

# SOCIOLINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF PROVERBS IN ZULU SOFOLS'S WEDLOCK OF THE GODS

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## Abstract

Proverbs have served as didactic and instrumental tool in sharpening the moral and behavioural trajectory. This study carries out a sociolinguistic survey of Zulu Sofola's *Wedlock of the Gods* with the aim of exploring and analysing proverbs from a sociolinguistic perspective in the context of English as a second language in Nigeria. Studies have been carried out on the selected text, but the sociolinguistic approach has not been explored to drive home the intricacies of language and the society which uses it. This study adopts Dell Hymes's *Ethnography of Communication* as its theoretical framework. This is because of Dell Hymes' SPEAKING acronym's relevance, which accounts for sociolinguistic variables such as setting, scene, participants, ends, act sequence, instrumentality, and genre. The study finds out that ample proverbs of about thirty exist in the text. Still, but this paper will qualitatively analyse fifteen to explicate the sociolinguistic implication of the selected proverbs. The data also reveal that there are different motives for delving into this study, which varies from castigating, compelling, and admonishing erring characters to teach didactic lessons. Also, proverbs in these texts help clarify conflicts and explain Igbo cultural values/mores.

**Keywords:** Sociolinguistics, Proverbs, didactic, Ethnography of Communication.

## Introduction

The culture of a particular ethnic group is seen in their language. No culture exists without a language that differentiates it from others. Language is a tool used to identify a particular culture or ethnic group. It is part of culture and culture is a part of language, and both are intricately interwoven such that one cannot separate the two without losing their significance. Language is a means of communication by humans, living a symbiotic life in an environment.

Different countries and cultures universally use proverbs to portray the dynamics of the speech community to which they exist. Language is used as a means of communication in a particular speech community. Devices like idioms, folklores, proverbs, etc. help to portray the cultural heritage of that society, and this is universal to all ethnic groups. But for the purpose of this paper, proverbs will be explored. Proverbs are universally used by different countries and cultures to portray the dynamics of the speech community to which they belong.

The origin of Proverbs could be dated as far back as 3000 B.C. Proverbs are probably the oldest extant documents of the Hebrew wisdom movement, of which King Solomon was the founder and patron. They revolved around the professional sages, or wise men and scribes in the service of the court. They consisted primarily of maxims about the practical, intelligent way to conduct one's life and speculations about the very worth and meaning of human life. Proverbs contain truths that apply universally to all of mankind. It contains warnings, admonitions, standards of conduct and speech, revelation and promises. Our modern world would profit significantly if more of us would read and apply what the Proverbs teach. Proverbs are highly compressed, carefully chosen words of wisdom. In the Bible, they are found in the Book of Proverbs. The different definitions and uses of

proverbs make it a good topic for research. In the African setting typically and in Nigeria, particularly, proverbs are extensively used by different writers and scholars to beautify the cultural heritage of speech communities. No speech community exists without its unique Proverbs attributed to it.

Achebe says proverbs are ‘the palm oil with which words are eaten’ (Ilu bụ mmanụ eji eri okwu). This remark about proverbs by Achebe portrays the rich cultural heritage of the Igbo speech community. A good understanding of Igbo proverbs would automatically lead one to understand the Igbo man, his philosophy of life, tradition, culture, and mode of living. It is in them that the accumulated knowledge, wisdom, religious belief, and experience of the Igbo man throughout his history have been embedded and preserved.

The purpose of this paper is to explore a sociolinguistic view of proverbs in Zulu Sofola’s *Wedlock of the Gods* to portray the rich cultural heritage of Nigeria, the Igbos, and to elucidate further the motives proverbs play in such society. This research is undertaken to investigate the theoretical basis for the proverbs that accounts for both linguistic variation from individual to individual and relative linguistic coherence across the social realm.

By examining these proverbs, this paper will insightfully cushion the moral bedevilment of the younger generation as to whom Sofola targeted in her play.

Adopting Sociolinguistics as the approach to this paper implies that; Sociolinguistics is the study of language, and it is affected by various factors like region, social class, and gender. When conducting their studies, sociolinguistics often participates in ethnography research, which is the study of culture and social patterns, which is the essence of this study.

## Review of Related Literature

Proverbs are short, traditional sayings that convey wisdom, advice, or cultural insights. They often offer a concise and memorable way to express common truths or lessons about life, human behaviour, or specific situations. Proverbs are typically passed down through generations and reflect the values and beliefs of a particular culture. They provide guidance, make a point, or emphasize a moral or practical lesson.

Obiechina in Asika Emmanuel's work on "Proverb as a Crucial Element in Uchenna Nwosu's *The Rejected Stone*" defines proverbs as: "...the kernel which contains the wisdom of traditional people. They are philosophical and moral expositions shrunk to a few words, and they form a mnemonic device in societies in which everything worth knowing and relevant to day-to-day life must be committed to memory" ... (156).

Onuekwuso sums up these definitions by looking at proverbs from their significant characteristics. He believes proverbs are widespread, common and numerous. They are pleasant expressions which adorn the rhetoric of a people. They constitute a part of the oral tradition of a people, which is unconsciously acquired from generation to generation. In his words:

A proverb is a philosophical, allusive, elusive and metaphorical citation that gives credence to traditional truth and wisdom. It is elusive and metaphorical because it refers to some truth outside itself. It is philosophical because it is a product of a long period of reasoning and observation that expresses some timeless truth (17).

Ezenwamadu and Umesiegbu in their work "The Use of Igbo Proverbs in Select Plays of Zulu Sofola," depict the importance of oral traditions like proverbs, riddles, songs, tales, and poetry as they generally influence African literature. In their work, they attribute the paucity of the use of Igbo Proverbs to the degradation of the Igbo

language as a result of colonialism. Colonial education discouraged the learning of indigenous languages. They employed varieties of local literary theories such as those of Robert Dwyer and Malinowski as oral literary theories that formed the basis of their work, while the critical approach for the interpretation of the proverbs is the contextual approach. The first theory suggests that oral lore or traditional contexts are present in all human societies. It largely shapes influences and adorns the literary works of many authors of folklorists. Its importance in folklore/literary studies suggests that cultural mores, traditions and cosmological values used by an author can go a long way to inform the audience on the creative work's cultural background and contextual background. For the contextual framework which serves as the critical approach of this study, it is imperative to restate that the meaning of a proverb of any kind depends on its cultural and social contexts. Equally important is that a proverb isolated from its context(s) indeed becomes lifeless and even meaningless. Despite the similarities in the text selected for the above work, it differs in ways with the present study in the sense that the above work is under the ambit of literature. In contrast, this study is language-based due to the sociolinguistic study of the play. Also, there are couple of linguistic elements examined in the work, while this study focuses only on proverbs. Moreover, different theories were employed in the above work which differs from this study that employs Dell Hymes's *Ethnography of Communication*.

Ukaegbu in his work "A Sociolinguistic analysis of the use of proverbs in Mbaise", evaluates the use of proverbs in Igbo land and examines the form and context in which Igbo proverbs are used, as well as their functions in the society. Most especially, the study argues that in as much as proverbs are indispensable in the Igbo cultural system, there are some restrictions to them; these restrictions form the crux of the matter. He employs the Speech Acts theory by J.L. Austin, and concludes that proverbs in Mbaise land are restricted to be used at

certain times, on certain occasions and by certain people. It also revealed that in Mbaise land, children do not speak to the elders in proverbs; one sent on an errand does not use proverbs; laws are not enacted in proverbs and finally, some proverbs are exclusively for men. This allusion is illustrated thus: “*The ókènyé nòdurùàlà hú, nwàtà kwúrúótó o gaghìàhu*” (16) (this proverb means that what an elder see while sitting, a youth cannot see while standing). This proverb is used when advising youths because youths often see elders as people who never enjoyed life and therefore do not know what youthful enjoyment entails. Though this study centres on the Igbo speech community like the current research, the significant dissimilarities are evident because the study specified gender and age in the usage of the proverbs while this dissertation liberalized its usage. Also, the function of proverbs as tool for admonishing erring youth, which Sofola copiously explored in her plays, is the same with this study. Still, the method of data collection and the theory adopted differ.

Abdulkarim and Abdullahi also presented Proverbs as a form of oral Literature that is more consistent and most employed by the Hausa people than folktale, songs, chants, myth, etc, in their paper, “Thematic Analysis of Some Selected Hausa Proverbs.” They depict proverbs as expressing the morals and ethics of the people. Hausa proverbs maintain conformity to cultural values and accepted patterns of behaviour. Thus, “proverbs are filled with allusions to several aspects of life; they are employed in different kinds of situation in Hausa society to control several activities without the use of force or harsh language” (27). The themes in Hausa proverbs are characteristically the same ones that form the basis of other literary forms. There are the themes of human vices, nature, social norms, the importance of good manners, the nature of women and the routes to a successful life. This study, however, differs from the present study in terms of geographical and regional location, while their work centres on the Northern part of

Nigerian, the present study centres on the southeast. Also, the thematic preoccupation differs as well as the method of data collection.

Essuman, ResCue and Yeboah believe that the use of proverbs is a way to project the origin of the work and a technique to fully develop the plot of the story by offering detailed descriptions of the identities and utterances of characters. In the case of movies, Ayodabo explains that proverbs are used for characters to justify their actions and show their disapproval of wrongdoings. Both writers above, delved into analyzing the use of proverbs in movies (Ghanian movies) but Zulu Solofa's plays project a typical Nigerian setting (Southeast), where proverbs are strongly used by elders to warn, caution, and redirect obstinate characters. Also, while the above case studies centre on movies, the present study confines to the play of Zulu Sofola.

Furthermore, Nwabudike also explored the "A Sociolinguistic Analysis of Proverbs in Ola Rotimi's *The Gods Are Not to Blame*" he extensively unearths the Yoruba's culture as it relates to Proverbs. In the Yoruba speech community of Nigeria to which Ola Rotimi belongs and in which the play is set, proverbs are considered as multifunctional and flexible instruments of communication. They are employed to reflect social relationships and for performing routine communicative activities. These proverbs reveal the values of good conduct, respect for elders, the place of royalty, cordiality, and cooperation for peaceful co-existence. He adopted the historical-descriptive design. Data for the study were analysed using Dell Hymes' Ethnographic acronym, "S-P-E-A-K-I-N-G" to show the nature or gender, age, class, and contextual dynamics in the use of proverbs in the play. The study shows male dominance in using proverbs; elders and leaders are more disposed to proverbial expressions than young and common individuals and proverbs are conditioned by the circumstances of their users. This study adopts the same theory as the present study but differs in geographical location and the text selected. While Nwabudike's focuses on the

Yoruba community, the present study centres on the Igbo community. Also, the findings of his study show that there are discrepancies on gender usage of proverbs as there is male dominance in proverbial usage, while the present study does not analyse proverbs from a gender-based perspective.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This research is anchored on Dell Hymes's *Ethnography of Communication*, a comprehensive and interdisciplinary approach to studying language and communication as actions that transpire in naturally occurring, everyday situations and interactions. According to Hymes, language cannot be studied in isolation. It must be studied wider context of cultural and social aspects. Language is not limited to a mere technical set of grammatical rules. It has a specific context, both in terms of the individual and the cultural norms and beliefs, which cannot be separated. The approach was conceived by Dell Hymes and his colleagues in the 1960s and 1970s. It combines a richly descriptive ethnographic focus with a detailed research procedure (Hymes' SPEAKING acronym) on the other hand. Hymes' SPEAKING acronym brings to the fore an array of components of communicative interaction, including participants, channels and media, sign systems, and more. In addition to communication as essential to sociocultural life, EC scholars typically focus on the unique cultural dimensions of communicative events and processes. EC advances a theoretical view whereby language and communication are essential social and cultural features, which allow smooth interchanges between studying the detail of actual situated interactions and the larger societal structures, relations, and identities that these interactions help to produce. The thrust of Hymes' advocacy for a break in linguistics is the generational shift from descriptive linguistics into sociolinguistics, contemporaneous with the Chomskyan shift to Transformational-

Generative grammar. The sociolinguistics movement expressed continuity with prior generations of scholars, in contrast to the acrimony surrounding transformational grammarians' split with structural linguistics. Both represented fundamental changes in linguists' understanding of language. Hymes was particularly critical of Chomsky's idea of linguistic competence and failure to account for linguistic variation. Locating language within an *a priori* mental grammar does not account for or even acknowledge the enormous role of the socially contextualized ways we use language in determining the shape of utterances. Hymes frequently noted that, ungrammatical utterances may be socially appropriate, just as grammatical utterances can be socially inappropriate. He objected to Chomsky's definition of linguistic competence in the strongest terms, saying that "a child from whom the grammatical sentences of a language might come with equal likelihood would be a social monster" (3). The system of use, children acquire within a social matrix of language is 'communicative competence', Hymes' alternative to Chomsky's 'linguistic competence'. While, for Chomskyans, humans are born with the capacity for acquiring linguistic competence, communicative competence is learned and thus can be complete or flexible. This shift in understanding competence reflects Hymes' concern for disadvantaged children who do not have equal access to the sociolinguistic resources they need. Further to this shift from linguistic competence to communicative competence, Chomsky's linguistics focuses on the aspects of language that are uniform across speakers, ruling variation off the field of study by stipulating idealised speaker/hearers in completely homogeneous communities as its research object. Hymes is concerned with actual linguistic variety found in speech and therefore calls for 'concepts and methods that enable us to deal with diversity. Therefore, the concepts and methods for linguistic investigation that resulted from Hymes'

concern with actual language use in social contexts is 'the ethnography of communication'.

Hymes aims to move away from considering speech as an abstract model and toward investigating the diversity of speech as it is encountered in ethnographic fieldwork as cited by Farar:

...that the study of language must concern itself with describing and analysing the ability of the native speakers to use language for communication in real situations (communicative competence) rather than limiting itself to describing the potential ability of the ideal speaker/listener to produce grammatically correct sentences (linguistic competence). Speakers of a language in particular communities can communicate with each other in a manner which is not only correct but also appropriate to the sociocultural context. This ability involves a shared knowledge of the linguistic code as well as of the socio-cultural rules, norms and values which guide the conduct and interpretation of speech and other channels of communication in a community ... [T]he ethnography of communication ... is concerned with the questions of what a person knows about appropriate patterns of language use in his or her community and how he or she learns about it (4).

This paper, therefore, adopts Hymes' SPEAKING acronym as an aspect of the ethnography of communication that is suitable for this research because of its conformity with the use of language in the sociocultural context (Aniocha Village). Also, proverbs are used not because of their widely acceptable meaning but because they are used according to the Igbo ideology and maxim. The acronyms are illustrated thus:

S –Setting and Scene–The setting refers to the time and place, while the scene describes the environment of the situation.

P –Participants—This refers to everyone involved in the speech, including the speaker and the audience (listener).

E – Ends –: The purpose and goals of the speech and any outcomes of the speech.

A – Act Sequence – the order of events during the speech.

K – Key – The overall tone or manner of the speech.

I – Instrumentalities –The form and style of a speech being given.

N – Norm – Defines what is socially acceptable at the event.

G – Genre – The type of speech that is being given.

## Methodology

The qualitative research method is selected in this study because of its focus on the social and cultural aspects of language use in the texts. Qualitative techniques and approaches help to focus and assist in understanding people, social systems, and cultural contexts. This approach is relevant in discussing how proverbs are used to form part of cultural norms and values, serve as a tool in teaching morals and portray how language and society are intertwined as an element of a speech community.

The data for the study was read, identified, and purposively selected from the text. Thirty proverbs were identified from the text, but only fifteen will be analyzed textually to adequately illustrate the distribution of the proverbs using the SPEAKING mnemonic.

## Data Presentation and Analysis

Sofola, in *Wedlock of the Gods* tries to admonish that tragedy not only stem from one person's ignorance or nonchalance but can also be a collective or societal tragedy stemming from the abuse or ignorance of culture. This is the case of Ogwoma and Uloko, in as much they are aware of the custom of their people and the tradition of a woman to mourn her dead husband but consciously deviate from upholding such norms, which exemplifies moral decadence. Such decadence leads to

spiritual rumbling and chaos, resulting in the death of the two lovers. The ritual of death and mourning characterizes *Wedlock of the Gods* as a tragedy. Zulu Sofola, at the Prologue of the play, states that “the traditional solemnity that follows the ritual is distorted however for, rather than engaging in the normal funeral rites and rituals which should have cleansed her and send the spirit of the deceased to the world of the gods, Ogwoma, the widow, expresses a sense of liberation from unwanted marriage”(1). On the other hand, the mother of the deceased performs rites meant to destroy her son’s widow as an act of vengeance for supposedly killing her son. The conflict in the play builds up to a frenzied state, which seizes her at the scene where she makes Ogwoma to kill herself.

**Datum 1: A man fights to die if what he wants and loves is threatened a second time (14).**

The setting of the Proverb is at Ogwoma’s house, uttered by Uloko to express his love for Ogwoma. The participants are Uloko and Ogwoma who refuse to succumb to any tradition that might separate them and vow to bond till death to the extent Ogwoma laid with him in her mourning period and became pregnant. It was out of his raw determination to fight Odibei (Ogwoma’s mother-in-law) and possess his lover Ogwoma that prompted the above proverb. The proverb entails that persistence is the answer to one’s intention especially if the intention is denied at first trial. The tone of the proverb is strong-willed.

**Datum 2: A dog does not see a cat and sits quietly (32).**

The setting of the proverb is at Ibekwe’s house; the participants are Ibekwe, Udo, Ike, Ata and Okolie (Ibekwe’s kinsmen).Ogwoma’s father (Ibekwe) said the proverb to show his helplessness about the outcome of his decision to give out his daughter in marriage to pay for the treatment of his son. He never envisaged that it would turn out the way it did. He utters the proverb when he perceives Okolie’s

pretentious attitude towards Ogwoma; he believes that Okolie is a green snake in a green grass. The tone of the proverb is cynical.

**Datum 3: Not all cutlasses that went to the farm are used (15).**

The play's setting is at Ogwoma's house and the participants are Odibei, Ogwoma and Uloko. The proverb is uttered by Odibei to show her disapproval of seeing Uloko in Ogwoma's house, who is still mourning her husband (Odibei's son). The action that led to the proverb is Odibei's attempt to slap Ogwoma, which was prevented by Uloko. So Odibei uttered the proverb to remind Uloko that she is not a woman that can be messed with, especially by Uloko. The tone of the proverb is harsh.

**Datum 4: A man who plays the flute also blows his nose (6).**

The proverb is set at Ogwoma's house. At the same time, the participants are Otubo and Odibei, who came looking for Ogwoma. Odibei's curiosity about who killed her son led to the use of the proverb because she suspects that Ogwoma did. The proverb actually shows that Ogwoma must not always be at home because she is mourning; she can also be engaged in some other chores. Otubo is considerate in tone to show that Ogwoma may not be the actual culprit of her husband's death.

**Datum 5: A man is not a man simply because he parades an okra sprout (15).**

Still at Ogwoma's house, Odibei reprimands Uloko with the proverb proof to warn him against contending with her. Odibei uses a warning tone to confront Uloko about parading himself in Ogwoma's house. On the other hand, Uloko is adamant and further proves his manhood.

**Datum 6: One must not see a skunk to smell him (16).**

The setting is still at Ogwoma's house, and the participants are Odibei, Ogwoma, and Uloko. Odibei, in furious rage, warns Uloko to stop his advances on Ogwoma, which is now apparent to everyone. The

proverb means that one should not be the cause of one's own death. She confronted Uloko with the above proverb to warn him against the repercussions of his action. The tone of the conversation is filled with hostility and reprimand.

**Datum 7: A man does not have to keep his daughter if she becomes too much of a problem to him. (26)**

The setting of the above proverb is at Ibekwe's house. The above proverbs construe a true picture of female gender oppression, where a woman is marginalised and turned into an object of trade. The participants are Ibekwe's kinsmen, and the proverb was uttered by Ike to show that the best solution to a female child who poses a problem to her family is to give her out in marriage. The speech is condescending and is an axiom that portrays women in a bad way.

**Datum 8: A man's daughter is his source of wealth. (28)**

The proverb signifies a picture of female chauvinism. Essentially, the practice of paying bride price, for example, is seen to have an overt, negotiable exchange value, turning marriage, in a fundamental sense, into a commercial transaction. The tone of the proverb is condemning because it reduces the value of women and the participants are still Ibekwe's kinsmen. This proverb is repeated in the play by Anwasia (Ogwoma's friend) to remind Ogwoma that her father's decision to give her out in marriage to treat her ailing brother is not out of context.

**Datum 9: The tortoise says that his problems are his problems and therefore cannot be crushed by them. So he carries his problems on his back wherever he goes. (28)**

The scene of the above proverb is still at Ibekwe's house, and the ongoing matter of Ogwoma's pregnancy stirs a reaction from the different unexpected turn. The tone is that of self-defence from Ibekwe, Ogwoma's father. He tries to justify why he singlehandedly gave out his daughter without seeking help from his kinsmen (Umunna). This is a

philosophical proverb and means that nature takes care of itself, and providence does not burden man beyond his capacity. In other words, people of responsibilities should know how to cope with their tight schedules without fuss or complaint. The lesson here is that no situation in life is unmanageable, and neither is any problem insurmountable. The proverb is likened to the shape of the tortoise whose back is burdened with a cracked dome-shaped shell; it is assumed that it carries his burden everywhere. Ibekwe uses this proverb to justify his action of letting his defiant and strong-willed daughter whom he loves so much, be married to Adigwu instead of Uloko. He thinks of the consequences of his action of arranged marriage and decides to face the outcome all alone. This proverb negates unity in a family because it emphasises solitary living as against communal living, which the Igbo exhibit. It thereby suggests a negative image in Ibekwe's character. It is certain in Igbo land that a man's daughter is a source of wealth to him. Still, Ibekwe's kinsmen felt Ibekwe should have sought for their financial assistance to heal his son rather than to allow Ogwoma to marry a man against her wish, all in a bid to obtain the funds to finance Edozie's treatment. They condemn his actions and suggest that he faces the consequences alone. The consequence, however, later manifests in the play when Ogwoma gets pregnant by Uloko while she is still mourning her departed husband, Adigwu. The death of Ogwoma and her unborn child, as well as Uloko became the consequences of Ibekwe's action.

**Datum 10: To friendly concubine that a woman hops in time of need.... (29).**

The above proverb is uttered by Ike, at Ibekwe's who supports his brother's act of giving out his daughter, Ogwoma, for money. The proverb signifies that one can only make do with what he has without seeking help from those who will mock him in the aftermath. The tone of the proverb is empathetic.

**Datum 11: There is nothing man's eyes have never seen (34).**

The proverb's scene is at Uloko's house, and the participants are Uloko and Udo. Udo's visit is to castigate Uloko for his abominable act of impregnating a woman in mourning. The maxim entails that there is nothing new under the sun, but what matters is the consequences of some actions. The tone of the maxim of is filled with disappointment.

**Datum 12: The head says that sleep impossible without the arm beside it (34).**

The above proverb is used by Udo to advise Uloko on his abominable action, but Uloko wouldn't listen. This goes in line with Igbo proverbs that say, "E kwuronti ma onugi, egburuisi, ya n anti esorolaa," which literally means that when the ear is defiant to adhere to instruction, once the head is cut off, the ear goes along with it. He believes he is a grown man with class and could defend his actions regardless. The tone of the proverb is admonishing.

**Datum 13: No one knows why the snail sighs.... (26)**

The sound a snail produces when it has a contact with an object is likened to a sigh, and the aftermath action is for the snail to go back into its shell because it senses danger. The setting of this proverb is at Ibekwe's house where his kinsmen are deliberating on the heinous matter between Ogwoma and Uloko. Ike uses a soft tone to defend his brother's decision to give out his daughter in marriage.

**Datum 14: A man who visits a woman's house in ashes hides so that people will not see his face (38).**

Nneka (Ogwoma's mother) uses the proverb condemn Uloko's act of impregnating Ogwoma while still mourning. She knows the implication of Uloko's action and vows that her daughter will vomit his "medicine and bastard". The Igbo tradition holds that: The law of the land, "nsoala", is that the woman in mourning must never allow

another man or visitors to visit her. Custom also has it that on the death of a young woman's husband, she should be taken over by the brother of her late husband if he has one. Where none exists, sacrifices and ceremonies have to be made to free her and allow her to marry into another family. Uloko and Ogwoma do not even consider this alternative to their getting married after three years of waiting because Ogwoma's late husband, Adigwu, has a brother to whom Odibei is ready to make her over. The tone of the proverb is lustful.

**Datum 15: the child calms a mother's wrath no matter what offence the child has committed (38).**

Uloko, oblivious to the magnitude of his devious act, tries to calm Nneka, but she remains defiant.

The participants are Uloko and Nneka. The tone of the conversation is furious as exhibited by Nneka.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the proverbs illustrated in the play show their effect on African Culture. It teaches moral and didactic lessons to erring youths. Also, it serves as a tool to maintain cultural values, as culture reflects the way of life, and historical background of a particular speech community through language. The work has understudied how Sociolinguistics and Proverbs draw a meeting point. Sociolinguistics is a veritable tool for the analysis of proverbs. It is an area of study that deals with language and society (culture). The sociolinguistic implication of this study critically explains the relevance of Dell Hymes' theory of Ethnography of Communication.

This study is highly recommended in High School for young adults who out of youthful exuberance, have fully opposed the cultural value of Africans and cling to Western Culture, which creates a crisis of identity. They should be acquainted with the morals that African proverbs offer.

Also, this research recommends that Nigerian literary artists especially Igbo writers use the oral traditions of their various communities in their creative works. This effort is expected to go a long way in exposing the untold truth of the Igbo cosmological worldview.

Finally, this work is also recommended for all ethnic groups in Nigeria to avoid the extinction of their local language, dialect, traditional norms, and values.

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