the process)'

159. àvidi mèé, óò mè kíkí ni

First do, is do small it

'The first to act, his is a minor act'

160. éwu óò yí òka jí òzà íreru, ò yí nàmì-nàmì ání chíré oza àngwà

Snake is not yet cut person bit, is not twist-twist itself instills one fear

'Even if a snake does not bite, the mightiness of some instills fear in people'

161. íresu éné kúne enya yi òròkò óni vi áná ráa za ẹnya

Head put laden load for neck itself it that too hold load

'The head that ladens the neck with load carries load too'

162. o ku áàyí ẹvu va ápara hi ira

Is pack peels goat is covered on fire

'To pour yam peelings into the fire out of hatred for the goat'

163. úvó òó yara áa na irùvò bààbà, óọ naa dà ihyèrè

Hand if always is go anus much, it goes cut shit

'If the hand is dipped into the anus too frequently, it would bring out shit'

164. Wàá kú àyi ìtùtù, ví u ka ò nò èba hu ávóò ni

You display anger refuse, is you say is it grow pass bigger it

'Your display of hatred for the refuse dump only make it grow bigger'

165. òzà áná ka àsí ọcheè nẹtáà, ví òche ngu o ẹyì ni

One that say not pop away, then pop into is eyes it

'One who does not want any of the bursting nuts to spill away would have them



- popping into his eyes’
166. ɔnya óní ìtù ọọ yí zụ za, èpàhí ó zu za ba?  
 Load that mud is not can hold, wooden is not hold right?  
 ‘Can the load which the local solid mud ceiling cannot carry be borne by the local wooden platform?’
167. Mèé yí nyí òzà òpà, mèé yí si àhàbà àmì tẹ  
 I not pick one arrow, I not carry quiver my hide  
 ‘I have not picked from anybody’s arrows (so) I am not hiding my quiver’
168. dó té mì, ó me vù  
 Collect hide me, do not lost  
 ‘Something given for safe-keeping never gets lost’
169. írezi ènèè vù, ó ma wu “èèsi-èèsi”  
 Dog that lost, do not harken look-look  
 ‘The dog that would get lost would not hearken to (its master’s call)’
170. írẹsu áwụ óò gànà, éèyí vi ènyùsè áka wà sì zà  
 Head your is wide, it not iron say you carry hold  
 ‘If your head is wide, it is not meant for you to carry iron’
171. èè híné mì- ee híné mì, ónóbó síí ọọ írẹ  
 It sweet me- it sweet me, old carry collect pregnancy  
 ‘I enjoy it- I enjoy it’ leads an old woman to pregnancy
172. èé yí vù àgùvì èmi inya ákà àsí àvù ìrèvù ìní ida  
 It is not because me alone say carry wrestling fight inside rock  
 ‘It is not because of me alone that wrestling on rocky surface is discouraged’
173. òzà ó ma si eyi ósùsù mè ónógidí  
 One do not use eyes empty do masquerade  
 ‘One does not use just “bold face” to perform the feat of onigidi (Masquerade)’
174. ísí írá mèé áa sị hi ò ìrà nì  
 What fire does is what call it fire it  
 ‘It is what fire does that makes it to be called fire’
175. ùúhwe ka óni yà ini úvó óní inyáma  
 Hen say it here inside hand owner mercy  
 ‘The hen says that it is at the mercy of the retail trader’

176. òzà ó ma si irùku kèrèkèrè ka óku  
 One do not use forest every-every fetch wood  
 ‘It is not from every forest one fetches firewood’
177. òzà òòhèè èhényi hí àhà ònyáà àgùví ò kú àhúhù  
 One remove urinate in place one that it form produce  
 ‘One should urinate on one spot to produce foam’
178. Wáá wú òzà irèvù, usí uvọtà àwù zù ọ  
 If kill one tse-tse fly endeavour palm your look  
 ‘If you are assisting someone to kill the tsetse-fly (sucking him), endeavour to show him your palm thereafter’
179. Ogwéyí ọọ nèè wótò, ányí írẹta óní ó si áhù kú  
 Blind is start boast there stone himself is put leg cover  
 ‘When the blind begins to boast, he has his foot on a stone’
180. òzà ọ ri énu ónirí àánkóò  
 One is eat yam together seedlings  
 ‘To eat the yam together with the seedlings’
181. Eku óó yàrà èkù àbàrà, ọ si vàrà òzà  
 Masquerade is stay longer room, it will turn human  
 ‘If a masquerade stays too long in the room, it would turn to human’
182. òzà ó ma ji òrèrè hu ózà áná nyí ókú  
 One do not cut weeping pass one that have corpse  
 ‘A sympathizer does not cry louder than the bereaved’
183. írezi ó ma dóvidí úye  
 Dog do not forward meat  
 ‘The (hunting) dog does not run in front of the animal (it is pursuing)’
184. írenú ìzé ánáa wu ìzé  
 Mouth grasscutter that kill grasscutter  
 ‘The mouth of the grass-cutter often kills the grass-cutter’
185. òpà óní òzà re, ó mè chè.  
 Arrow that one see, do not hit  
 ‘The arrow one sees (coming) ought not to hit him’
186. òzà òò zà íreha no ùbè óò yí wù ùyè

Person is carry bell go hunt is not kill animal

'If one goes on hunting carrying bells, he would not kill any animal'

187. ò véné òzà híre òchì, dí ò sí iràgà màà

Is deceive one climb tree, then is carry axe cut

'One who deceives another to climb a tree then cuts the tree with an axe'

188. ọ dú èèví, ó ma za ònya

Is chase two, do not catch one

'One who chases two things (at a time) catches neither'

189. ò nyà òzà inòri ó ma ye kà ọọzi òzà, èèyí vi òzà si nyà.

is lash one cane do not know that is pain person, do not person use lash

'Those who lash people with canes do not know that it hurts (until you lash them back)'

190. òzogà ó ma nò èkùrà ne re ùhwè

Stranger do not go new-place go see moon

'A stranger does not go to a (new) place and see the (new) moon'

191. ené íreta tú èbá, ọzoza vi ánáa si ọvọ kú íreṣu ani

throw stone through up, everyone will would carry hand cover head himself

'If a stone is thrown up, everyone covers his own head with his hands'

192. àásí ọchì mò enyi re, òzà ó ma si òzà mọ ènyi rè

have tree measure water see, person do not carry person measure water see

'A stick may be used to assess the depth of water not human being'

193. òhààhàrà vj ánáa ji àhábà

Scrapping is that cut quiver

'Too much scraping (smoothing) makes a hole in the quiver'

194. àá yé ízì ájira tu àvi, òzà ọò yí ye ízì àrì na za

They knows place set-fire put grass, one is not know place burn go catch

'One knows the point where fire is set to a bush but no one knows the extent to which it would burn'

195. Wáá rí ònyíchére u káneyí úvota awù

You eat monkey you look palm your

'If you are feasting on a money take a look at you palm'

196. òzà ó ma si ẹwù tu íresú itù suara  
 One do not put snake in head ceiling sleep  
 ‘One does not put (leave) a snake n the ceiling and go to bed’
197. Utọ óò nyi àvi  
 Ears is have grass  
 ‘Ears have grasses (growing in them)’
198. Ví èè vene éyí hu nì  
 that with caution eyes blow it  
 ‘It is with caution that specks are blown out from the eyes’
199. èè yí vj ìhí orupa za úye, òò vù  
 It not the day trap caught animal, is rotten  
 ‘It is not the day a trap catches an animal that it gets rotten’
200. idè tu èhú idè dí òò ‘dàgù idè nì  
 He-goat reach level he-goat before it smell he-goat it  
 ‘A he-goat matures to a full he-goat before it starts to smell like he-goat’
201. éyí òzogà òó buru, ò yí rẹ ètè  
 Eyes stranger is large, is not see place  
 ‘The stranger has large eyes but does not see with them’
202. òzà ó ma si uvọ èva nọ íresu utù na ka àtáhú  
 One do not use hand two go head platform go pack kernel  
 ‘One does not use his two hands to pack palm-kernel from the (high)local ceiling platform’
203. ẹjijí òkúkù ó ma jèé dí ò da ira  
 pieces wood do not catch ready is cut fire  
 ‘A previously half burnt wood readily catches fire’
204. òbo ònyíchére àà sí ònyíchére nì  
 Rope monkey is carry monkey it  
 ‘The monkey’s rope (long tail) is a ready rope for tying the monkey’
205. ènyinyí òó tú íreyi nì  
 Jest is reach conflict it  
 ‘Making jest fuels conflict’

206. àáká enyì hì ířesu, àhẹtẹ àà vǎá nì  
Fetch water on head, feet is pour it  
'When one pours water on the head, the destination is the feet'
207. òsì úvó tú íní ihì tú òzà òsè  
put hand to inside gloves to someone punch  
'To put hand inside gloves to punch someone'
208. ìtǎhù òó túrá òzà írenu, òò yí za àzà ànàvò ka àsí rí àtǎhù  
Wound is swell person 'mouth, is not catch people remaining say not eat palm  
'kernel If one has boil on his mouth, it does not stop others from chewing palm  
Kernel'
209. úsú áná nyí òzítù, ómẹ su isu areyi  
Rat that have escape, never death death smoke  
'The rat that has an escape hole would never be smoked to death'
210. òri ògù ùùhwè na hi èvù  
eater gain hen go buy goat  
'To make gain from the sale of a hen to buy a goat'
211. ó tó írenu yí òzà ri ùyè  
Is reach mouth for person eat meat  
'To chew for somebody else to swallow the meat'
212. òzà ó ma ku òsì èva chíre ira ùpè ònyá  
One do not put rod two together fire same once  
'One does not put two drilling rods in the furnace at the same time'
213. òhiana mè ọ èyìzà, ú sí àkú èsómì  
Ohiana do you gift, you went greet Esomi  
'Ohiana gave you a gift, your appreciation (gratitude) went to Esomi'
214. òzà ó ma na íresu àni na hi òdì  
One do not sell head himself go buy title  
'One does not sell his head to buy red cap'
215. òzà áná ku èche hířoyì, òó kaneyi óríhí nì  
One that spread corn under-sun, is check rain it  
'He who spreads corn for wine under the sun is the one who keeps watch of rain'

216. írehi ká óni ó yí nyi anya, ọni óò yí zu na me òjířeka ànyà  
 Cricket say it is not have blood, it is not can go do settler blood  
 ‘The cricket says it has no blood so he cannot settle a dispute over blood’
217. òjí òzà íreyi, ó jí òzà ísú ni  
 cutter person quarrel, is cut person death it  
 ‘The one who reconciles people involved in a quarrel separates them from death’
218. òzà òó zú túrá ọchi òyíwù èyi, di òhwóóhu sìmà  
 One is can draw tree dried hair, the robust cut  
 ‘Expectation may be that the dry tree would fall but the (robust) fresh tree may fall instead’
219. Isa áná ngu ùsì, ọ ka àkú édu vẹ ni  
 Thing that enter hole, is say bring hoe come it  
 ‘It is what enters the hole that necessitates the need for hoes to be brought’
220. ékú oché-àhù óo ngu íruku, òzà óoché-àhù ò và si jine  
 Masquerade break-leg is enter forest, person break-leg is come now out  
 ‘A masquerade with a fractured leg entered the forest, a man with a fractured leg came out’
221. ónuvu ka àkú óni íresu, anavo ò vi éyi àni  
 Masquerade is pack his head, leave its hould eyes itself  
 ‘The madman says that if they want to help shave his head, he should be allowed to be present’
222. ùhì ya íní inẹ dí àjí atẹ óvwoṣṣu ye éhẹ ni  
 Fat is inside stomach bring out saliva white come out it  
 ‘There is fat inside the stomach but one spits while saliva’
223. òzóku òó zá ùdà áví-áví ni  
 Elder is carry frond leaf-leaf it  
 ‘It is the elder that carries the leafy palm frond’
224. ada ézi kú ìhyèrè, dí àsí írengwa ri  
 Cover sand cover shit, we use paw-paw eat  
 ‘Let us cover shit with soil to enable one to eat pawpaw’
225. éwu òó sí hu dí ú váá sí òkùtè nya ètè ni  
 Snake is has gone before you come carry staff hit ground it

- ‘The snake had gone before you start hitting the ground with cudgel’
226. ókúhá òò ràrà, àà jínee ùpè èèva  
Stream is meander, is cross times two  
‘If a stream meanders, it may be crossed twice’
227. úkókó ka onì vi ihyèrè, oni ó ma dọ ihyèrè  
Beetle say it is shit, it do not accept shit  
‘The beetle admits it is shit but does not accept shit (from nobody)’
228. ẹwu éné yí gòdò, òzà ó ma kàyira áni gòdò  
Snake that is long, person do not make-fire that long  
‘A snake that is not long does not require a large fire (to roast it)’
229. òvágù ènyí ọ ma ku òsa ùhù kà ósí èyi bòkòò  
Chimpanzee ought is not says person insult say have eyes hallow  
‘One chimpanzee ought not to insult another of having hallow eyes’
230. òzà ó ma nyèèyi che írezi òpà ùpè èèvà  
One do not mistake shoot dog arrow times two  
‘One does not shoot a dog with an arrow twice by mistake’
231. orihi áná zu, ètè óo sí óo hu  
Rain that falls, ground is has by drink.  
‘The rain that fell has been absorbed by the ground’
232. ínée à wu ni, òzà òò yí wu ùnòkò  
Mortar is hear it one is not hear pot  
‘It is the (loud complaint of the) mortar one hears, the (groaning) of the pot is Unheard’
233. íruku ri mi uvọ, mi sí uvọ nya me  
pot hurt my hand, I carry hand hit mortar  
‘Hot food-pot scorched my hands (and) I hit the mortar (to soothe the pain)’
234. .ékú òkùkù óo zú ówọwá idò ní  
Masquerade old is should new ritual it  
‘It is the old masquerade that guides the new one on expected rites and rituals’
235. úhi óò yí nyi oyi óọ nyí ùjì àkàsà  
Shame is not have thief is have basket ashemed  
‘If the thief is not ashamed, the old basket (used to carry the stolen items) is

Ashamed'

236. irezi óní ihinḅà òò kà ònì áa dà úye yi ri dí òsí itàhù túra ínì ipátà-

Dog that God is say he is cut meat it eat it use sore upon inside center

Ìresu

head

'The dog God intends to punish, He makes a sore to develop on the centre of its Head'

237. Enya ó ma rata hu íresu

Load is not heavy pass head

'A load is never heavier than the head (carrying it)'

238. ásíse úbà ọ ngu ùbà eyi ni

Feather vulture is cherish vultures eyes it

'It is the (dull and unattractive) plumage of the vulture that it cherishes (more than the radiant and beautiful plumages of other birds)'

239. ògweyi véé hée òsòrú

Blind will find palm-nut

'The blind may by chance find the juicy and palatable palm-nut'

240. éé túràà òbo, di òbo éètùrà íruku

When draw rope, then rope draw forest

'When the rope (climbing plants) are being pulled, it (in turn) pulls the forest'

241. irezi ò ráà ji òzà ána pa a íreru

Dog is has cut person that train it bit

'The dog has bitten its trainer (mentor)'

242. ọ si da, òò yí re èpè si va

Is has cut, it not see soup has paste

'He has cut a morsel (of food) but has no soup (to eat it)'

243. òzà ó ma kata yi isu

One is not powerful for death.

'One is never power and too powerful for death'

244. èehenyi áná húùní àgàdà, èéyí nyi ó mę gòdò pòòrò ini àgàdà àà

Urine that through thighs, never know is do long everytime inside thigh is

vàà ta



pour finish

'The urine (of a male) that shoots out between the thighs, no matter how far it goes, would come back back (to end) between the thighs'

245. itàà bo, íreyi ó ma hùrà bò

Cloths old, words do not always old

'Clothes get old or worn but never spoken words'

246. òzà éné yí yẹ àkòkò, òó sí àkòkò nò ini eyi nì

One who not know pepper, is carry pepper to inside eye it

'It is he who does not know pepper that takes pepper to the eyes'

247. ihi ó ma rata, éèyi vi anyì isẹ ya inì anì

Bag is not heavy, if not any thing place inside it

A bag is never heavy except something is inside it

248. "íva ọ sí pá", ó mè bo

Wonder is has happen" is not old

"It is a wonder", never grow old

249. ókú ó me hi úsì

Corpse is not fill grace

'The corpse neber fills the dug grave fully'

250. igùgù ó ma ri Pòòrò di àsí óvọ igùmò

Stump is not eat everything it without remain unburnt

'A tree stump does not burn without leaving a small bit (unburnt)'

251. ùkàdàrà írayi ẹẹtẹ, òò yí ri òzà uvọ

Cassava years three, is can burn ones hand

'A (hot) cassava flour meal of three years can burn someone's hand'

252. Dó yi ózì, ọ vi ónyì òzì nì

Take for child, it is mother child it

'Take this (gift) for the child, is for the mother of the child'

253. ùpòhu éné yi nyi írẹta, ózwéyi za túrá nì

Private-part female is have stone, child may play it

'The female private part that is bereft of pubic hair is what youngsters may play

With'

254. òvaréma tu ámi, ó ma wu ozi ùnè  
 Depart to me, will not make child cry  
 'As I depart, I will not harken to the cry of the kid'
255. òzà óyìzà ánáá ma ozi òndú  
 Person good that child birth godless  
 'The good and respected person, that gives birth to a godless child'
256. ví o nyi éyí iràdà kẹnẹ̀ nì, óò yí si za ùùhwè  
 She is have eyes wild-cat like that is not still carry catch chicken  
 'She only has the face of a wild-cat, she does not snatch chicks'
257. ihìnè írehi àni, ó me chee  
 Ant house his, is not sting  
 'The ants in his house never sting himself'
258. Nyénè ọ vi ọzọku yi tàngwà óni  
 Morning is the senior than hello itself  
 'Good morning' is older than 'hello'
259. Mmèémèé o vi èrò òzúrenu ni  
 Done is what neutralize curse it  
 'What have I done? Is the neutralizer of a curse'
260. òrí ihíhyòò, ka ihíhyòò  
 eater today, say today  
 'One who eats today and speaks (appreciates) today (only)'
261. Iràhu vi ùbà  
 Might is blanket  
 'Night is a thick (woven) coverlet'
262. òzà ó ma kóşẹ̀ ùvohà òyí mè ini ùnòbò  
 One is not learn left-hand when do inside oldage  
 'One never learns to be left-handed in old age'
263. óchí èèvà éé ma tùrà èngù, áná yá íresu á vídí àà síni  
 Tree two is not ontop another, that on head is before is carry  
 'If two trees fall on one another, the one on top has to be removed first'

254. òvaréma tu ámi, ó ma wu ozi ùnè  
 Depart to me, will not make child cry  
 ‘As I depart, I will not harken to the cry of the kid’
255. òzà óyìzà ánáá ma ozi òndú  
 Person good that child birth godless  
 ‘The good and respected person, that gives birth to a godless child’
256. ví o nyi éyí iràdà kẹnẹ̀ nì, òò yí si za ùùhwè  
 She is have eyes wild-cat like that is not still carry catch chicken  
 ‘She only has the face of a wild-cat, she does not snatch chicks’
257. ihìnè írehí ànì, ó me chee  
 Ant house his, is not sting  
 ‘The ants in his house never sting himself’
258. Nyénè ọ vi ọzọku yi tàngwà óni  
 Morning is the senior than hello itself  
 ‘Good morning’ is older than ‘hello’
259. Mmèémèé o vi èrò òzúrenu ni  
 Done is what neutralize curse it  
 ‘What have I done? Is the neutralizer of a curse’
260. òrí ihíhyòò, ka ihíhyòò  
 eater today, say today  
 ‘One who eats today and speaks (appreciates) today (only)’
- 261 . Iràhu vi ùbà  
 Might is blanket  
 ‘Night is a thick (woven) coverlet’
262. òzà ó ma kóşẹ̀ ùvohà òyí mè ini ùnòbò  
 One is not learn left-hand when do inside oldage  
 ‘One never learns to be left-handed in old age’
263. óchí èèvà éé ma tùrà èngù, áná yá íresu á vidí áà síni  
 Tree two is not ontop another, that on head is before is carry  
 ‘If two trees fall on one another, the one on top has to be removed first’

264. àzà írèma èkù, ọ vi èkù nì  
 People back masquerade, is the masquerade it  
 ‘It is the masquerade supporters that are the real (masquerade)’
265. éyí òzọga áa ri ùtà nì, òzà o me si ò èyi ànì  
 Eyes visitor is eat dept it, person is not give it eyes him  
 ‘It is in the presence of a visitor one incurs debts but it is not re-paid in his Presence’
266. òrí ìnyáaku áà wú pùpùruu íní írenu anì nì  
 Eater garden-egg that hear crunching inside mouth himself him  
 ‘It is from the mouth of one eating garden egg that a crunching sound is heard’
267. àá ka òzókú ọ va yé enu, ọ ka enu o vi ènù nì  
 they say elder is now know yam, is say yam is still yam it  
 ‘An elder is asked to help identify yam and he says “yam is yam”
268. Isa óní òzà òò yí ma ri, ó ma si ji àgù àahì  
 food that one is not do eat, is not suppose pass aroma nose  
 ‘What one considers undesirable to eat ought not to be taken to the nose to perceive its aroma’
269. òzè íní íresu ìvòvò zí du nì  
 road inside head fish take spoil it  
 ‘It is from the head that fish begin to rot or fish rots from the head’
270. íní ùsì ánánwàhí èèné anayivi nì  
 Inside grave coward throw brave it  
 ‘It is in the grave of (dug by) the coward that the brave is buried’
271. ándáyì esi hù, ùsè sí hùrà nì  
 Our people had gone, journey make fast it  
 ‘Our people have gone!, makes a journey faster’
272. òsìri ó ma si ònyò  
 Shippery is not make frog  
 ‘The slippery ground can never make the frog slip’
273. írehi áná si ìrikiti kà ètè, ìrikiti òò wù ònì  
 House that carry falsehood build ground, falsehood is kill it  
 ‘The house built on foundation of falsehood would be pulled down by falsehood’

274. òmè èyizà, ó dọ avọ èèrì ni  
Doer good, is collect thanks yesterday it  
'It is the good-doer that receives thank you (appreciation) for yesterday'
275. ájẹ ódivi ikònyá óo du àvèbẹ áje ni  
Egg bad one is spoil others egg it  
'One bad egg spoils all the other eggs'
276. úvó ónya ó ma si ènyà ne hi íresu  
Hand one can not carry load put ontop head  
'One hand cannot lift a load on the head'
278. òzà òò yí nyẹngu àà zùsè ka íresu àni óò yí hènyi  
One is not cannot is walking say head himself is not shake  
'One cannot walk without his head shaking'
279. Uvọ ana ku èpè, irahu ò yè ni  
Hand that scoops soup, darkness is known it  
'The hand that scoops excess soup (from the communal dining dish), is know to the darkness'
280. óríhi ótu-irùvò, óò nyí ẹkuhi àni  
Needle reach-bottom, is have day itself  
'The needle with a broken eye has its (useful) day'
281. óníví ózà óò yí yara aa rùru, àà vòrò kà óò nyí pè za òta  
Enemy person is have very is plenty, is become able is have help caught friend  
'If one's enemies are becoming too numerous'
282. Uuhwẹ ó me wóto hi iràdà  
Hen is not boast to wide-cat  
'The hen cannot boast (of dealing with) the wild-cat'
283. òzà ó ma zu òzà ọdọbà  
One is not point person elephant  
'One need not point out an elephant to someone'
284. írẹru èwù éyàà hi írẹru ikù ní  
Mouth snake they call bite scorpion it  
'It is the bite of a snake they are calling the bite (sting) of a scorpion'

285. ò sí vọ gèrè-gèrè, ó ma wu ozi inòmi  
It is remain nearly-nearly, is not kill child bird  
'Nearly hit never kills a small bird'
286. òbèè re, ó ma kà  
Hunter see, is not tell  
'The hunter sees but never tells'
287. ózì ònyíchéré, ó me nòzè tara òchì  
Child monkey, is never far from tree  
'The child of a monkey is never far from the tree'
288. Anyénee ví àdávù, òzà o ma si téhi ètè  
Female are mud, one is never take mark earth  
'Females are dried mud that are never used as landmark (to depict boundary)'
289. òzà ó ma si irùkù nà dà ènyi  
One is not take pot go fetch water  
'One does not take the large earthen storage pot (to the stream) to fetch water'
290. únómi ó ma rirà kà éèyi nyi izi avi vò jèè  
Wilderness can not burn say will have where grass remain stop  
'The wilderness cannot be burnt by wild-fire without leaving a small patch  
Unburnt'
291. òrihì òwòòwà òò si nyimà àà zù, dí àré si ipà ọwọọwa pèè.  
Rain new is has began is fall, then see use calabash new fetch  
'When new rains begin to fall, then new calabash should be used to fetch it'
292. òzà zùè yí írépa ná géri eku  
One run from trap go meet masquerade  
'One to run away (in fear) from the masquerade casket only to find himself  
face-face with the masquerade itself.'
293. áná vòrò kà éwu ani ó sì bùrù, ọ sí na àhère váhà ni  
What ought say snake his is too big, is carry go molting shred it  
'What ought to make his snake bigger he uses to produce molting scales that are  
shredded off'

294. óchí áná nyí ààngwé, óní ìhinè òyìzà híre ni  
 Tree that have oil, it ant good climb it  
 'It is the oily tree that (good) ants climb'
295. òzà sáásáni ó mè tù engu àni itáhu-írema  
 One himself do not puss body himself boil- back  
 'One cannot, by himself, squeeze out the puss of the boil on his back'
296. Atemẹ ka irahu o vi ùkù ni  
 Sheep says night is real diseases it  
 'The sheep says that it is the night that real sickness occurs'
297. èèna ájini o ma vi isa  
 Four today is not make something  
 'Four days time never make plans succeed'
298. átábá ényi òò yí zèè kà re áná yá eyi òsòò  
 Mountain one do not allow say say that at side other  
 'One mountain does not allow one to see the other one on the other side'
299. áhi òò yí tu, òzà òò yí re irùvó ààhwè  
 Wind is not blow, one is not see anus hen  
 'If the wind does not blow, one would not see the anus of the hen'
300. árasí èta ó me yi isà yi ùnòkò  
 Tripod three is not reject thing in pot  
 'A hearth made of three props or stands never rejects the (things in the) pot'
301. ókú óní òzà vàà dò nyári ò àni, áá vòrò ka ò sí uku naa  
 corpse that one will receive condolence is himself, it ought to is give greeting go  
 yò  
 him  
 'A death over one would receive condolences, he ought to give his greetings to  
 the dead when alive'
302. òtù- ùbè, ó ma gù àzà òòhù-rí ònya  
 Organizer- hunt, is not complete people twenty-with one  
 'The organizer of a hunting expedition cannot be counted as the twenty-first  
 Participant'

303. òzà éne ne ji irèvù, óọ dó òsè ni  
 One who go cut fight, is collect blow it  
 'He who separates a fight receives the blows'
304. ónuvu óò yí yẹ ka áa nyi izi áa zi òni, éyí vi ìhi ùkù ta  
 Madman do not know say if there place is pain him, yet is day disease go  
 'The madman does not know that he is sick until he is healed'
305. ìhìnè òò yi ye isi upa èzù vi  
 Ant is not know what skin tiger is  
 'The ant does not know what the hide (dried skin) of the tiger is'
306. ózì òdọba ó mẹ wèrè zi íní ùnòmì  
 Baby elephant is not secretly follow inside wilderness  
 'The baby of an elephant never moves about stealthily in the wilderness'
307. ànùvà èè ré, dī èku èè rè ni  
 Drummer is see, so masquerade is see it  
 'The pot-drum(er) is suffering, so the masquerade'
308. úsú íní èèhì óò si áná yá èhè nàà zù izi unẹ yà ni  
 Mouse inside house is carry that in outside go show place locust-beans kept it  
 'It is the house-mouse that often leads the bush rat to show where the locust-beans is'
309. àdẹ̀jì ka òzà òo sù ísú àpààpè, ví ò yẹ òzà ànà vi òza àni  
 Hare say person is dead death pretend, so is know one that is person himself  
 'The hare says that one should pretend to be dead to know those who are his people (i.e. those who really love him)'
310. irùvú ó nées zúéchí, óò yí du isà, isà àádú  
 Toad is jump running, is not pursuing something, something pursuing  
 'If you see a toad running, if it is not after something, (then) something is after it'
311. ákúté òó sí vira dí ọ varéma èhú irèvà ezi àni  
 Rabbit is grow old it is turns drink breast children herself  
 'When the big rat grows old, it begins to suck its children's breast'
312. ìhí òzà ne tá, ò mè he ìhyònòò  
 Day one throw away, is not find that-day  
 'The day one misses (record a loss), he does not find (that day)'



313. òboobo á sii ri íreta ni  
Prank by carry eat stone it  
'It is by tact one eats a stones'
314. íreṣi óò sí banyi, òzà óò sí hidùmà  
Problem is give big, one is given grunt  
'When confronted with an overwhelming problem, one should simply groan (grunt) over it'
315. òzà ma si ayi-òyíkwò tú íreṣa nó ubè  
One does carry anger to back go hunt  
'One does not take cassava flour along to hunting expedition'
316. òzà óò yí zu gu aḥe, òó ré aaḥe  
One is not can catch song, is see song  
'If one cannot take part in the singing, one should (at least) serve as a (good) Spectator'
317. ísá óní òzà bàrà ési bèe ni  
food that person favour, thing track him  
'It is one's favourite food (or thing) that is used as bait to catch him (or destroy Him)'
318. òwú íreku, óó jí íreḱú ni  
Shout war, is cut war it  
'It is the alarm raised about (evil of war) that helps to halt a war'
319. úvó ó sí rárà, àhù óò sí che  
Hand is carry twist, leg is carry break  
'The hand is twisted (sprained), the leg is fractured'
320. ínómi óó nowu odivì, èèné íreṭa ngu o írenu  
Bird is shout bad, throw stone into is mouth  
'If a bird sings an ominous song (cry), a stone should be thrown into its mouth'
321. ùnò òókúkù àà sí re owoowa mè ni.  
Skill past they use see new do it  
'The skills or methods of the past are what the present copy or imitate'

322. òzà ó ma ma si nyi  
 One is not birth then marry  
 One cannot be parent to and marry the same child
323. éyí ózà si wu íreyi ni  
 Eyes one carry hear matter it  
 It is with the eyes one listens to (hears) a speech.
324. éhẹ vẹ àpápà, àzà ényi áa sù di òsá àà nwàra àni  
 Life is beans-bread, people some are wrap then another are unwrap it  
 Life is (like the local) bean-bread, (while) some are wrapping (it) others are unwrapping it.
325. ọmẹ ẹyiza kú úru  
 Doer good pack backlash  
 Good-doer receiving negative backlash in return
326. òzà ó ma wù ònitù  
 One do not kill messenger  
 One does not kill a messenger
327. òzà óni éyí vòrò ka òzà nyisà, òzà ó ma dù èchí  
 One that not ought say one flog, one do not follow chase  
 A person you ought not to flog, you do not chase him.
328. ánúkú ka àsí irèyi kà, ò sí vọ tú ini úvọ írẹku  
 People say take quarrel say, is carry remain in inside hand war  
 The Uku people (Ogori) say the quarrel is over but it remains the war
329. Ḿaa yẹẹ àkàrà mé yẹ àngwè  
 I know beans-cake me know palm-oil  
 I know him as much as the cake (akara) knows palm oil
330. ihínébà ó ma zu di óò sí jì ẹtẹ nyi  
 Rain is never fall then is has fall ground miss  
 Rain never misses the ground when it falls
331. Ḿeè yí pa irùvu tè òkowù  
 I not rear toad keep consume  
 I am not rearing toads for the green snake (to consume)

332. èè yí nyí òzà ònì ehè si ẹdu-ùpòtò chíre uvọ, ka ọ yí kà àbà  
 There is not one that thrust carry hoe-new hook hand, say is know made heap  
 vaka ẹngu ànì vẹ  
 toward body himself come  
 There is no one that life thrusts a new hoe into his hands that would not use it to  
 make heaps towards himself.
333. Wàá nyí isùúrù, ákínàà vaa su atitọ  
 You have patient, coal will turn ashes  
 if one is patient, the hot burning coal would become ashes.
334. évináà ózi-oku òò yí yara àa ùwètè, dí vaa kú úvọta  
 Water-yam child-dead is if always is white, before they cover palm  
 If the orphan's water-yam is very whitish, it should be covered with the palm  
 (to hide it)
335. igègè áná vábè, ázu si kányi írachi ni  
 Finger that clenched can use touch chest it  
 It is with clenched fingers one can thump his chest (in boast)
336. ízí òzà dà énu chíre ẹtẹ ọọ nọ ne si ísé ni  
 Where one cut yam plant soil is go go search piece it  
 it is where you have tips of yams cut in the soil (during harvest) that you go to  
 search for pieces of yams (during critical periods).
337. igègè éeyí vi èbèèbè  
 Finge not done equal  
 Fingers are not equal
338. òsù guri engu òò rùrà re engu ni  
 sleeper near body is dream see body it  
 Those who sleep near one another see each other in their dreams
339. úvó ózwéyí òò yí tu íresu óchúkwú, dí úvó ọzọkọ óò yí ngu òjì  
 Hand child is not reach head platform, before hand elder is not body put  
 írenu ni  
 mouth it  
 A child's hands cannot reach the top of a raised storage platform (ochukwu)  
 and the elder's hand cannot enter the mouth of a small storage pot (oji)

340. àhù òó sí éza na ye aare ni  
 Leg is led beans go know farm it  
 The legs led (took) beans to know the farm.
341. óchí óbányí ázà ùnò zu ini àní ni  
 Tree big catch cow tethered inside itself it  
 It is to a big tree that a cow is tethered
342. òkùtè éyinyara óọ rara, ó ma hura che  
 Staff brothers may twist, is not never break  
 The walking stick of brothers may bend but never breaks
343. úsí óní ózà nyi óò si uvọ túrá ni  
 Lap own person have is put hand ontop it  
 it is on one's own laps that he places his own hands
344. òzà ó ma to ònyí-tó ònyí ò sí vi engu àkòkò  
 One is not chew one-to one is very similar body pepper  
 One cannot chew "onyi" seeds to have similar (or resemble the) effect of pepper.
345. úvó ònyá ó me ku òjì írenu  
 Hand one can not cover storage pot mouth  
 One hand cannot cover the mouth of a storage pot
346. isá ánáhù òzìnyáà ri, óòhu àzà ẹnì èèvá ri  
 Food sufficient person-one eat sufficient people they two eat  
 The food sufficient for an individual is enough for two persons.
347. àbà óó bányi àà gú óò éyí èèvá  
 Heap is big it plant is side two  
 if a yam heap is big, it may be planted on two sides.
348. àásí gáyí írahu dí òò ví ni  
 Meet confer night before is ripe it  
 Palm-nuts confer at night before they ripen
349. ésí tú íya, èèsi gu "ínyán" ònyónya óò vi ni  
 Used pound yam, use cover yam" same is cook it  
 Use it (i.e. yam) for pounded yam, use it for "inyan" is one and the same thing

350. àásí homo ézi- èhèbé, àsí na yi ání sósó  
 Give birth children-clan, given go give people Soso  
 Instead of children of Ehebe (clan), it should be given to Ososo people.
351. òó tú eyi, òò tù àahì  
 It reach eyes, is reach nose  
 What affects the eyes affects the nose
352. ècýí nyi óza ána hu engu àni  
 Non have one that sufficient body himself  
 No one is sufficient unto himself
353. òzà òò yí yẹ ohì ánáa wu isì  
 One is never know broomstick that kill fly  
 One never knows the broomstick that would kill the fly.
354. óchí ònyá o ma vi íruku  
 Tree one do not make forest  
 A tree does not make a forest
355. ózì áná sí tura òkéèhé òò yí yẹ été mèmè nòzè  
 Child that carry ontop shoulder is not know ground how far  
 The child carried on the shoulders does not know how far the journey is.
356. ùzì énéè yí nyí reyi, ónirí óchí àà tọ rì nì  
 Bitter-leaf that is not bitter, together stick is chew eat it  
 A bitter-leaf that is not very bitter is eaten with its stick
357. òzà ó ma kara ivòvò òyi wù  
 One do not curve fish already dry  
 One does not curve an already dry fish
358. éhí étù ùuhwe, ásisẹ ọ rée yí zẹẹ kà àyẹ ni  
 sweat beat hen, feather is prevent know make say they it  
 The hen sweats, it is the feathers that prevents people from knowing
359. òzà ó me tu iyà írenu ààni ji èhù  
 One do not pound yam mouth meant cut lumps  
 One does not pound yam meant for his own mouth haphazardly with lumps.

360. òzà éné yí nyi íresu, óò yí yè íresú mèmèè zi òzà  
 One that know have head, is not know head would pain person  
 Someone that has no head would not know what it means to have headache
361. ézè ónósiye, ó ma nyi ògà  
 Dance poverty, is not have applause  
 The dance of the poor attracts no applause
362. òzà óò yí nyi írezi àràkà, óó ónẹ zùbè  
 One is not have dog male, is female hunt  
 One that has no male dog may hunt with a female one
363. wàá sí èzù ha èvà, ènáà dò “izàzà” náà yó?  
 You use tiger do divination, who would “charm” covey it?  
 You have conducted divination for the tiger, who would convey the “izaza” to it?
364. éyí ózà gòrògòrò vi ùhwò  
 Eyes person presence is knife  
 One’s face (presence) is a knife
365. òzà ó ma gu òzà ẹnya ò si ka tu  
 One do not assist one load is carry hunch point  
 One does not assist someone to carry the person’s load to the point of developing a hunch-back
366. òzà ó hyayí úsi èvù tú íní èpè  
 One is forget thigh goat on inside pot  
 To forget the thigh of a goat in the soup (pot)

# DIALECTAL MAP OF EBIRA LANGUAGE

