Concrescence: Journal of Multi-Disciplinary Research
Vol. 2, No. 5, 2025, ISSN: 1595-9287

An Analytical Study of Some Proverbs used in Matrimonial Celebrations among the Native users of the Igala Language

Idegu, A. Solomon
Department of English and Literary Studies
Federal University Lokoja, Kogi State
Solomon.idegu@fulokoja.edu.ng

Abstract
This work analyses some proverbs used in matrimonial celebrations among the native users of the Igala language. Proverbs are cultural tools for transferring the traditions of a speech community, including their values, beliefs, and collective knowledge, from one generation to another. They are unique languages that are based on the traditions of their users. The data for the study were collected from marriage events among native Igala language users and an elderly Igala informant, using a tape recorder. The data recorded were later transcribed, with full attention given to the aspect of the data transcribed. Fifteen (15) proverbs were obtained from the transcription and subjected to practical analysis using Grice's Conversational Implicature and Austin's Speech Act Theory. The finding shows that context is important in meaning decoding. The finding also indicates that implicature is, in itself, very important because it helps in understanding the usefulness of proverbs. Therefore, the exploration of some elements by the researcher in this work, such as context, implicature, and speech act, is relevant in decoding the hidden meaning in proverbs.

Keywords: Context, Celebrations, Implicature, Speech act, Transcription

Introduction

The importance of language to humans cannot be underestimated. Language is the vehicle for the conveyance of thought and culture. The worldview of people, which is contained in their culture, is transmitted through language. According to Jary and Jary (1991:101), as cited in Odebunmi (2008), culture is the total way of life for an entire society. Culture encompasses all aspects of human life, such as codes of dressing, ritual norms, behaviours, manners, belief systems and language.

One of the various domains that contribute to the understanding of culture is language-in-use. Pragmatics, which is one of the major concerns of this study, takes context into consideration as opposed to language in the abstract (semantics), which focuses on language purely in terms of its systematic properties. Focusing on proverb-in-use as an instantiation of the domain of language-in-use, proverbs are considered as social tools that are employed to carry out particular functions in common social interactions and also to identify those functions. According to Meider (1985:117), a proverb is a phrase, saying, sentence, statement or experience of the folks which contains wisdom, morals, lessons, and advice concerning life which has been passed down from generation to generation. Okunowo (2012) defines proverbs as not only figural devices, especially within the context of literature, but also powerful socio-semiotic tools that are used to capture all shades of human experiences.

Pragmatics, according to Yule (1994:4), is the study of the relationship between linguistic terms and users of these forms. Thus, pragmatics is the study of those relations between language and context that are encoded in the structure of language.

Marriage institution is one of the established cultures among the African people, of which the Igala is no exception. Proverbs, therefore, represent the codes used to conduct the marriage. This marriage institution guides, instructs, and informs the affected couple as they begin their matrimonial journey in life.

A considerable amount of research has been conducted on Igala proverbs, but little attention has been given to the pragmatic analysis of proverbs used in matrimonial celebrations among native Igala language speakers. Hence, the study is anchored on a down-to-earth analysis of some proverbs used in matrimonial celebrations among the native users of the Igala language in order to fill the knowledge gap identified by the researcher.

Theoretical Frameworks

To account for how proverbs are pragmatically used in marriage ceremonies among the native users of the Igala language, Grice's (1975) Conversational Implicature and Austin's (1962) Speech Act Theory were used. The study of implicature has developed very well and now it is forming the cornerstone of most pragmatic approaches. Implicature is the expression of what is meant but not actually said. It is the meaning conveyed indirectly or through hints. Herbert Paul Grice is principally associated with the concept of implicature, which is the product of his cooperative principles. Grice identifies two types of implicature. The first one is Conventional Implicature, whose meaning is determined by the conventional meaning of words used in a statement. Levinson (1983) lists four conventional implicatures: "but," "every," "therefore," and "yet." The second type of implicature is Conversational Implicature, which is concerned with the way we understand an utterance in conversation in accordance with what is expected to hear. Conversational implicature varies according to the context of utterance, that is, what is left implicit in actual language use.

Grice explains conversational implicature in relation to his maxims: (a) Maxim of quality; do not say what you believe to be false, and do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence. (b) Maxim of quantity: make your contributions as informative as required; do not make your contributions more informative than required. (c) Maxim of relation: be relevant. (d) Maxim of manner: be perspicuous, avoid obscurity, avoid ambiguity, be brief, and finally, be orderly. According to Grice, these maxims are communicative behaviours that are learnt from childhood; hence, participants will conduct themselves in conversation in accordance with these principles, all things being equal. When a speaker flouts a maxim without the intention to either mislead or opt out and is not faced with a clash, a conversational implicature is generated. The recovery of implicature, therefore, depends on the contextual elements such as background, information, mutual knowledge, and participants. The working out of an implicature in an utterance depends largely on shared knowledge of both the speaker and the hearer, and on the presupposition of the context of interactions. Implicature, as a pragmatic tool, makes a speech event more meaningful as it unfolds the speaker's intentions that are tactfully shrouded. The failures of the speaker or writer that are not explicitly stated could have serious consequences on the accurate interpretation of a text or an utterance.

In Speech Act Theory, Austin (1962) shows the way we can use words to do different things, whether one asserts or merely suggests, promises or indicates simply an intention, persuades or argues, depends not only on the literal meaning of one's words, but what one

intends to do with them and the social setting in which the linguistic activity occurs. Austin's intention is on how to do things with words. He believes that the issue of doing and saying differentiates constative from performative.

Constative statements are used in making statements, describing situations and it is treated as having the property of truth or falsity. It is simply saying something true or false. While performative statements lack truth values, they have certain acts performed through their productions. It denotes an action that has already been performed by the speaker, as stated by him. Constative and performative utterances lie in the differences between saying something and doing something by means of what is said. Therefore, performative can only be felicitous when certain conversational procedures are enacted. Within the context of speech, especially the kind of words and persons paraded by the performative speech in the matrimonial celebrations, are usually performative statements, which mean they are all performing an action. Examples of performative statements are "I christen this ship the Joseph Stalin" and "I now pronounce you husband and wife". These two examples are designed to do something, that is, have an effect on the person or the thing the sentence is uttered to.

Conceptual Review

Proverbs

In the Igala speech community, proverbs are considered tools of creative and persuasive arguments. This is why the proverb is considered the key to understanding words and expressions in the Igala language. It is thus, defined in Igala as; *Ita che anya ela kuma du ne oli ola, oli ola che anya ela ita, egba duu koli ola lenyo, ita ma du fejuwn.* This Igala proverb means a proverb is the horse of a word, and a word is the horse of a proverb. When a word is lost, the proverb finds it out.

Proverbs constitute an important aspect of language use in Igala speech community, such as naming ceremonies, chieftaincy affairs, burial rites, marriage ceremonies, and vocations such as hunting, fishing, farming, etc. All these activities, therefore, provide enough spaces and resources for the day-to-day inter-personal conversations among the people.

Proverbs, according to Delano (1973:77), represent a self-evidence of truth among the users of the language. When proverbs are uttered by elders, they are taken by the hearers as sources of truth and confidence. Meaning that, once elders speak in proverbs, especially at matrimonial celebrations, the couples are expected to believe those utterances as they are meant to serve as useful instruments in building their future homes and togetherness. Perhaps that is why Afolayan (2005:176) opines that proverbs are vehicles of expressions and evocations. The proverbs used in marriage celebrations are usually used to encourage the new couple, and also to call to the mind on what they are expected to do to have a happy home.

In the view of Sotunde (2009), a proverb is a short, familiar sentence expressing a supposed truth or moral lesson which often requires an explanation beyond the literal meaning of the words used. Elders are mostly found to talk in proverbs, not for any reason, but for the level of wisdom and resourcefulness they possess. Therefore, in African culture, young people are not supposed to use proverbs, especially in the presence of elders, so as not to offend or incur the wrath of such elders. According to Bada (1970), proverbs present ideas in a picturesque and more challenging way than ordinary speech could have done. Igala people, like any other tribe, regard the accurate use of proverbs in society as a sign of wisdom, and it occurs in almost every discourse, such as marriage, which is the main concern of this work, and its meaning cannot be known solely on the basis of the words that constitute each of them. The ideas of proverbs are alike, especially when related to a particular context,

such as marriage celebrations. Proverbs are used by elders to warn, advise, and also to encourage the new couple. According to Crystal (2003:184), proverbs are products of human observations about what happens in their environments. Among the Igala people, it is believed that many marriages have crashed due to a lack of wisdom in running such homes. Proverbs, therefore, serve as an instrument to guide against such activities that could destroy a home. In the opinion of Norrick (1985:78), a proverb is a traditional, conversational, didactic genre with a general meaning. Proverbs said by elders during marriage ceremonies are usually informative, educative, and instructive because they are meant to serve a purpose that will help the couple maintain and conduct their matrimonial home peacefully.

Katz and Ferretti (2003) opine that proverbs are concrete instantiations of a general truth which are also sensible as literally true statements. Marriage proverbs are usually used as evidence of a general truth. These proverbs are used because the elders know that there are some marriages that have crashed due to delay in having children or some other problems in marriages. Therefore, all proverbs used in marriage ceremonies are to support the general claim or true statements, which are all sensible and useful to the couple. According to Marianna & Vogelzang (1996:2), a proverb is an anonymous miniature piece of verbal art used rhetorically to highlight an argument relating to human behaviour. It is a recognisable saying that is often combined with linguistic delight, which adapts figurative speech, metaphors and humorously exaggerated statements. They are unsystematic and may contradict each other. Their purpose is not only to give moral instruction, but also to support an argument by referring to what is tacitly assumed to be commonly accepted knowledge, whether or not the point is moral. They are usually used rhetorically. They do not require answers because elders use them to perform an action, and they are also used to support an argument or existing truth about marriages.

Lauhakangas (2007) states that proverbs are multifunctional and flexible instruments of everyday reasoning. They are propositions loaded with hidden feelings, wishes and intentions of the speaker. They serve as tools to cover individual opinions in public interactive situations. The ability to use them leans on common rules and recipes, and it is a part of facilities for outlining and organizing quickly and effectively things which we experience in everyday situations. Most of the proverbs used in matrimonial celebrations are usually meant to advise the couple and also to serve as tools to support the elders' opinions and suggestions on the way the couple will live their lives together without problems.

Proverbs as Pragmatic Phenomenon

Research on pragmatics as a branch of linguistics dates back to ancient Greece and Rome, where the term "pragmatics" is found in late Latin and "pragmaticos" in Greek, both meaning "practical". The modern use and current practice of pragmatics are credited to the influence of the American philosophical doctrine of pragmatism. The pragmatic interpretation of semiotics and verbal communication studies in *the foundation theory of signs* by Charles Morris, for instance, helps to neatly expound the differences between mainstream enterprises in semiotics and linguistics.

Grice (1975) enlightens modern treatment of meaning by distinguishing two kinds of meaning: natural and non-natural. Grice suggests that pragmatics should concentrate on the more practical dimension of meaning, namely, conversational meaning, which was later formulated in various ways. Practical concerns also help shift pragmatists' focus to explaining naturally occurring conversations, which resulted in hallmark discoveries of the Cooperative Principle by Grice (1975) and the Politeness Principle by Leach (1983).

Vol. 2, No. 5, 2025, ISSN: 1595-9287

According to Leech and Short (1987), cited in Osisanwo (2003:49), the pragmatic analysis of language of proverbs can be broadly understood by investigating the aspect of meaning which cannot be derived from the formal properties of words and constructions, but from the way in which utterances or proverbs are used and the particular contexts in which they are used. Therefore, in the pragmatic analysis of proverbs, context is very important to make the meanings of utterances clearer to the hearer.

Context refers to the relevant aspect of the physical or social setting of an utterance. Crystal (1987:48) defines context as "the place in which a communication event occurs". Also, Mey (2001:39) opines that context is a dynamic, and not a static concept. It is to be understood as the continually changing surroundings, in the widest sense, that enables the participants, in the communication process, to interact, and in which the linguistic expressions of their interactions become intelligible. Thus, there are many issues that make up the physical context of pragmatics. These include the participants (that is, a boy or girl, man or woman, old or young, etc.), particular activities (such as naming, marriage celebrations, etc.)| and the place (that is, the actual environment where a speech act is going on can be a major determinant of its message and or meaning).

Methodology

Since this study focuses on proverbs used in matrimonial celebrations, some of the data were sourced from marriage ceremonies, while others were obtained from an informant who was an experienced person and had attended several marriage ceremonies, especially among native users of the Igala language, where proverbs were extensively used during conversations. The data were obtained from marriage ceremonies and the informant through a tape recorder, which was later transcribed.

Analytical Technique

The analysis will be presented in a tabular format in the Igala language, followed by an interpretation and the contexts in which those proverbs are used. The analysis will apply the theory of implicature used for the study. Proverbs are used implicitly and Grice's (1975) Conversational Implicature is linked to the co-operative principle that will show the depth of those proverbs. Conversational implicature is, therefore, something which is implied in conversation, that is, something which is left implicit in actual language use. In conversation, what is meant often goes beyond what is said, and this additional meaning is inferred and predictable. The significance of this theory to this work is that proverbs are usually said or used implicitly and conversational implicature will show the depth of these proverbs.

The theory of J.L. Austin's (1962) Speech Act asserts that "saying amounts to doing". The proverbs that are said in marriage ceremonies perform different actions and this theory will show the locutionary act performing different actions. The proverbs, when said, are locutionary acts and the intention behind the proverbs, which is the illocutionary act, will be performed.

Vol. 2, No. 5, 2025, ISSN: 1595-9287

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

S/N	IGALA PROVERBS	LITERAL MEANINGS	ILLOCUTIONARY ACTS	IMPLICATURE
I.	Iche lola kone ki ne oyabibi, amaa ichenwu ubailo tule kone kinana ebiene.	To marry a bad woman is easy, but it is more dangerous to have a bad in-law.	Warning	Fear
2.	Iche lola kone ki ne oya, amaa eneke deju to oya che enwu ogbogaga.	To marry a wife is easy, but to provide for her upkeep is the most important task.	Warning	Preparedness for an action
3.	Oya ogba ahiujenwu koko nwu aboji runi.	The most senior wife does not cook the food which the husband deters.	Warning	Disappointment or Expectation in behaviour courtesy.
4.	Oya oko ki ya chu okonwu ukata agbane unyi okonwun.	A housewife who is disrespectful does not last long in the matrimonial home.	Warning	Courtesy.
5.	Oya duu kiya abu ata okonwu ina che molanwu kikwu unyi okole.	A wife who insults her father-in-law is ready to leave her matrimonial home.	Warning	Respect for elders.
6.	Onobule duu kima ne ofilini neju kakini ola ubi majenwu ki ya nokoniyi.	A woman who lacks decorum believes she is unlucky in finding a husband.	Warning	Good conduct.

7.	Itali duu koko du gwo oya nwu ogijo che maja todu oya nwu tito.	The cane which was used to beat the senior wife, is in the safe for the new wife.	Warning	Decorum
8.	Oya duu kiya kpa oma okonwu igbe ki folanwu mu kiya deju do enwu ebiene.	Any wife who beats her husband's child should be ready to face the music.	Warning	Respect
9.	Onobule ki nail bibi idukpe kine alibibi le nyunyi okonwuni.	A lady with bad character should not go to her husband's house with that same character.	Advising	Respect and good conduct
10.	Enekele duu kuma adu oyanwu tito anwu ki deju do idu kpe kiya na nugo gogo loji ogba geni.	The man whom we are bringing the bride to meet does not need to stretch his neck to see behind the wall.	Advising	Anxiety or Eagerness
11.	Oma duu ki gba bu opia jo dukpe ku mamudunwu, ila bu ukoche jo, mala mu dunwu ge.	When a child is due to have a cutlass, he/she should be given one, and when he/she is also due to have a hoe, he/she should be offered.	Advising	Procrastination

12.	Onobule duu ki munyinwu rida kima ru alibibinwu dani ineke adodo unyi oko leni.	A wife who changes her house, but not her bad attitude has not reached the destination of her matrimonial journey.	Advising	Courteousness in behaviour
13.	Egba duu koko etitito alo tugbo oyanwu etito, atogba oya dupe ki mudabi	When a groom comes to see his bride, the go-between should withdraw.	Advising	Privacy or avoidance of intrusion from a third party
14.	Matene enekele ki nubi kiwa kuma du oyanwu, enekele ki nuke ubi chane efolonwu nyi ate awogba, ila ma kakini ichi uke ubi ma kayini.	A request for a suitor who has a back so that he could be given a wife, a hunch back person surges forward, not knowing that it is not the hunch that is requested in this regard.	Advising	Steadiness in action
15.	Oya duu kenekele fune, onwule amoma anejunwuyi.	The wife whom a man marries is the one whose children would be cherished.	Advising	Love-lust

Discussion

Based on their pragmatic functions, the proverbs that constitute the data of the study can be broadly classified into two:

1. Proverbs of warning

2. Proverb of advising

Proverbs of warning: In this category, proverbs are used among the native users of the Igala language during marriage events to warn the would-be couple against the dangers of unpleasant consequences in the matrimonial home resulting from bad social conduct.

The following extracts from the analysis are examples of proverbs used in this context:

Proverb 1

To marry a bad woman is easy, but it is more dangerous to have a bad in-law.

The illocutionary act of this proverb is "warning" against marrying a wife from a bad family. The linguistic context contained in this proverb is that a man can marry any kind of woman, but it will be disastrous to have a bad in-law. The implicature contained in this proverb is the need for carefulness with regard to the family they marry into to ensure that the in-laws are not only resistive of them, but are unbiased and impartial in handling marital disputes among the couple. By extension, this implicature underscores a fundamental difference between the Igala traditional marriage, a microcosm of the African marriage system, and the Western system of marriage. The pragmatic interpretation of this proverb suggests that Igala traditional marriage allows in-laws to intervene and broker peace during conflicts in their children's marriages.

Proverb 2

To marry a wife is easy, but to provide for her upkeep is the most important task.

The illocutionary act is "warning" against inadequate financial preparation before marriage. The linguistic context is situated within its context of use. The proverb is usually directed at young men whose anxiety to get married does not allow them to make adequate preparation before their marriage. Thus, the proverb shows how the Igala sparkers place emphasis and efficiency on the upkeep of the woman in the matrimonial home, which is the basis of measuring how responsible a man can be. A man who is unable to cater to his wife's needs has neglected an important responsibility.

Proverb 3

The most senior wife does not cook the food which the husband deters.

The illocutionary act contained in this proverb is a "warning" to wives against the attitude of displeasing their husbands. This is the situational context that usually underpins the utterance. This is when a wife in a polygamous setting exhibits a disrespectful attitude towards her husband. The implicature contained in the utterance is that the Igala traditional marriage system permits a man to marry more than one wife, depending on how wealthy he is. Because of the social problems associated with polygamy, the proverb is used to ensure a harmonious marital relationship between a man and his wives. The proverb teaches morals and how a lady should behave well toward her husband. The reference in the proverb to "the most senior wife" reflects the societal expectation of her in terms of leadership and exemplary lifestyle among the younger wives, as she is supposedly more familiar with her husband's likes and dislikes, having lived with him longer.

Proverb 4

A housewife who is disrespectful does not last long in the matrimonial home.

The illocutionary act of this proverb is "warning" to women against disrespecting their husbands and their in-laws. The implicature contained in this proverb is the need for married women to be courteous not only to their husbands, but also to their in-laws. This

shows how Igala culture places a high premium on the culture of courtesy and respect among women. This serves as the basis for determining whether a wife comes from a good family background.

Proverb 5

A wife who insults her father-in-law is ready to leave her husband's house.

The illocutionary act of this proverb is "warning" against disrespect for elders. The linguistic context of the proverb is a warning to the bride not to insult any elder, especially her father-in-law. The implicature reveals the high value the Igala communities place on respect. To disrespect an elder is an act of bad conduct. Therefore, this proverb warns against disrespecting an elder or one's father-in-law. The context in which this proverb is given is when a bride shows some signs of disrespect towards an elderly person.

Proverb 6

A woman who lacks decorum believes she is unlucky to find a husband.

The illocutionary act of this proverb is "warning" against the consequences of bad conduct by a woman delayed in marriage. The linguistic context contained in this proverb shows that the warning is meant for a young lady who lacks good behaviour. The implicature of this proverb is to encourage good behaviour. It also implies that good conduct is not optional, but obligatory for every human being in the Igala speech community.

Proverb 7

The cane, which was used to beat the senior wife, is in the safe for the new wife.

The illocutionary act of this proverb is "warning" against behaviour among married women. The linguistic context of the proverb shows that what is done to the senior wife can also be done to the new wife. The implicature contained in the proverb is that the new wife should be careful not to exceed her limits, because she can be treated in the same way the senior wife was treated. The context is usually used when the new wife shows some kind of disrespect.

Proverb 8

Any wife who beats her husband's child should be ready to face the music.

The illocutionary act of this proverb is "warning" against intolerance in a polygamous setting. The linguistic context in this proverb shows that a wife should not abuse her husband's children because if she does, she is indirectly abusing her husband. The implicature contained in this proverb is that a wife should tolerate anything that belongs to her husband and care for all her husband's things as if they were her own, especially her husband's children, whom she did not give birth to, but whom she is responsible for since she is married to their father. The context in which this proverb can be used is when the wife maltreats her stepchildren, and she is being warned to stop, otherwise she will face the consequences.

Vol. 2, No. 5, 2025, ISSN: 1595-9287

Proverbs of Advising

In Igala tradition, a wedding is a medium for elders to advise the new couple on what they should do or should not do in their home. Most of the proverbs used in marriage ceremonies are to advise the bride on how to respect and be of good conduct in her husband's house.

Proverb 9

A lady with bad character should not go to her husband's house with that same character.

The illocutionary act of this proverb is a piece of "advice" given on the need for the lady to be of good behaviour. The linguistic context contained in this proverb shows that a lady's bad behaviour should not follow her to her husband's house. The implicature contained in this proverb is that a lady needs to behave well and she should be of good conduct everywhere. The context in which this proverb can be used is when a lady behaves in a disrespectful manner.

Proverb 10

The man whom we are bringing the bride to meet does not stretch his neck to see her behind the wall.

The illocutionary act contained in this proverb is "advice" against indulging in pre-marital sexual relationships. Its linguistic context suggests that the advice is intended for young men who have met the traditional initial requirements for marriage. The implicature contained in the utterance relates, first, to the need for the intended bridegroom to exercise sexual restraints until the white wedding ceremonies are conducted. This portrays the Igala as a people with a culture that values decency. The feature analysis of this proverb shows that, in terms of its context, the proverb is usually given by the relatives of the bride, who must be an elder in the society, and it is usually used when the intended bridegroom begins to exhibit an amoral tendency towards his would-be bride.

Proverb 11

When a child is due to have a cutlass he/she should be given one. When he/she is also due to have a hoe, he/she must be offered.

The illocutionary act in this proverb is "advice" against late marriage. The linguistic context suggests that when a man or a woman is due to get married, they should do so on time. The implication is that someone who is married is considered well-off and more respected in society than an unmarried person. The context in which this can be used is when a man or woman who is due to get married is not showing any signs of marriage.

Proverb 12

A wife who changes her house, but not her bad attitude, has not reached the destination of her marital journey.

The illocutionary act contained in this proverb is "advice" to ladies to put up good conduct in their matrimonial homes. The linguistic context suggests that a housewife should not only change her physical appearance, but also undergo a change in character, morals, and

values. This implies that wives are expected to be of good conduct and manners in their husband's house. By extension, the proverb suggests the importance the Igala people place on the virtue of character over physical appearance. The dignity and beauty of a woman in marriage, in this context, is measured by her moral character. It is used when a housewife lacks decorum.

Proverb 13

When a groom comes to see his bride, the go-between should withdraw.

The illocutionary act is "advice" on the need for effective social intimacy between the would-be couple and the absence of a third party. The linguistic context is that the would-be bride and groom need some level of privacy so that they can get to know themselves very well. The implicature is that the couple should avoid intruders. The context in which this is used is when the couple or would-be couple wants to discuss.

Proverb 14

A request for someone who has a back so that he could be offered a wife, a hunch back person surges forward, not knowing that it is not the hunch that is requested in this regard.

The illocutionary act contained in this proverb is "advice" for ladies to bring responsible husbands. The linguistic context shows that the advice is meant for a lady who is planning to get married. The implicature of the proverb is that the intended bride should bring a man from a good family background or one with a bright future to marry. The context in which this proverb can be given is when a lady is seen with a man who is not responsible or not from a good or well-to-do family.

Proverb 15

The wife whom a man marries is the one whose children would be cherished.

The illocutionary act is "advice" on the need for legitimate marriage among women. The linguistic context points out that a lady should be legally married to a man, for she will be fully accepted by him. The implicture of this proverb is that ladies should only be in the confines of marriage before having sexual relationships. The context in which this proverb can be used is when there is a show of uncooperation with one's children.

Findings and Conclusion

The findings presented in this study are based on the different contexts, implicatures, and illocutionary forces of the proverbs. The analysis reveals that no communication activity can occur without context. This helps us to foreground the importance of contextuality. The finding also shows that implicature cannot be underestimated, as it helps us understand the usefulness of proverbs. Similarly, the finding also shows how proverbs have had a great influence on the lifestyles of many people through religion and culture. Therefore, some of the elements explored by the researcher in this study, such as context, implicature, and speech act, are relevant in decoding the hidden meanings in proverbs.

In conclusion, the study has demonstrated that proverbs can be used to instruct the young in good conduct and how elders utilise them to impart specific codes of conduct to their fellow human beings, as well as to remind listeners of wisdom and truth. It is generally accepted that the proverbs and sayings of a people show their national character and personalities.

Vol. 2, No. 5, 2025, ISSN: 1595-9287

Refernces

Afolayan, M.O. (2005). *Aabo Oro: The Indigenous Language of Education in Yoruba in Toyin Falola and Ann Genora (ed.) Yoruba Creativity: Fiction, Language, Life and Songs.* T. Renton, TJ: African World Press, 2005, 165-182.

Austin, J.L. (1962). *How to do things with Words. Cambridge:* Harvard University Press.

Bada, S.O. (1970). *Awon Owe Yoruba ati Isedale won.* Ibadan: Oxford University Press.

Crystal, D. (2003). The Cambridge Encyclopedia of the English Language. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Grice, H.P. (1975). *Cooperative Principles.* New York: Longman Inc.

Grundy, P. (2006). *Implicit Meaning:* Sperber and Wilson's Relevance Theory. Chapter 5, in doing Pragmatics (2 ed.). London.

Honeck, R.P. (1997). *A Proverb in Mind.:* The Cognitive Science of Proverbial Wit and Wisdom. Mahhwah, New Jersey London: LAWRENCE ERLBAUM ASSOCIATES.

Katz, A.N. and Ferretti, T.R. (2003). *Reading Proverbs in Context:* The role of Explicit Markers. Discourse Processess, 36(1) 19-46.

Lauhakangas, O. (2007). *Use of Proverbs and Narrative Thought.* Folklore, Vol. 35, 77-84.

Leech, G.N. (1983). *Principles of Pragmatics.* London: Longman.

Levinson, S. (1983). *Pragmatics.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Louis, C. (2000). *Proverbs and the Politics of Language.* Proverbium 17, pp 172-194.

Mariana, E. & Vogelzang, H.L. (1996). *Mesopotamian Poetic Language: Sumerian and Akkadian,* STY.

Matthew, P.H. (2007). *Oxford Concise Dictionary of Linguistics, New YORK: Oxford University Press.*

Meider, (1985). *Popular Views of the Proverbs.* Proverbium 2, pp. 109-143).

Mey, W. (2001). *Pragmatics:* An Introduction. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.

Norrick, N. (1985). *How Proverbs Mean:* Semantic Studies in English Proverbs. Amsterdam: Mouton.

Odebunmi, A. (2008). *Pragmatic Functions of Crisis-Motivated Proverbs* in Ola Rotimi's "The

Gods Are not to Blame". Linguistic Online 33: 1. 73-84. Olatunji, O.O. 1984. Features of Yoruba Poetry. Ibadan: University Press Ltd.

Okunowo,Y. (2012). *Proverbs as Aesthetics of Meaning* in Osundare's Poetry. The Criterion.Satunde, F.I. (2009). *Yoruba Proverbs and Philosophy.* Abeokuta: Damsan Nig. Company.

Usman, S.S. (1987). *Olufia Ekeji.* The Igala Language Dictionary, Printed and Bound in Nigeria by JAS Inestment Services, Anyigba, Kogi State.