

A PRAGMATIC ANALOGICAL ANALYSIS OF ENGLISH AND NAFARA PROVERBS: A CROSS-CULTURAL UNDERSTANDING

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Abstract

The present work examines the analogy of English and Nafara proverbs in real life for a cross-cultural understanding. Nafara is a language spoken in the north of Côte d'Ivoire, in Africa whereas, the English language is spoken in Europe and America. This analysis deals with the contextual interpretation of proverbs in discourse on the one hand, and aims at documenting and promoting the Nafara language on the other hand. Although the two languages belong to two different groups, we couldn't deny similarities with some proverbs meaning in English and Nafara. The analogy of proverbs in the both languages demonstrates that when a speaker performs a speech act, he implicitly sheds light on that language's culture. Implicitness of language in use leads to cross-cultural understanding. Hence, the pragmatics of cross-cultural theory by Deborah Tannen and Anna Wierzbicka frames that work.

Keywords: *analogy, culture, cross-cultural understanding, implicit, proverbs*

Résumé

Le présent travail est une analyse analogique des proverbes Anglais et Nafara dans la vie réelle pour une compréhension interculturelle. Le Nafara est une langue parlée au nord de la Côte d'Ivoire, en Afrique tandis que la langue Anglaise est parlée en Europe et en Amérique. Cette analyse porte d'une part sur l'interprétation contextuelle des proverbes dans le discours, et d'autre part vise à documenter et promouvoir la langue Nafara. Bien que les deux langues appartiennent à deux groupes différents, nous ne pouvons nier les similitudes de contenu et de sens existantes entre certains proverbes en Anglais et en Nafara. L'analogie des proverbes dans les deux langues démontre que lorsqu'un locuteur accomplit un acte de langage, il met implicitement en lumière la culture de cette langue. Le caractère implicite du langage utilisé conduit à une compréhension interculturelle. De ce fait, la théorie de la pragmatique interculturelle de Deborah Tannen et Anna Wierzbicka est utilisée pour cette analyse.

Mots-clés : *analogie, culture, compréhension interculturelle, implicite, proverbes*

Introduction

Proverbs are often used in everyday conversation and they deepen the meaning of a discourse. They contribute not only to the increase of the language learning but also to the type of speech activities. These sayings

provide cultural insight and help hearers to understand the attitudes, beliefs, and values of a language native speakers. They stay a fertile material for learning and another way of expressing ideas in different words. That work is one of the first attempt to analyze English and Nafara proverbs in natural context. It is based on two different languages and cultures. Today, there are more and more interactants who belong to different languages, different cultures, and different conceptualizations. Moreover, Lakoff and Turner (1989) think that the folk knowledge that is behind proverbs is natural, and universal. Hatch and Brown (1995) have argued that although we think proverbs are bound to culture, there are many with equivalents across cultures. D. Tannen (1986) and A. Wierzbicka (2003) have favored cross-cultural pragmatics based on the semantics of human interaction. I notice that the use of proverbs can bestow a quality on hearers' knowledge in human interaction in English as well as in Nafara. In this way, Kasper, Nguyen and Yoshimi (2010) have asserted that pragmatics analyzes speech acts from the perspective of language users with special attention to societal and cultural issues, involving the connections between language, ideology, and power. What is the purpose of using proverbs in a language? How do proverbs enhance oral communication in English and Nafara? This work aims at showing differences and similarities on the one hand, and the cross-cultural understanding of these languages on the other hand. Therefore, this work will be analyzed under cross-cultural pragmatics theory in three parts.

1- Theoretical and Methodological Framework

The way people from different languages and cultures interact is a growing interest today. Cross-cultural phenomenon is explored from a perspective focusing on pragmatic features. Leech (1983, p.6) states that pragmatics is the study of meaning which is related to the speech situations. On the contrary, A. Wierzbicka (2003, p.6) thinks that "to compare meanings one has to be able to state them. To state the meaning of a word, an expression or a construction, one needs a semantic metalanguage. To compare meanings expressed in different languages and different cultures, one needs a semantic metalanguage independent, in essence, of any particular language or culture and yet accessible and open to interpretation through any language." Consequently, natural semantic metalanguage (NSM) fits in with this study because in the era

of globalization, communication is destined to become increasingly cross-cultural. In addition, D. Tannen (1986, p. 30) says that "the future of the earth depends on cross-cultural communication". Then, A. Wierzbicka (2003, p.1) investigates "various kinds of meanings which can be conveyed in language (not in one language, but in different languages of the world) - meanings which involve the interaction between the speaker and the hearer". The main ideas that elucidate the direction of her thought are as follows in A. Wierzbicka (2003, p. 67):

- (1) In different societies, and different communities, people speak differently.
- (2) These differences in ways of speaking are profound and systematic.
- (3) These differences reflect different cultural values, or at least different hierarchies of values.
- (4) Different ways of speaking, different communicative styles, can be explained and made sense of, in terms of independently established different cultural values and cultural priorities.

The social, linguistic and cultural values of proverbs are put forwards in that work.

Dundes defines the proverb as "a traditional propositional statement consisting of at least one descriptive element, a descriptive element consisting of a topic and a comment" (Dundes, 1980, p.60). Proverbs syntactic structure sheds light on the idiosyncratic aspects of each language. The data of this analysis have been taken from S. Tuo (2020) thesis dissertation data.

2- Analogical Analysis of English and Nafara Proverbs

2-1.1. English Proverbs Morphosyntactic Structure

The morphosyntactic structure sheds light on the proverbs' form then on their structure too as S. Tuo (2020) displays it in her thesis dissertation. It also shows the two languages functioning. Here is the way the English language functions.

Noun Word-Class (Eng.01) Clothes do not make the man.

[noun clothes] [verb do] [adverb not] [verb make] [determinative the] [noun man]

Verb Word-Class (Eng.02). Eat like a bird.

[verb Eat] [adjective like] [determinative a] [noun bird]

Adjective Word-Class (Eng.03). Every man has his price.

[adjective Every] [noun man] [verb has] [adjective his] [noun price].

(Eng.04). All's fair in love and war.

[adjective All] [verb is] [noun fair] [preposition in] [noun love]

[conjunction and] [noun war] .

(Eng.05) Every dog has his day

[adjective Every] [noun dog] [verb has] [adjective his] [noun day]

Preposition Word-Class

(Eng.06). Among the blind the one-eyed man is king.

[preposition Among] [determinative the] [noun blind]
[determinative the]

[adjective one-eyed] [noun man] [verb is] [noun king]

Adverb Word-Class (Eng07). Always put your best foot forward.

[adverb Always] [verb put] [adjective your] [adjective best] [noun foot]

[adjective forward]

Determinative Word-Class(Eng.08) A cat has nine lives.

[determinative A] [noun cat] [verb has] [adjective nine]
[noun lives]

Conjunction Word-Class (Eng.09). If you can't beat them, join them.

[conjunction If] [adjective you] [verb can] [adverb not] [verb beat]
[adjective them] [verb join] [adjective them]

2-1.2 Nafara Proverbs Morphosyntactic Structure

Gur languages in Côte d'Ivoire are tonal languages. Nafara is a nominal class language. Only five classes govern that language and its tonal system is analyzed as a three-level tone system. High tone (´), Mid tone (-), and Low tone (`). The following examples illustrate those rules as S.Tuo (2020) displays it.

Class 1 has three sub-classes

(Naf. 01) Mu ga na_m ja_m ma_rifaa ni ji_{ɔ̃} wu bi laà. = word + ∅ ⇒ (plural form) word + bele

(Naf. 02) Fiarafo-**ɓ** ka_ʔa ni goli ja_n na_nɛni.= word + ɓ ⇒ (plural form) word + bele

(Naf. 03) yooji_{ɔ̃} ma_ʔ paar **ɓ**ɔ̃-ɔ̃ ju_{ɔ̃} na, ki si pan nɛ ka_falijiére ni u ma_ʔ. = word + vowel ⇒ (plural form) word + bele

Class 2

Substantives of this class particularly have their suffixes ended by –g+ v, and ʔ + v.

(Naf. 04) ji_{ɔ̃} kúo wée ka-**ʔ**a téé na kɔmɔ ni

Class 3 substantives have two sub-classes. One deals with words ending by l+ ɔ, and the second sub-class is about words ending by n+ v.

(Naf. 05) kɔgi na_ʔama_ʔ kéé lágbu_{ɔ̃}-**ni** go fɛ_ʔɛ sɔli

Class 4

(Naf. 06) fɛ_ɛ-**rɛ** kuo sádo ni

(Naf. 07) A jibeli jo wée-ri ma_ʔ gba, a ka_jé-**ri** wuo doo.

The substantives of class 4 end with -r (v) like **-rɛ -rɔ -rà -ri**.

Class 5 nouns end with –m(v).

(Naf. 08) waa fii-**mɛ** kuo ja waa fré taa ni

Carlson (1994, p. 2) notes that “it is probable that several grammatical constructions are calques on the corresponding Bambara constructions”. For him, Senúfo languages have a subject–object–verb (SOV) constituent order like Mande languages, rather than the subject–verb–object (SVO) order which is more common in Gur and in Niger–Congo languages.

2.2 Similarities in Proverbs Meaning

Each proverb has its own meaning according to its using context in a specific language. The meaning may differ from a language to another. Some proverbs have an almost exact equivalent meaning whereas others meaning are different. However, some proverbs have an almost exact equivalent in meaning, form, and usage in the English and Nafara languages.

Context: when someone seems to be in a hurry to do something or he wants to jump a step.

In Nafara they say:

(Naf.09)

Píá	kúo	tààri	sìgùgù	ni
Child	not	walk	without creeping	in.

A child cannot walk without creeping.

A child grows up by steps or stages. Before walking, a baby creeps. Each stage is a necessity in a baby's growth. They smile, sit down, creep, and after standing up, and finally they walk. They cannot jump stages. They are obliged to follow those steps by steps.

In English they say:

(Eng.) Learn to walk before you run.

Do things in the right order, from simple to more complicated. For example, do not try to read a difficult English novel when you're just starting to learn English. If you try to jump ahead, you will most likely fail - just like a child who tries to run before learning to walk will fall. All things will come in time, but you must be patient and go through the proper process.

(Eng.39) Don't throw out the baby with the bathwater.

In Nafara they say:

(Naf.10)	Faa	piw	waa	na	wee	logbelig	ni
Don't	baby+	cl1+def.	throw	with	its	bathwater	in

Don't throw out the baby with the bathwater

The proverb: don't throw out the baby with the bathwater is a common proverb to both languages with the same structure.

Naf.11)

pòò	fànfòl	kúo	jii	na	u	ni	kàsàgi	ni
dog	encourager	not	enter	with	him	in	bushes	in

The person who encourages the dog does not enter with it in the bushes.

The person who encourages you, will give you up when difficulties occur. If there are problems, he will not assist you. We should be careful when taking decisions.

(Naf.12)

Kátè̀̀geli fii kà gbà yáù jàà ii, ā ù gō púò ii, wàà gùù
Options two not can sick impossible if he not well he dies

Among the two choices, the sick man will necessary choose one, if he does not heal, he will die. When someone is sick, he has to choose between life and death. Sometimes, we are in front of circumstances where we are compelled to choose only the best option for us.

(Naf.13)

Mu ga jè̀ mu go sinè wàa-ré wàbriré nà ii,
You TAM is you not lay down these leaves fresh on
mù go yàli mù sinè tè̀ wàwàri nà
you not allow you lay down their dryer on

If you do not lay down on fresh leaves, you cannot lay down on the dry leaves

If you did not know how something started, you cannot give details about its starting period.

(Naf.14)

Mu sàgà súro líi, mu ga gba kée pè̀̀gele lè̀̀é lége
you home meal eat you not can its plates take tidy
sharing a household meal, do not allow you to tidy its plates.

Be invited to share a family meal, do not allow you to interfere in their problems. It means that you do not master how things work in their household, so a daily visit do not give you right to be a specialist of this family concerns. A family member is quite different from a guess, and a stranger.

(Naf.15)

a kògi mòzòl jùfàù ni, ki kuo yígi na yácè̀̀gè ni
if hand lasted pocket in, it not come back with good thing in.

If a hand spends much time in a pocket, it won't come back with a good thing

People expectation is vanished by the long waiting time. Then, they lost patience when news take much time.

Social relationships are very important for a community well-being. For that reason, members shall behave correctly to maintain peace. As such bad behavior must be forbidden.

(Naf. 16)

a mu p̄natèni nā ʃiɔ̄ ni kátènga nā, a mu nā
 If you sit down with someone in seat on if you on
 yiri, ma u yáli u sògò u t̄eni
 stand up TAM him inform him be careful him sit down

If two persons sit down on the same seat, before standing up, the standing person shall tell his the neighbor be careful

A relative does not betray the family members. Tell the truth. Only telling truth to our relatives will strengthen our relationship. Social relationships are so fragile that we shall pay attention to them by avoiding bad behavior because it can deeply hurt the quality of social relationship.

Sameness rate of proverbs in English and Nafara in is very low. The reasons may be the cultural fact. In Nafara, there is a compatibility of proverbs use and argumentation. Proverbs are always used in a situational context to back up a viewpoint with the objective to make it stronger than another argument. But British do not share the same realities as Nafara people. British culture is different from Nafara and they are not used to proverbs use.

3 -Cross-Cultural Understanding of the Two Languages

3.1 Differences between English and Nafara Proverbs

Proverbs seem to have almost no equivalents in the both languages. Nafara proverbs are bound to their realities and so do English proverbs. This is the specific difference between the both languages proverbs. They are deductive arguments because they always express the truth. Even if some people think elders are telling lies, in this context their lies contain the truth. To this respect, the following proverb is used to elucidate people.

(Naf.)

ʃiɔ̄ a gba léɔ̄ finaga kana, u go
 someone TAM can elder lies avoid, he not

sa	gba	wee	sijoori	kana
TAM	can	his	word/speech	avoid

Someone can avoid an elder lies, but, he cannot avoid the word of this elder.

This proverb testifies that elders' words always bear truth. For that reason, proverbs remain trustworthy and reliable truth.

(Eng) A man of words and not of deeds is like a garden full of weeds.

Mostly, elements use in English proverbs are quite different from those use in Nafara proverbs. Therefore, the referred elements in real world are bound to each language culture as it can be seen in the following British proverbs:

(Eng)The grass is always greener on the other side of the fence.

So instead of thinking about what everyone else has, this proverb wants you to be thankful for what you have.

(Eng.) People in glass houses shouldn't throw stones.

“People in glass houses” means anyone who is sensitive about their failures. People like this should not insult others (should not “throw stones”) because most likely the other person will turn around and insult you back. And like glass, which is easy to break, your self-esteem (what you think of yourself) will easily break into pieces.

Proverbs Expressing Knowledge and Literacy in Britain. Some proverbs illustrate knowledge and literacy issues in this community.

(Eng.) Better untaught than ill-taught

The issue of good education is as stake in Great Britain

(Eng). Pen is mightier than sword.

Thinking and writing have more influence on people and events than use of force. In addition, some British proverbs deal with good health conditions.

(Eng.) An apple a day keeps the doctor away

It is also used in shortened and allusive forms. ‘Eat an apple on going to bed. And you’ll keep the doctor from earning his bread.’

Great- Britain is deeply rooted in business issue. As a matter of fact, there are big firms and companies in Britain.

(Eng.) Every man is the architect of his own fortunes

Everyone who wants to do business is his own architect to succeeding in.

(Eng.). To know which side your bread is buttered on.

Be aware of where one's best interests lie.

(Eng.). The harder you work, the luckier you get.

The harder you work, the more good ideas and chances you may make for yourself.

Moreover, human rights issue is well-known in developed countries.

(Eng.) Might goes before right.

Everybody must correctly fulfill his task before uprising for his rights

As a developed country, British people are used to success and new challenges. As such, some proverbs may express success and challenge in community. These proverbs put together development and language.

(Eng.) Nothing succeeds like success.

Nothing can give you the joy benefits that success procures in someone's life.

(Eng.). Fortune favors the brave.

If you carry out your plans boldly, the luck is more likely to favor you.

English proverbs illustrate issues of power and innovation This proverb puts development, power, and innovation notions with language together.

(Eng.). Necessity is the mother of invention.

A need or problem forces people to come up with innovative solutions..

3.2 Cultural and Social Aspect of Nafara Proverbs

Proverbs are always marked by this community inks. A community culture and social aspects can be seen as its tradition. All that community concern is straggled through these aspects. Proverbs use by Nafara

people are loaded with tremendous Nafara culture and social elements. Nafara people worldview, beliefs, and even their language overtly show their culture and social features all along.

(Naf.)

Cólèbeli nà cópiifòbeli kà gbà p̄nè tàà ii
 Ancients initiated and new initiated not can together walk.

Ancients and new poro initiated people cannot walk together. To this regard, one can assert without doubting that both classes are not equal. It is a hierarchical initiation. Therefore, the two classes cannot be equal.

(Naf.)

Mì tòō nà mì n̄ pe mi séé, ā mi l̄
 My father and my mother they me born, and I older
 Mì n̄ nà, nà já nà mì tòō ni kálā.
 My mother than, and with and my father in generation

I am born from my father and my mother, I am older than my mother and I belong to my father generation. Poro initiation stands only for male. The male child knows many things than his mother. In this way, he is considered to be older than his mother. By the time being, women are not admitted to this training and be aware of its content unless they reach menopause period if they really want. Anyway, male child will be older than his mother because women are not concerned with Poro initiation.

(Naf.)

fè̀̀ere kuo s̄dogo ni
 shame not s̄dogo in.

s̄dogo is for shameless persons.

Most of the members of s̄dogo are women. But there are few men. The s̄doobeli (people of s̄dogo) are naked when performing their rituals. It is very shameful to be naked in a group, but, s̄doobeli should. The practice of s̄dogo is for shameless people.

Proverb reveals the literature aspect of British culture.

(Eng.) Don't judge a book by its cover.

Things are not always what they seem. This proverb teaches you not to make judgments about people appearance.

Conclusion

Nafara is a Niger-Congo language whereas English is an Indo-European language. Poro initiation depicts on the community organization and respect due to elders and chiefs. To Nafara mind, solidarity is a great quality. As hard-working people, solidarity is developed to well-undergo activities. On the contrary, British culture is dominated by literature, technology, music, cinema, philosophy, architecture and education. The analogical study of proverbs in the two languages demonstrates that language users always manipulate morphosyntactic structure, words, phrase, and clause meanings, pragmatic information from the context, as well as interactional, to shed light on linguistic, social and cultural richness. Speakers use proverbs to fulfill some purposes like to impart knowledge, to offer advice, to back up an argument, to teach and inspire others. The idiosyncratic elements of proverbs help learners to understand the attitudes, beliefs, and values of the two languages native speakers. For these reasons, proverbs issue can be analyzed in the sense of discourse strategies.

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